

# **A Fragile Revival:**

Chinese Buddhism under the Political Shadow, 1522-1620

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## Abstract

I aim to reveal in this dissertation the dynamics behind the evolution of the late Ming Buddhist revival as well as some of its general characteristics, mainly from the political perspective. This significant religious revival has proved to be intimately tied to politics. Studying these interactions reveals a remarkable and complicated process. I examine how the revival took place and was processed at different social levels in different regions over the one hundred years of the Jiajing-Wanli period (1522-1620). The more theoretic portion of this project seeks to understand how, why, and to what extent this revival was a reaction and adjustment to the contemporary political environment by referring to the relevant social, economic, religious, cultural, and regional backgrounds.

In addition to close reading of textual and epigraphical materials, I consistently employ quantitative analysis, regional approach and cases studies in the mould of the French Annals School. My argument is that, profoundly influenced by a weak Buddhist institution and a structural weakness in the Ming government, the evolution of the late Ming Buddhist revival was not so much driven by the inner dynamics of Buddhism as by drastic changes in the overall lay society, among which the inner and outer court politics, although not always the decisive factor, always remained a catalyst for other factors. This revival fostered a stronger commitment to Buddhism in society and produced some charismatic Buddhist masters who were tremendously influential, but it remained fragile because its development was basically under the control of its patrons rather than the *sangha* itself.

I suggest that we reconfigure our understanding of the Ming Buddhist revival. Specifically, I point out that a long-distance shift of the national Buddhist centre took place from Beijing to the Jiangnan region around the 1600s, and that it was propelled both by drastic changes in national politics and by distinct traits of local Buddhism. I explain how this revival could happen after Jiajing's discrimination against Buddhism, and why it would conclude later when the socioeconomic environment mostly remained unchanged. Key words include Buddhist revival, court politics, the mid- and late Ming, Beijing, and Jiangnan.

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## Abbreviations Used in the Notes and Bibliography

CHC	Cambridge History of China
FCZ	Ge Yinliang 葛寅亮, Jinling fan cha zhi 金陵梵刹志
HSMY	Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清, Hanshan dashi mengyou ji 憨山大師夢遊集
HSNP	Fuzheng 福徵, Hanshan dashi nianpu shuzhu 憨山大師年譜疏注
JJSL	Ming shizong shilu 明世宗實錄
KXT	Feng Mengzhen 馮夢楨, Kuaixue tang ji 快雪堂集*
RXJW	Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊, Rixia jiuwen kao 日下舊聞攷
SKHB	Beijing tushuguan cang zhongguo lidai shike taben huibian 北京圖書館藏中國歷代石刻拓本彙編
SZSL	Ming shenzong shilu 明神宗實錄
T	Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. eds., Taishō Shinshu Daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經
WLYH	Shen Defu 沈德符, Wanli yehuo bian 萬曆野獲編
XZJ	Xu zangjing 續藏經
ZBQJ	Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可, Zibo zunze quanji 紫柏尊者全集

\*The original page numbers of some old books are retained when they are reprinted and also given new page numbers in the modern versions, as we find with the *Kuaixue tang ji*. For convenience, I will give the citation information in the form of “p. a (b)”, “a” referring to the old page number and “b” to the new one.

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An African proverb says that it takes the whole village to educate a child. This cast a light on the pathway of my growth and, more importantly, reveals a secret in the development of human civilization. After having benefited so much from others, it is my turn to do something good for society.



## Dedication

To my grandfather

## Introduction

The sixteenth day of the first month of Jiajing 44 (February 16, 1565) was an ordinary day for most people in China of the age, but a sad one for the monks of the great Baoen monastery 大報恩寺 in Nanjing. Its abbot, Xilin Yongning 西林永寧 (1483-1565), died that day at the age of eighty two. Serving as the abbot of this monastery for thirty-four years and concurrently as a top monastic official in the Nanjing Central Buddhist Registry (*senglu si* 僧錄司) for twenty-five years, Yongning was highly esteemed not only by the Baoensi community but by the entire Buddhist world in the Jiangnan region. These monks also felt disturbed by Yongning's prediction about the monastery's coming decline. To their surprise, his solution was to entrust them to a young monk eventually known as Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546-1623). It took the Baoensi monks little time to realize that their leader's prophecy was not empty talk. Ironically, the first major challenge the monastery had to battle was actually generated by Yongning himself - to be more precise, by the deceased Yongning: three hundred taels of silver were estimated necessary for his funeral. Since Yongning left behind only about thirty taels, the difference had to be met by a loan at a very high interest rate. When the funeral was over, the Baoensi monks began to worry about the debt. A meeting was convened, but no good idea was put forth. Finally, Deqing suggested the sale of Yongning's belongings and a part of the monastic land property as a means to defray the debt. This was accepted, and the debt was taken care of. One year later, much more severe challenges emerged as a lightning-caused conflagration destroyed the main body of this monastery. Since this was an imperially sponsored monastery, its ruin led as many as fifteen superintendent monks to be thrown into the prison. Rumours had it that they would be facing the death sentence. It was said that Baoensi monks started to flee in panic, with the exception of Deqing, who was preoccupied with taking care of his imprisoned colleagues and attempting to overcome the crisis. Those persecuted monks were eventually set free with relatively minor punishments. Subsequently, spurred by the dilapidated state of the monastery, Deqing and a fellow monk named Xuelang Hong'en 雪浪洪恩 (1545-1607) vowed to rebuild the monastery at any cost. Five years later, at the turn of the Wanli era (1573), in spite of the opposition of Hong'en, Deqing set off to North China in search of the Dharma and support for the monastery. In time, he would spend most of his life

outside Nanjing and even become the mentor to the reigning emperor's mother. Unlike Deqing, Hong'en chose to stay on and was active in the Jiangnan region. Deqing arranged the bestowal of a Buddhist canon from the inner court to this monastery in Wanli 17 (1589), and Hong'en managed to reconstruct the Baoen stupa, a landmark of the monastery, with support from local society in the Jiangnan region. Nevertheless, neither of them was successful in fulfilling their vow to restore the great Baoen monastery. Finally, this monastery was rebuilt in Kangxi 38 (1699) with government money.

The above narrative is based mainly on Deqing's autobiography, and it includes many puzzling points. Built by the Yongle emperor (r.1403-1424) in memory of his mother, the Great Baoen monastery was one of the largest monasteries of the time supported by a large amount of imperially bestowed land. Why did it then become so financially strapped in the last years of the Jiajing era that it could not even afford the funeral of its abbot? Was it legal for the resident monks to sell the monastic property? What would have happened to those arrested monks had Jiajing lived a bit longer? Turning to Deqing's departure from the Jiangnan region, why did it happen at the turn of the Wanli era? And why did he head for North China? As for the restoration of the monastery, what was the key to the decision-making process? And of all the forces involved - the inner court, the local society, the government, and etc. - which were the most decisive for the growth of Buddhism in the Ming and Qing periods? More intriguing is the question of whether this was a story about only one individual monastery or it was typical of what happened to most if not all of the monasteries at that time.

These puzzles concern important problems in the history of Buddhism in Ming- and Qing-dynasty China, and more studies are needed in order to get satisfactory answers. This study is a renewed effort to answer some of the most important questions by focusing on the mid- and late Ming. This period witnessed a Buddhist revival and thus constituted the most important part in the entire Buddhist history of the Ming and Qing periods. I will examine the fluctuation that the Baoen monastery experienced by putting it in a wider historical context with particular emphasis on the remarkable and complicated interactions between the *samgha* and politics. The aim of this dissertation is thus twofold. It will examine how the late Ming Buddhist revival took place at different social levels in different regions over the one hundred years of the Jiajing-Wanli era (1522-1620). The more theoretical portion of this project seeks to understand how, why, and to what extent this revival was a reaction and adjustment to the contemporary political environment by referring to the relevant social, economic, religious, cultural, and regional backgrounds. Not only is it aimed at a thorough explication of one of the

most significant phases in the history of Chinese Buddhism, but it also attempts to shed light on other related socio-political, economic, cultural, regional, and religious aspects. Before formally turning to this study, however, it is necessary that we first conduct a cursory survey of recent research on Ming Buddhism in general and on late Ming Buddhist revival in particular.

### 1) Studies on Ming Buddhism

Ming Buddhism is an understudied field which was not studied by modern academic approaches until the 1920s and which, since then, has kept changing in both its subject of research and methodology. It was Japanese scholars who constituted the mainstream in this field from the 1920s to 1960s. They first tried to clarify the policies related to Buddhism and the historical context in which they were made.<sup>1</sup> Roughly beginning from the 1940s, they shifted their attention from the early to the middle Ming. At the same time, the Chinese scholar Chen Yuan led his Chinese colleagues with two exemplary books both on the study of Buddhism in the late Ming and early Qing, with one characterized by the regional approach which is currently becoming popular.<sup>2</sup> In the 1970s, with a growing interest in the intellectual history of the mid- and late- Ming period,<sup>3</sup> scholars invested more energy in Ming Buddhism, especially late Ming Buddhism. Centered on several eminent Buddhist masters, their studies attempted to reconstruct these monks' systems of thought and discern their theoretical creativity. This trend was carried into the 1980s, resulting in the publishing of several monographs, mostly about a single master but a few about a group.<sup>4</sup> With these studies as a basis, we can now

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Ryūichi Kiyoshi 龍池清, "Min no Taiso no bukyō seisaku" 明の太祖の仏教政策, *Bukkyō shisō kōza* 仏教思想講座, no.8 (1939), pp.83-112; idem., "Mindai no yūga kyōsō" 明代の瑜伽教僧, *Tōhōgaku* 東方學報 11.1 (1940), pp. 405-13; idem., "Mindai no sōkan" 明代の僧官, *Shina bukyō shigaku* 支那仏教史學 4.3 (1945), pp. 405-13. Shimizu Taiji 清水泰次, "Mindai ni okeru butsudō no torishimari" 明代における佛道の取締, *Shigaku zasshi* 史學雜誌 40. 3, pp. 263-310; idem., "Mindai Butsudō tōsei kō" 明代佛道統制考, *Tōyō shikai kiyō* 東洋史會紀要 (Tōkyō), no. 2 (1937), pp. 1-19.

<sup>2</sup> Chen Yuan 陳垣, *Ming ji dianqian fojiao kao* 明季滇黔佛教攷 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1959); idem., *Qing chu seng zheng ji* 清初僧諍記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962).

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Araki Kengo 荒木見悟, *Bukkyō to Jukyō* 仏教と儒教 (Tōkyō: Kenbun shuppan, 1963); idem., *Mindai shisō kenkyū: mindai ni okeru jukyō to bukyō no koryū* 明代思想研究: 明代における儒教と佛教の交流 (Tōkyō: Sobunsha, 1972); idem., *Yōmeigaku no kaiten to bukyō* 陽明學の開展と仏教 (Tōkyō: Kenbun Shuppan, 1984). William Theodore De Bary, *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Chang Sheng-yen 張聖嚴, *Minmatsu chūgoku bukyō no kenkyū: tokuni Chigyoku o chūshin to shite* 明末中國佛教の研究: 特に智旭を中心として (Tōkyō: Sankibō Busshorin, 1975); Guoxiang 果祥, *Zibo dashi yanjiu* 紫柏大師

appreciate the sophistication in the thoughts of these major Ming-Qing monks and the relationship between their theories and China's other traditions, especially Confucianism. Chün-fang Yü's book on Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲祿宏 (1535-1615) deserves particular attention because it lay a solid foundation for the study of late Ming Buddhist revival.

The 1980s saw a major innovation in methodology. On the one hand, following the line of intellectual history study, the relationship between Buddhism and Christianity sparked interest among scholars. On the other hand, no longer exclusively devoted to doctrinal issues, scholars began to consider the expansion of Buddhism in its own light and take it as evidence that Buddhism had already found its way into the lives of people across time, space, and social classes. Subsequently, issues related to the "popularization" of different religious traditions gradually caught more attention. Chün-fang Yü's research on Zhuhong demonstrates this shift in methodology. The cult of Three-in-One teaching (*sanyi jiao* 三一教) as a good topic related to both the study of intellectual history and of popularization has also become a hot point of debate since then.<sup>5</sup> In addition, Masaaki Chikusa's book and Timothy Brook's dissertation, which was finished in 1982 but published in 1993, formed the first systematic effort to introduce the approach of sociology into this field.<sup>6</sup> Their extensive use of local gazetteers and monastic gazetteers brought to light an abundant but underused source of research material.

Since the 1990s, study of Ming Buddhism continues to flourish both in terms of the proliferation of topics and the refinement of methods. In methodology, the effectiveness of the

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研究 (Taipei: Dong chu chu ban she, 1987); Jonathan Christopher Cleary, "Zibo Zhenke: A Buddhist Leader in Late Ming China" (Ph.D. disser., University Microfilms International, 1985); Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-Hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

<sup>5</sup> For example, see Judith A. Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-En* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); Timothy Brook, "Rethinking Syncretism: The Unity of the Three Teachings and Their Joint Worship in Late-Imperial China," *Journal of Chinese Religions*, no. 21 (1993b), pp.13-44.

<sup>6</sup> Chikusa Masaaki 竺沙雅章, *Chūgoku bukkō shakaishi kenkyū* 中國仏教社會史研究 (Tōkyō: Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1982); Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993). In fact, it seems that scholars studying Chinese popular religion have studied Chinese society through the lens of religion even earlier than scholars in this field. See, for example, Daniel Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976); Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: the Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); idem. *Shantung Rebellion: the Wang Lun Uprising of 1774* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). A most recent progress in this field is Daniel L. Overmyer, *Local Religion in North China in the Twentieth Century: The Structure and Organization of Community Rituals and Beliefs* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009).

sociological approach has been fully appreciated.<sup>7</sup> The regional approach has also been widely exercised. Scholars have treated at different lengths Buddhism in areas like Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Beijing.<sup>8</sup> Noticeably, scholars have started to employ various methods heavily informed by political perspectives, particularly in the early Ming. Hoong Teik Toh is the first to deal with the relationship between the early Ming government and Tibetan Buddhism in a monograph length work.<sup>9</sup> Zhou Qi examines how China's political culture left its mark on the policy choice relevant to Buddhism in the early Ming.<sup>10</sup> Timothy Brook's studies deserve special attention for his ground-breaking discovery that restrictions on Buddhism during this period were nearly equal to suppression and thus left profound impact on the development of Buddhism thereafter.<sup>11</sup> Chen Yunü pays special attention to the political influence on Buddhism in the early Jiajing era and Longqing period.<sup>12</sup> In addition, two general studies have come out. Du Changshun has made a sweeping examination on the relationship between the Ming court and Buddhism. Thornton chronologically surveys the history of Buddhism in Hangzhou, with the conclusion that during the Ming and the early Qing dynasties Buddhist monasteries in this area were fundamentally dictated by their position vis-à-vis the state.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to *Praying for Power*, also see Brook, "At the Margin of Public Authority: The Ming State and Buddhism," in *Culture, and State in Chinese History: Conventions, Accommodations, and Critiques* (Stanford, Cali.: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 161-81; Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü, *Pilgrims and Sites in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-Yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Chen Yunü 陳玉女, "Mindai Bukkyō shakai no chiikiteki kenkyū: Kasei Banreki Nenkan o Chūshin Toshite" 明代仏教社會の地域的研究-嘉靖萬曆年間(1522-1620)を中心として (Ph.D. disser., Kyūshū University, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> For studies on Nanjing, see He Xiaorong 何孝榮, *Mingdai Nanjing siyuan yanjiu* 明代南京寺院研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2000); For studies on Hangzhou, see Susanna Thornton, "Buddhist Monasteries in Hangzhou in the Ming and Early Qing" (Ph.D. disser, London University, 1996). For studies on Beijing Buddhism, see He Xiaorong, *Mingdai Beijing fojiao siyuan xiujian yanjiu* 明代北京佛教寺院修建研究 (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 2007); Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Hoong Teik Toh 卓鴻澤, "Tibetan Buddhism in Ming China" (Ph.D. disser., Harvard University, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Zhou Qi 周齊, *Mingdai fojiao yu zhengzhi wenhua* 明代佛教與政治文化 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Timothy Brook, *The Chinese State in Ming Society* (London, New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005); idem., "At the Margin of Public Authority: The Ming State and Buddhism."

<sup>12</sup> See Chen Yunü, "Ming Wanli shiqi Cisheng huangtaihou de chongfo-jian lun fo, dao liang shili de duizhi" 明萬曆時期慈聖皇太后的崇佛—兼論佛、道兩勢力的對峙, *Chengong daxue lishi xuebao* 成功大學歷史學報, no. 23 (1997), pp. 195-245; idem., "Ming Huayanzong pai Bianrong Hesang ruyi Kao-Jianshu Long, Wan Nianjian Fojiang Yu Jingshi Quanguide Wanglai" 明華嚴宗派遍融和尚入獄放—兼述隆、萬年間佛教與京師權貴的往來, *Lishi Xuebao* 歷史學報, no. 24 (1998), pp. 215-58.

<sup>13</sup> See Du Changshun 杜常順, "Mingdai gongting yu fojiao guanxi yanjiu" 明代宮廷與佛教關係研究 (Ph. D. disser., Jinan University, 2005); Thornton, "Buddhist Monasteries in Hangzhou in the Ming and Early Qing."

Old topics have been refreshed as new ones were introduced. Here are several remarkable indicators. First, new progress has been made on the study of Buddhist canons,<sup>14</sup> with the book coauthored by Li & He as the most comprehensive and useful. Second, new light has been thrown onto Buddhism's ties with eunuchs.<sup>15</sup> Chen's study uncovers the economic nature of their cooperation. Third, the study of Buddhism and folk religions appears to be so full-fledged that some theoretical approaches have been gradually sophisticated.<sup>16</sup> Ma and Seiwert both demonstrate how complex the relationship between Buddhism and folk religions sometimes was, for which they offer convincing explanations. Fourth, individual monks and Buddhist traditions (like the Chan, Pure Land, and Vinaya) have been further studied.<sup>17</sup> Finally, institutional reforms within the *samgha* that occurred in the late Ming have been studied by Jiang Canteng, Hasebe Yūkei, and Chen Yunü.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See Lianbin Dai, "The Economics of the Jiaxing Edition of the Buddhist Tripitaka," *T'oung Pao*, 94. 5 (2008), pp. 306-59; Hasebe Yūkei 長谷部幽溪, "Mindai ikō ni okeru zōkyō no kaichō" 明代以降における藏經の開雕, *Aichigakuin daigaku ronsō, ippan kyōiku kenkyū* 愛知學院大學論叢 一般教育研究 31. 1 (1983-84), pp. 3-28; Li Fuhua 李富華 and He Mei 何梅, *Hanwen Fojiao Dazangjing Yanjiu* 漢文佛教大藏經研究 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003); Nozawa Yoshimi 野沢佳美, *Mindai daizōkyō shi no kenkyū: nanzō no rekishigakuteki kiso kenkyū* 明代大藏經の研究: 南藏の歴史學的基礎研究 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> See Chen Yunü, "Ming dai zhongye yiqian huanguang, sengguan yu tingchen de lianjie guanxi-tongguo dui 'fen si' yu 'diyuan' wenti de tantao" 明代中葉以前宦官、僧官與廷臣的連結關係—透過對"墳寺"與"地緣"問題的探討, *Chengong daxue lishi xuebao*, no. 22 (1996), pp. 283-304; Idem., *Mingdai ershi si yamen huanguan yu beijing fojiao* 明代二十四衙門宦官與北京佛教 (Taipei: Ruwen chubanshe, 2001). He Xiaorong, "Mingdai huanguan yu fojiao" 明代宦官與佛教, *Nankai xuebao* 南開學報, no. 1 (2000), pp. 18-27.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Ma Xisha 馬西沙 and Han Bingfang 韓秉方, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi* 中國民間宗教史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1992); Hubert M. Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003); Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Hon-Chun Shek, eds., *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); Richard Hon-Chun Shek, "Religion and Society in Late Ming: Sectarianism and Popular Thought in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century China" (Ph.D., disser, University of California, Berkeley, 1984); Daniel L. Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976).

<sup>17</sup> For several noteworthy examples, see Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Chen Songbai 陳松柏, "Hanshan chanxue zhi yanjiu: yi zixing wei zhongxin" 憨山禪學之研究: 以自性為中心 (Gaoxiong: Foguangshan wenjiao jijinhui, 2004); Shengyen 聖嚴, *Mingmo fojiao yanjiu* 明末佛教研究 (Taipei: Dongchu chubanshe, 1993).

<sup>18</sup> See Jiang Canteng 江燦騰, *Wan Ming fojiao conglin gaige yu foxue zhengbian zhi yanjiu: Yi Hanshan Deqing de gaige shengya wei zhongxin* 晚明佛教叢林改革與佛學爭辯之研究: 以憨山德清的改革生涯為中心 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1990); Hasebe Yūkei, *Ming Qing fojiao shi yanjiu xushuo* 明清佛教史研究序說 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1979).

The emerging interest in Ming-Early Qing Buddhism since 1990s has much to do with a “revolution in paradigm” in the study of Buddhism in late imperial China which had long been viewed as a story of continuous decline. Such an understanding was largely derived from what might be called “Sui-Tang centrism” in the sense that it takes Sui-Tang (581-907) Buddhism as a universal standard to gauge Chinese Buddhism for all ages.<sup>19</sup> Recently, this stereotype has been forcefully challenged, with the “glory” of the Sui-Tang Buddhism brought into question. Largely due to these challenges, scholars have steadily come to recognize the value of Buddhism in other ages,<sup>20</sup> which has led scholars to approach them in their own light. Working on the basis of this new paradigm, scholars have uncovered a remarkable Buddhist revival in late Ming China.<sup>21</sup>

## 2) Studies on Late Ming Buddhist Revival

This Buddhist revival was important not only in China but also in the entire East Asia.<sup>22</sup> As shown by the survey above, however, a systematic endeavour has yet to be undertaken to explore the whole history of this fascinating phenomenon. Further, the current scholarship on this issue is flawed in several regards. With the exception of Chen Yunü, few if any scholars have attempted to relate Buddhism in this period with Buddhism under the previous periods, making this revival appear both abrupt and mysterious. In fact, right before the revival there were Emperor Jiajing’s policy and practice that were much discriminating against Buddhism. Further, although nearly thirty years has passed since sociological approaches were systematically introduced into this field, local elites/ scholar-officials remain the sole object of focus, with the exception of Chen who has studied women.<sup>23</sup> As a result, in sharp contrast to the study of folk religion, the spiritual world of commoner Buddhists has been left out of the

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<sup>19</sup> See Albert Welter, “Review of Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism,” *China Review International*, no. 11 (2004), pp. 193-98. However, Helen Josephine Baroni, *Ōbaku Zen: The Emergence of the Third Sect of Zen in Tokugawa, Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000), also argued that such a “centrism” was not simply due to lack of knowledge about Buddhism in late imperial China, but also partly resulted from some Japanese scholars’ efforts to advocate the autonomy and superiority of Japanese Buddhism.

<sup>20</sup> See Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, eds, *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), p.14; Brook, *Praying for Power*, p.31, and the preface to Jiang, *Wan Ming fojiao conglin gaige yu foxue zhengbian zhi yanjiu*.

<sup>21</sup> See Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*; Brook, *Praying for power*; Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*.

<sup>22</sup> For instance, the Buddhist monk Yinyuan Longqi kanji 隱元隆琦 (1592-1673) migrated to Japan from Southeast China and founded the Ōbaku Chan tradition in Japan, which has become the third largest of its kind see Baroni, *Ōbaku Zen*.

<sup>23</sup> Chen Yunü, “Mingdai funü xin fo de shehui jinzhi yu zhizhu kongjian” 明代婦女信佛的社會禁制與自主空間, *Chengong daxue lishi xuebao* 成功大學歷史學報, no. 29 (2005), pp. 121-64; no. 30(2006), pp. 43-90.



sphere of scholarly attention. Moreover, although recognized as the key to comprehending the development of Ming Buddhism, only sporadic studies have been attempted on the Ming monastic economy.<sup>24</sup> This is a serious omission, considering that it was during this period that China's economy boomed at an unprecedented pace. To compound the situation, significant as it is, the regional approach has not been widely used in this field of study. When concentrating on Buddhism in a given area, scholars have, more often than not, succumbed to two tendencies: the first is to compartmentalize different areas, overlooking their possible interactions, and thus failing to understand them in a national context. The second is that scholars are prone to apply conclusions derived from their study of a given region to other areas without sufficient justification. Last but not least, although popularization seemed to be a sweeping feature of late Ming Buddhism, it is still unclear to what extent the commoners were religiously driven to Buddhism.

I would like to further discuss current scholarship in this field, with more reference to Timothy Brook's book on Buddhism and late Ming gentry society, which is actually a standard source for students interested in Chinese Buddhism.<sup>25</sup> The application of Brook's study might be constrained by the space and time he chose to study. In terms of region, although he tried to cover as widely as possible, as evidenced by his case studies, his focus is on areas south of the Yellow River and east of Guangxi, which had a higher economic and cultural level compared to North China.<sup>26</sup> Such options are open to question in the perspectives of Buddhist and political realms. Yunnan was a case in point. This is not the place to go into details, but a few words are in

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<sup>24</sup> For monastic economy in the Ming dynasty, cf. Chikusa Masaaki, "Mindai jiden no fueki" 明代寺田の賦役, in *Min Shin jidai no seiji to shakai* 明清時代の政治と社会, ed. Ono Kazuko 小野和子 (Kyōto: Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo), pp. 487-512; Noguchi Tetsurō 野口鉄郎, "Jiso shiroku no hō o megutte" 寺租四六の法をめぐって, in *Yamane Yukio kyōju taikyū kinen mindaishi ronsō* 山根幸夫教授退休記念明代史論叢 (eds. Yamane Yukio 山根幸夫 and Okuzaki Hiroshi 奥崎裕司; Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 1990), pp. 903-26; Ishida Tokuyuki 石田徳行, "Min dai Nankin no jishō ni tsuite-toku ni jishō no zeieki futan o chūshin to shite-" 明代南京の寺莊について—特に寺莊の税役負擔を中心として, *Zengaku Kenkyū* 禪學研究 no. 2 (1966), pp. 79-97.

<sup>25</sup> This excellent study is aimed at an understanding not so much of the history of Chinese Buddhism as that of late Ming society, which Brook believed can be studied by analyzing the interplays between local gentry and Buddhism. Moreover, the author felt more interested in the gentry patronage of Buddhism as a characteristic of the age, rather than in Buddhism's step by step evolution over time. The specific purpose of his study meant that the author has made different choices of material and reached different conclusions than more Buddhism-oriented historians. These differences further imply some significant but oft-neglected limitations in applying the conclusions reached in this work to the history of Buddhism.

<sup>26</sup> For the regional study of Chinese society in late imperial China, see William. Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1977).

order. The growth of Ming Buddhism in Yunnan was unique in that with the substantial support from local authorities it flourished during the Jiajing era when Buddhism in other areas was suffering from harsh political intervention.<sup>27</sup> Beijing was another missing piece of the puzzle with much more significance. In medieval China when Buddhism enjoyed its glory in cosmopolitan cities like Chang'an, Luoyang, Nanjing, and Hangzhou, Buddhism in Beijing, which was mostly a frontier, had little to boast except for the stone canon in Fangshan 房山. However, after it was made the middle capital 中都 of the Jin dynasty (1115-1234) and the Grand Capital 大都 in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), various Buddhist monasteries were built in the area. Beijing lost this status as another city was designated the imperial capital of the Ming dynasty in its early years; but fortunately for the Beijing-based Buddhist community, such a status was restored in 1418. In addition to its political status, Beijing was unique also because its social, economic, and cultural features made it so distinct from the regions south of the Yellow River. For example, we can hardly find the Jiangnan type of local gentry active in this area. In contrast, the imperial family, eunuchs, military officials of Imperial Bodyguard (*jinyiwei* 錦衣衛), and the “incense association” (*xianghui* 香會) which organized common people loosely constituted the major driving force of the religious life therein.<sup>28</sup> All of these factors, as we shall see in Chapters Four and Seven, helped establish Beijing’s leading position in the Buddhist society on a national level in the middle Ming dynasty. Therefore, taking Beijing into account would add a significant part to the picture of Buddhism depicted by Brook and other scholars.

Time is another problem. It is difficult for any scholars to precisely track the growth of Buddhism’s presence and growth in society over time. Nevertheless, Brook still suggests that the sixteenth century, particularly its middle decades, was the starting point of the interaction of gentry and clergy, which then expanded rapidly until the opening decades of the Qing dynasty.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Chen Yuan has made so far the best study about Buddhism in Yunnan. See his *Ming ji dian qian fo jiao kao*. For a recent study on Buddhism in this area, see Lan Jifu 藍吉富, *Yunnan dali fojiao lunwen ji* 雲南大理佛教論文集 (Gaoxiong: Fuguang chubanshe, 1991); Hou Chong 侯冲, *Yunnan yu Ba Shu fojiao yanjiu lungao* 雲南與巴蜀佛教研究論稿 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2006).

<sup>28</sup> Chen, “Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū: kajō manreki nenkan wo chūshin toshite,” pp.195-225.

<sup>29</sup> Brook, *Praying for Power*, pp. 91-96. He loosely refers to this period as the late Ming. However, it seems that he was not very sure about the starting point. For example, for Gui Youguang’s (1506-1571) boast that as late as the middle of the sixteenth century “the popularity of Buddhism among the people constantly declining,” Brook comments that “he did not seems to realize, or else chose to ignore, that monasteries were beginning to receive substantial support from the local gentry, and the gentry were taking up all manner of Buddhist practices.” (p. 33) If Buddhist monasteries had already received substantial support by

Therefore, he naturally puts emphasis on one hundred years starting with the Wanli era when these interactions prevailed everywhere in Jiangnan. To a historian of late Ming Buddhism, however, this unit of time might appear unwieldy. For example, Wu Jiang clearly split it into two parts along the 1630s, referring to one as the late Ming Buddhist revival and the other as the Chan revitalization.<sup>30</sup> More importantly, if this ambiguous starting point, that is, “the middle decades of the sixteenth century”, is acceptable for Brook’s study of late Ming society, it should not be easily adopted by scholars of Buddhist history because it was exactly during this short period that many things happened which would largely decide the development of Buddhism, as we shall see. In this sense, that Chen Yunü advanced the starting point of the study to the Jiajing period had the advantage of allowing us to observe the change in *saṃgha* more carefully.

Even within the topics Brook addresses, there are questions that remain unsolved. The separation of the state and society forms the foundation for Brook’s arguments.<sup>31</sup> With regard to the reasons for its appearance, his explanation primarily depends on the economic boom which not only dramatically reduced the chance for a candidate to get a post through the civil service exam after the 1550s but also enabled local gentry to afford to be more independent of the state. He was right in this respect, but he left some important questions to other scholars to explore. Therefore, when he noticed that such patronage declined after the 1680s but there was no marked alteration in the socioeconomic conditions of gentry life from the 1680s forward, he

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the middle of this century, the starting point of the interactions under discussion should be put earlier.

<sup>30</sup> Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*, pp.22-45.

<sup>31</sup> Roughly speaking, Brook’s line of thinking is as follows: beginning from the start of sixteenth century, an economic boom made education much more affordable than before, particularly in the Jiangnan region, which in turn made candidates overwhelmingly outnumber the available civil-service posts. Well aware of this increased instability in obtaining and maintaining power in the bureaucracy, gentry families were forced to conserve economic resources to prevent the family from being forced out of the competition for degrees. Sociologically, on the other hand, “this competition made the realm of most aspirants limited in the local society” and accordingly made them local gentry. More importantly for Brook, the awareness of such limits in their influence, together with the contemporary cultural and intellectual current, prompted local gentry to act much differently from their counterparts prior to and after the late Ming. Separation between the state and locality was thus triggered and took form. On the part of local gentry, supported by their growing wealth and cognisant of the difficulty in the civil career competition, they were able to afford and even were contented with this separation. Further, they tried to act according to their own agendas which were sometimes different from or even contrary to that established by the state and by Neo-Confucian ideology, and the “public realm” was thus needed. Buddhist monasteries, which were excluded from the public realm defined by the state but at the same time constituted an open public space in local society, came to the fore. Against this background, Brook employed four distinct but related tensions in late-Ming society- Confucianism versus Buddhism, political versus economic power, state versus locality, and public versus private-as the backbone in his analysis of the gentry’s generous patronage to Buddhist monasteries which boomed in late Ming in various forms.

cannot help but ask why it could happen as such?<sup>32</sup> We can also ask in other words: What made the ever disrupted relationship between the state and the gentry return to normalcy even when socioeconomic conditions basically remained unchanged? Because it was outside of his main focus, Brook left this problem to other scholars, but this remains unsolved in Wu Jiang's more recent book. It is from here that I will introduce politics as a significant, if not always the most important factor, to explore the growth of late Ming Buddhism. It will become evident that without considering the political role, not only will we miss a crucial dimension to understand gentry's standing apart of the state, but we will also remain in dark about the general dynamics behind the late Ming Buddhist revival.

### 3) The Late Ming Buddhist Revival and Contemporary Politics

To solve these problems which seem unsolvable with current approaches and methods, in this project I will approach this Buddhist revival mainly from the traditionally political perspective. In fact, Buddhism had a close relationship with politics in imperial China so that its growth was profoundly influenced by the latter. Unlike Christianity in Europe, Buddhism in imperial China, with a few possible exceptions (as that in the Northern Wei dynasty [386-534]), was not an integral part of the political hegemony, nor was it a state structure in its own right. Thus, on the one hand there was a natural gap between Buddhism and the state; and on the other, Buddhism was subject to the impact from the state. The heated controversy about whether a Buddhist monk should pay respect to a secular king in medieval China and Śākyamuni's reported wish that kings and ministers should serve as the protector of Buddhism reflect such a dilemma. In reality, although it was repeatedly stressed that Buddhism should keep away from politics, Buddhism was often found to be deeply entangled with politics.<sup>33</sup> This was also true during late Ming Buddhist revival.

So far mid- and late Ming Buddhism has occasionally been approached from the political perspective, but many problems remain. Thornton concluded in her study on Buddhism in

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<sup>32</sup> Brook, *Praying for Power*, p. 353.

<sup>33</sup> For the relationship between Buddhism and the state in the Sui Buddhism, see Tonami Mamoru 礪波護, *Zui-Tō no bukkō to kokka* 隋唐の佛教と國家 (Tōkyō: Chūō kōronsha, 1999); in the Tang dynasty, see Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Antonino Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century: Inquiry into the Nature, Author, and Function of the Tunhuang Document S. 6502, Followed by an Annotated Translation* (Kyoto: Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2005); in the Song dynasty, see Huang Chi-chiang 黃啓江, "Imperial Rulership and Buddhism in the Early Northern Sung," in *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China*, ed. Frederick P. Brandauer and Chun-chieh Huang (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), pp.144-87.

Hangzhou that “until the 1570s, without obvious support from any emperor, Buddhist monasteries at the local level were shunned by the elite, starved of investment, and taxed almost to extinction.”<sup>34</sup> This point about the indifference of local elite to the Buddhist affairs is somewhat in conflict with Brook’s suggestion, and if true it is no doubt an important point. Unfortunately, it is not easy to apply this conclusion to other regions because Thornton collected her data mainly from Hangzhou. Although Chen Yunü’s work deserves special attention for its concentration on the political influence on Buddhism in the early Jiajing era and Longqing period,<sup>35</sup> she assumed that Daoism always had an overwhelming predominance at the court in the mid- and late Jiajing era and ignored an increase in patronage of Buddhism by eunuchs taking place at that time. Du Changshun surveyed the development of Ming Buddhism under the influence of court politics, but he seems more interested in simply recounting the events of the time than in analyzing what happened.<sup>36</sup> Given the fragmentary nature of these studies, a comprehensive study of this revival from the political perspective is thus needed, just like what Timothy Brook has done from the social perspective.

I will address these issues in this project. That Chinese Buddhism covered the whole distance from decay to flourishing during the Jiajing-Wanli period suggests a widespread expansion of Buddhist belief and practice in a particular historical period. I deem the rise and fall of Buddhism as another expression of its diffusion and reception in society. To understand the “rediscovery” of the attraction of Buddhism during the period under discussion, I have also used the insights of structural functionalism. In this theory, societies are seen as coherent, bounded and fundamentally relational constructs that function like organisms, with their various parts (or social institutions) working together in an unconscious, quasi-automatic fashion toward achieving an overall social equilibrium. When changes happen, individuals in interaction with changing situations adapt through a process of “role bargaining.” Once the roles are established, they create norms that guide further action and are thus institutionalized, creating stability across social interactions. Where the adaptation process cannot adjust, due to sharp shocks or immediate radical change, structural dissolution occurs, and either new structures (and therefore a new system) are formed or society dies.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Thornton, “Buddhist Monasteries in Hangzhou in the Ming and Early Qing,” p.183.

<sup>35</sup> See her “Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū.”

<sup>36</sup> Du, “Mingdai gongting yu fojiao guanxi yanjiu.”

<sup>37</sup> See Talcott Parsons and Leon H. Mayhew, *Talcott Parsons on Institutions and Social Evolution: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

More importantly, I will attempt to explain why the late Ming revival evolved as such. As I will demonstrate later, politics surely placed tremendous effects on the development of Buddhism of the age. However, political figures did not always exert influence on society simply as political figures and through the political channel. Instead, even if they had quit their political careers, the fame established accordingly will keep them influential enough to lead the public opinion. For that reason, I have been inspired by the theories of communication studies. Communication studies concern the process of communication which is usually defined as the sharing of symbols over distances in space and time. I will rely in particular on two concepts in this field. One is the notion of an “opinion leader.” Opinion leaders are agents who are active media users and who interpret and communicate their messages to a primary group, thereby influencing the attitudes and changing the behaviour of their followers. Typically opinion leaders are held in high esteem by those that accept their opinions, but there are different levels within themselves, which means some of them are influenced by others. The other is the notion of “agenda setting.” Simply put, this refers to the large influence that the opinion leaders have on audiences by their choice of what stories to consider valuable and how much prominence and space to give them.<sup>38</sup> With the help of communication studies, I will examine how the people on the top end of hierarchy affected others under and trace the expansion of Buddhist belief happened in different social group of different regions.

I will thus take it as my assumption that religious belief is not only a personal choice but also a socio-political and economic act subject to outside influence. Accordingly, the increasing appeal of Buddhism for people in the late Ming and early Qing will be seen as part of people’s response to a society where they increasingly felt dislocated because of the tremendous recent changes in politics, society, economy, and culture.

In content, this project consists of seven chapters plus an introduction and a conclusion. I will first examine the basic framework of the Ming administration, which regulated the relationship between different social groups and their stances towards Buddhism. I will also study the structural problems inherent in this system and the problems that resulted, mainly in the form of “the Great Ritual Controversy” (*daliyi* 大禮議) in the Jiajing era and the naming of the crown prince in the Wanli era. In doing so, I intend not only to uncover the political backdrop for my entire project, but also to reveal that in many cases the seemingly personal

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<sup>38</sup> For the opinion leader, see Elihu Katz, and Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence; the Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications* (Glencoe, Ill: Free press, 1955). As for the agenda-setting, see Walte Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Free press, 1966).

choices of people in the Jiajing-Wanli period were ultimately regulated, if not decided, by the fundamental problem of the age.

Chapters Two to Four constitute a relatively independent section. I will examine how people outside the *samgha* adjusted their relationships with Buddhism in response to varying political winds. These people were from different walks of society, ranging from the royal family down to eunuchs, scholars-officials, and commoners. And their actions will be understood in relation to their own particularized socioeconomic, cultural, and regional situations and their interactions with each other. In doing so, I aim to disclose how the material, human, and intellectual resources accessible to the Buddhist society fluctuated in quality and quantity in response to variations in the political climate.

Specifically, the subject of Chapter Two is Emperor Jiajing's (r.1522-1566) discrimination against Buddhism which lasted throughout his reign of forty five years. Chronologically, I seek to understand to what extent Jiajing's treatment with Buddhism was not only a problem of personal religious belief but also a result influenced by the general political climate, especially his relationship with his ministers. I will also examine what influence that this emperor and his minister placed on the development of Buddhism.

In Chapter Three I will move to Wanli (r.1573-1620) and his mother Empress Dowager Cisheng 慈聖 (1545-1614), who was well known for lavish patronage of Buddhism. I will first examine how a cleavage in the inner court became increasingly deep in the Wanli era, which in turn caused growing tension between the mother and son. Then I will trace variations in Cisheng's patronage of Buddhism and analyze the spatio-temporal feature in it. By doing so, I hope to reveal precisely how Cisheng's support of Buddhism was controlled by her position in the power structure, especially in relation to her son the emperor. Finally, I conduct a few small case studies to demonstrate their direct influence on Buddhism.

In Chapter Four I will go down from the central governmental level to the local level and examine eunuchs and scholar-officials as the major supporting forces of Buddhism in Beijing and the Jiangnan region, respectively. Ming eunuchs were the extension of the inner court into local society. As a group they were also a generous and rather reliable sustaining force to Buddhism in Beijing, but I will chart the fluctuations in their support of Buddhist societies over the course of one hundred years. I will further reveal how these vacillations reflect their judgements about the political wind and at the same time suggest changes in their positions in relation both to the ruler and court officials. As the eunuchs' counterpart in the Jiangnan region, scholar-officials were increasingly active in local society during the mid- and late Ming. I will

explore how they kept adjusting their relationship with Buddhism in distinct ways and at different paces which cannot be fully understood without considering their social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. I will also conduct a case study on Feng Mengzhen 馮夢楨 (1548-1608).

Chapter Five through seven form another section of this dissertation, in which I will study how political changes in the secular world affected the Buddhist community and how the latter responded to the former. I will also examine the eventual effect of this interaction between the secular world and the *samgha* on the late Ming Buddhism as a whole. Monks and monasteries, which I consider as the foremost indicators of the state of Buddhism at the time, will be the major subject of study.

To be specific, in Chapter Five I will cover four cases, those of Hanshan Deqing, Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543-1603), and Miaofeng Fudeng 妙峰福登 (1531-1604) as well as Kongyin Zhencheng 空印鎮澄 (1547-1617), who were among the most influential Buddhist masters in the Wanli era. Befriending one another, they had close ties with the inner court and many scholar-officials, although they lived distinct lives. The stress of this chapter is laid on how and to what extent these personal and political ties had impact not only on their personal lives but also, due to their high status, on the evolution of contemporary Buddhism as a whole.

Similarly, Chapter Six consists in case studies, but about the histories of Buddhist temples in North and South China. In doing so, I intend to reveal the dynamics behind the development of Buddhist temples in different regions at different phases of the Jiajing-Wanli period, though a scarcity of material about temples in North China limits my ability to form a complete account of this question.

Chapter Seven is a regional study with an ultimate aim at a national level. Employing quantitative methods, I will first research the activities of eminent monks and monasteries in the North China/Beijing and the Jiangnan region— two thousands of miles apart but both pivotal to Buddhism. I will then reveal how the late Ming Buddhist revival evolved over time at a national level by looking at interactions between Buddhism in these two regions. Finally I will try to explain why it happened as such by reference not only to contemporary political milieu but also to local social, economic, and cultural context.

Regarding materials, not only will I examine all relevant textual sources, but I will also make extensive use of epigraphic sources, some of which have been recently made available and have not yet been adequately exploited by historians. In this project I will make use of



several hundred kinds of primary sources. In addition to regular material like the veritable records of the Ming (*Ming shilu* 明實錄), the Ming history, and collected works, I will heavily depend on biographies of eminent monks, local and monastic gazetteers, epitaphs and inscriptions, rubbings, and miscellaneous notes (*biji* 筆記).

All available sources, textual and epigraphic, monastic and secular, will be subjected to a close reading and critical analysis. In addition, quantitative analysis, regional approach, and cases studies are employed consistently in the mode of the French Annals School. The Annals School tends to view history as an interaction of diverse factors and emphasizes the advantages of studying a manageable region during a relatively longer period of time. Thus, inspired by their “long duree” theory,<sup>39</sup> rather than start at the immediate beginning of the revival during the Wanli era, this study looks far into the Jiajing era by examining the roots of what would eventually grow into a full scale revival. This “long duree” approach hopes to carve out a much more coherent picture and time frame of the overall revival. I also take inspiration from the Annals School’s blending of quantitative analysis with particularized case and regional studies. I have been fortunate to locate a diversity of sources that allow me to explore both the dynamics of this revival in larger realm-wide quantitative terms, as well as the more intimate and particularized qualitative levels found in personal and regional case studies.

Partly because of the relatively ambitious scope of this project, its results should not only be of interest to Buddhologists, but also to those more generally interested in historic church-state relations, Daoism, folk religion, comparative religion, and Chinese social and economic history.

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<sup>39</sup> For the “long duree” theory, see Fernand Braudel and Sarah Matthews, *On History* (The University of Chicago Press, 1982), Chapter One.

## Chapter 1

### The Religious Legacy and Political Context

Like other world religions, the development of Buddhism in a given period is based on the legacy it has inherited and the society in which it exists and with which it interacts. In this chapter I will first examine the legacy that mid- and late Ming Buddhism inherited by examining government policy towards Buddhism and its enforcement at the local level. Then I will move to reconstruct the political context where it was active. Instead of simply putting important events together and thinking that they happened by chance, I take these events mostly as results of the structural problem inherent in the framework of power. I thus trace the basic political structure of this dynasty back to the early Ming and examine its modifications in the subsequent periods, revealing a wide gap between the ideal design and its actual operation. In the last part I will examine how these structural problems broke out during the Jiajing-Wanli period, with an emphasis on the deadlock in the Wanli court.

#### 1.1 Policies Relevant to Buddhism in the Ming Dynasty

Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (r.1368-1398), the Hongwu emperor who founded the Ming dynasty, spent dozens of years designing institutional and legal systems to administer Buddhism. After having been further modified by his son Yongle (r. 1403-1424), this system became the basic policy throughout the Ming.<sup>1</sup>

、 In the early years of his reign Hongwu was more supportive of than strict with Buddhism.

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<sup>1</sup> For Zhu Yuanzhang's policy related to Buddhism, see Ryūichi Kiyoshi, "Min no taisō no bukkyō seisaku"; He Xiaorong, "Lun Ming Taizu De Zongjiao Shixiang jiqi Yingxiang" 論明太祖的宗教思想及其影響, *Lishi jiaoxue* 歷史教學, no. 6 (2008), pp. 83-112; Kageki Motohiro 蔭木原洋, "Kōbutei no bukkyō seisaku - Sō Ren to Kitan Shūroku ni shōten o atete 洪武帝の佛教政策 - 宋濂と季潭宗泐に焦點を當てて, *Tōyō shiho* 東洋史訪 5 (1999), pp. 13-24; 6 (2000), pp. 1-16; Kawakatsu Kenryō 川勝賢亮, "Min taisō no sōrin seido ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu minshin bukkyō no kihonteki seikaku wo megutte" 明太祖の叢林制度に関する一考察: 明清佛教の基本性格をめぐって, in *Sato seijun hakushi koki kinen ronbunshu: tōyō no rekishi to bunka* 佐藤成順博士古稀記念論文集: 東洋の歴史と文化, ed. Satō Seijun Hakushi Koki Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai 佐藤成順博士古稀記念論文集刊行会 (Kyoto: Sankibō busshorin 山喜房仏書林, 2004), pp. 53-70.

He had spent some time in a temple as a monk before joining the rebellion in the late Yuan dynasty,<sup>2</sup> and it is not surprising that he gave generous support to Buddhism when he ascended to the throne. He set up the Bureau of Buddhist Patriarch (*shanshi yuan* 善世院) to administer the *sangha* in Hongwu 1 (1368), giving its director the rank of 2b.<sup>3</sup> He summoned many eminent monks to the imperial capital, where he discussed Buddhist teachings with them. He held the Dharma assembly (*fahui* 法會) annually in the first five years of his reign, and even knelt before a Buddha statue.<sup>4</sup> In Hongwu 5 (1372), he ordered the compilation a new version of Buddhist canon, which was finally finished in 1401.<sup>5</sup> In the same year, he ordered officials to count Buddhist and Daoist monks all over the country and to give them ordination certificates (*dudie* 度牒), whose number was up to 57,000, for free. He selected some monks as officials, and sent others to foreign countries as envoys. In addition, he allowed monks to travel everywhere to preach Buddhist teachings. As for Tibetan Buddhism, his main strategy was to confer important monks with titles in a hope to get their cooperation to keep the frontier peaceful.

On the other hand, Hongwu did place some restrictions on Buddhism in this period. In Hongwu 5 (1373), he ordered a register book called *zhouzhi ce* 周知冊 (a register known everywhere) to be made and circulated all over the country so that fake monks could be found easily. One year later, alarmed by a rapid increase of Buddhist and Daoist monks from 57,000 in the twelve month of Hongwu 5 to 96,000 in the eighth month of next year, he ordered that novice monks (*xingtong* 行童) be denied full ordination until they passed relevant exams and that women be prohibited from becoming nuns until reaching the age of forty. He also required that “only one temple be permitted to exist in each prefecture, sub-prefecture, and county” and that monks all live there together, which clearly aimed at reducing the number of Buddhist

<sup>2</sup> Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, *Ming Taizu yuzhi wenji* 明太祖禦制文集 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1965) 16, p. 2a (435).

<sup>3</sup> For the Bureau of Buddhist Patriarch, see Chen, “Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū,” pp. 21-27; He Xiaorong, “Ming chu shanshi yuan kao” 明初善世院考, *Xi'nan daxue xuebao* 西南大學學報 35. 2 (2009), pp. 46-50.

<sup>4</sup> For the Dharma Assembly in the early Hongwu era, see Shiga Takayoshi 滋賀高義, “Minsho no hōe to bukkyō seisaku” 明初の法會と仏教政策, *Ōtani Daigaku kenkyū nenpō* 大谷大學研究年報, no. 21 (1969), pp. 197-237.

<sup>5</sup> For the Hongwu version of the Buddhist canon, see Li & He, *Hanwen fojiao da zangjing yanjiu*, pp. 375-406; Nozawa Yoshimi 野沢佳美, “Kōbu nanzō kara Eiraku nanzō e” 洪武南藏から永楽南藏へ, *Komazawa shigaku* 駒澤史學 52 (1998), pp. 218-39; idem., “Minsho ni okeru ‘futatsu no nanzo’ : ‘kōbu nanzō kara eiraku nanzō e’ sairon” 明初における「二つの南藏: 洪武南藏から永楽南藏へ」再論, *Risshō daigaku jinbunkagaku kenkyūjo nenpō* 立正大學人文科學研究所年報 45 (2007), pp. 15-23.

temples. Then in Hongwu 10 (1377), he ordered all monks in the country to learn the monk Zongle's 宗泐 annotated editions of the Heart Sutra, the Diamond Sutra, and the Lankavatara Sutra.

Beginning from Hongwu 14 (1381) there was a clear change in Hongwu's attitudes towards Buddhism, and in the second phase the emperor paid more attention to reorganizing and restricting the *sangha*. In the sixth month of Hongwu 14 (1381), the Central Buddhist Registry (*senglu si* 僧錄司) was instituted to replace the Bureau of Buddhist Patriarch. Its responsibility included registering and supervising monks, organizing exams necessary for ordination, and recommending candidates for vacant abbacies.<sup>6</sup> Compared with the Bureau of Buddhist Patriarch, the rank of the head of the Central Buddhist Registry was lowered from 2a to 6a. Also it was given less independence, for it was not allowed to make important decisions without cooperation with the Ministry of Rites.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand it had branches at prefectural, sub-prefectural, and county levels so that its influence could be extended to every corner of the country. In the fourth month of the following year, this system of registry was established and would persist throughout this dynasty. One month later, Hongwu further instituted a classification of Buddhist temples into three groups of the Chan, doctrine (*jiang* 講), and esoteric ritual (*jiao* 教). Both the Chan and the doctrinal schools had long traditions in China, while the esoteric ritual school was Hongwu's invention which allowed monks belonging to it to pray for blessings and perform funeral rituals at a reasonable fee.<sup>8</sup> In Hongwu 17 (1384), Hongwu approved a suggestion by the Ministry of Rites that monks be

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<sup>6</sup> Ge Yinliang 葛寅亮, *Jinling fan cha zhi* 金陵梵剎志 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980) (Cited as *FCZ* hereafter) 2, p.4b (210). For the change in the management bureau of Buddhism in the early Ming, see Nogami Shunjō 野上俊靜, "Minsho no sōdō gamon" 明初の僧道衙門, *Ōtani gakuho* 大谷學報 98 (26-1/2) (1946), pp. 8-15; Ryūchi Kiyoshi, "Mindai no sōkan 明代の僧官," *Shina bukkō shigaku* 支那仏教史學 4. 3 (1945), pp. 35-46.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Buddhist officials were assigned by the Ministry of Rites and the appointment of the abbacy of important temples needed permission from this Ministry even if he had passed the exam. See *Ming Taizu shilu* 明太祖實錄 (Rpt. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo, 1961-66; 257 vols) 144, pp. 1b-2a (2262-63).

<sup>8</sup> Huanlun 幻輪, *Shijian jigu lue xueji* 釋鑒稽古略續集 (in Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭, et al., eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 [Tōkyō: Taishō issaikyō Kankōkai 大正一切經刊刻會, 1924-1932], 100 vols; cited as *T.* hereafter], vol. 49.2038) 2, p. 932a. For two important studies of this classification of monks, see Ryūchi, "Mindai no Yuga kyō sō" 明代の瑜伽教僧, *Tōhō gakuho* 東方學報 XI.1 (1940), pp. 405-413; and Chen, "Mingdai yuqie jiaoseng de zhuanzhi hua jiqi jingchan huodong" 明代瑜伽教僧的專職化及其經懺活動, *Xing shiji zongjiao yanjiu* 新世紀宗教研究 3.1 (2004), pp. 37-88.

ordained only every three years.<sup>9</sup>

Hongwu further placed restrictions on the inner management of temples in this phase with an intention to weaken the influence of the *samgha* on society. In Hongwu 19 (1386), he required a *zhenji daoren* 砧基道人 to be assigned in each temple which had land tax obligations. According to his order, this daoren should be the only person communicating with the secular world on behalf of the temple involved.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps feeling that this restriction did not go far enough, on the pretext that monks were still intermingling with common people, he ordered in the seventh month of Hongwu 24 (1391) that all monks live together in temples according to their classifications.<sup>11</sup> An even stricter order appeared in Hongwu 27 (1394), which forbade monks from associating with officials and from traveling to towns and villages to ask for donations.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, he set up a complete procedure for becoming a monk. No monks were allowed to be tonsured privately; to obtain an ordination certificate they were required to take an exam, held every four years and different in content according to the classification of monk. He also set a minimum age for becoming a monk.

A more radical step he adopted was to amalgamate temples and limit their number. In the sixth month of Hongwu 24 (1391), he decreed that from then on only one large temple could be kept in each prefecture, sub-prefecture, and county, no matter how many temples had existed there.<sup>13</sup> The following month, probably recognizing that the order was too strict to be implemented, he instead ordered merely that both newly-founded chapels and old temples without name tablets be all abolished. In addition, monks were required to live together to form a *conglin* 叢林 (monastery) if their number was more than thirty and to be incorporated into other temples if they were less than twenty people.<sup>14</sup>

In this period, the emperor still supported Buddhism on some occasions. In Nanjing, he

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<sup>9</sup> *Ming Taizu shilu* 167, p.4a (2563). According to He Xiaorong, however, there were only three state-sponsored ordinations in the rest years of the Hongwu era and the interval between them was four rather than three years. See He Xiaorong, “‘Mingshi sengdao lu si’ bianwu si ze” 《明史·僧、道錄司》辨誤四則, *Qinghua daxue xuebao* 清華大學學報 21. 6 (2006), p. 106.

<sup>10</sup> Huanlun, *Shijian jigu lue xue ji* 2, p. 934c; *FCZ* 2, p.11a (223). This edict was reiterated in the first month of Hongwu 27. See *Ming Taizu shilu* 231, p. 6576. For more information about *zhenji daoren*, see Noguchi Tetsurō, “Mindai jiden no zeieki to chinki dōjin” 明代寺田の税役と砧基道人, *Bukkyō shigaku* 仏教史學 14. 2 (1968), pp. 17-33.

<sup>11</sup> *FCZ* 2, p.15b (232).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25a -26b (251-54).

<sup>13</sup> *Ming Taizu shilu* 209, p.1a (3109).

<sup>14</sup> *FCZ* 2, p.19b (240). Cf. Ryūichi Kiyoshi, “Minsho no jinin” 明初の寺院, *Shina bukkyō shigaku* 支那仏教史學 2.4 (1938), pp. 9-29.

designated five state-sponsored monasteries which, together with three other big monasteries, were given nearly five hundred *qing* of field and were exempt from both the land tax and corvee.<sup>15</sup> He prohibited monks from selling temple land, ordering that any such property sold to the laity be confiscated.<sup>16</sup> Monks other than the esoteric ritual monks were not allowed to leave the temples without permission but, the rule specified, an exception would be made if they intended to seek for instruction elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> He forbade officials to confiscate those amalgamated temples, insisting that they be left to the monks involved.<sup>18</sup>

In the Yongle era Hongwu's policy regarding Buddhism mostly stayed the same but some modifications were also made. The system of Buddhist Registry expanded to include frontier regions.<sup>19</sup> More importantly, Yongle put restrictions on both the number of both monks and temples. In the eleventh month of Jianwen 4 (1402) when he had just ascended to the throne, Yongle exempted temples which had been founded prior to Hongwu 15 (1382) and had name tablets, but asked the newly founded ones to be amalgamated as required.<sup>20</sup> By Yongle 15 (1417), he issued an order prohibiting monks and nuns from building new chapels (*anyuan* 菴院).<sup>21</sup> In the following year he changed the interval of ordination of monks from three years to five years.<sup>22</sup> In the same year, he issued an edict concerning the allowed number and quality of monks:

Henceforth, people who wish to become Buddhist and Daoist monks are to be no more than forty in a prefecture, thirty in a sub-prefecture, and twenty in a county. Only between the ages of 14 and 20, having obtained permission from his parents, is one allowed to submit his application to the official in charge. If a guaranty can be obtained from his neighbors that there is nothing wrong, [he] is allowed to enter a temple. After having

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<sup>15</sup> FCZ 16, 15b-17a (768-71).

<sup>16</sup> Huanlun, *Shijian jigu lue xu ji* 2, p. 391c.

<sup>17</sup> FCZ 2, p. 25b (252).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 2, p. 25a (251).

<sup>19</sup> For example, in the third month of Yongle 5, a prefectural Buddhist registry (*senggang si* 僧綱司) was established in Sichuan, see *Ming Taizong shilu* 明太宗實錄 (Rpt. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo, 1961-66; 274 vols) 65, p. 1b (916).

<sup>20</sup> *Ming Taizong shilu* 14, p. 1a (249). As a result, some temples that had been amalgamated retrieved independence. Examples of this kind can be found in *Jiaying fuzhi* (1600), j. 4.

<sup>21</sup> *Ming Taizong shilu* 189, p. 1b (2008).

<sup>22</sup> He, "Mingshi sengdao lu si' bianwu si ze," p.108.

received instructions from a master for five years, [he] may go to the Central Buddhist Registry or Central Daoist Registry to take the exam should he is versed in various sutras. If he indeed proves to be versed in the scriptures, then he may be given a religious name and ordination certificate. 今後爲僧道者，府不過四十人，州不過三十人，縣不過二十人。限年十四以上二十以下，父母皆允，方許陳告有司。鄰里保勘無礙，然後得投寺觀，從師受業者五年後，諸經習熟，然後赴僧錄、道錄司攷試。果諳經典，始立法名，給與度牒。<sup>23</sup>

Financially, Buddhism was criticized because of its exemption from land tax and corvee, but this situation was less serious in the Ming dynasty than preciously. It was not unusual for Buddhist monasteries to get imperially bestowed land of thousands *mu* in the Five Dynasty period and Song dynasty. This laid the foundation of monastic economy of the age. After they had lost most of the land property in the late Yuan chaos, however, Hongwu declined to help them retrieve those fields and seldom granted them new lands. The monastic economy was thus substantially weakened. In addition, Hongwu stipulated that the exemption of land tax and corvee apply only to imperially bestowed land, and that the rest of land, although exempt from surtax and corvee, pay the land tax. In Jianwen 3 (1401), further limitation was placed on monastic landholding, and it was ordered that Buddhist and Daoist monks should not own more than five *mu* of fields and that the surplus should be distributed to common people, with an exception of those bestowed by Hongwu. Under this new system, monks were exempted from corvee and land tax.<sup>24</sup> One year later in the ninth month of Jianwen 4 (1402), however, Yongle abolished this order in the name of restoring ancestral regulations (*zuzhi* 祖制).<sup>25</sup>

Yongle's policy related to Buddhism discriminated against women. When Yongle had suppressed a rebellion in Yongle 18 (1420), he ordered all Buddhist and Daoist nuns in Beijing and Shandong to be sent to the capital lest its woman leader pretend to a nun and escape. This action expanded to the entire country in the fifth month of the year. Although eventually he failed to find the woman, he ordered all nuns to return the secular life and prohibited women

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<sup>23</sup> *Ming Taizong shilu* 205, p. 2a (2109); Xu Xueju 徐學聚, *Guo Chao Dian Hui* 國朝典彙 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1993) 205, p. 5 (1615).

<sup>24</sup> Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 234, p.5a (1615).

<sup>25</sup> *Ming Taizong shilu* 12b, p.7b (224). For studies on monastic economy in the Ming dynasty, see Shimizu Taiji, "Mindai no jiden" 明代の寺田, *Tōa keizai kenkyū* 東亞經濟研究 8.4 (1924); Chikusa, "Mindai jiden no fueki."

from becoming nuns again.<sup>26</sup>

In practice, to what extent these orders were enforced varied with time and space. The system of the Buddhist Registry was first advanced in the Hongwu era in most areas, including the Jiangnan region, North Zhili, and Shanxi, and then extended to peripheral areas like Sichuan and Yunnan in the Yongle era. As for the amalgamation of temples and the grouping of monks into three schools, it seems that the further an area was from Nanjing, the capital, the less the order was enforced.<sup>27</sup> For instance, in Suzhou Prefecture which was close to Nanjing, as many as three hundred and eight temples and chapels were amalgamated and fifty seven *conglin* were preserved.<sup>28</sup> In Songjiang Prefecture, one hundred and fifty four chapels and temples were amalgamated and thirty *conglin* were preserved.<sup>29</sup> In Hangzhou Prefecture which was comparatively far from Nanjing, two hundred and eighty four chapels and temples were absorbed and one hundred and fifty eight monasteries were left.<sup>30</sup> In North China which was far away from the imperial capital, five small temples were recorded to be amalgamated in Daming Prefecture in the Hongwu era,<sup>31</sup> but there is no evidence that these policies were ever enforced in Baoding, Zhending, and Taiyuan Prefectures.<sup>32</sup> However, it is worth noticing that Shaoxing Prefecture was close to Nanjing, but no temples were recorded to be amalgamated.<sup>33</sup> Although very likely this result reflects not so much the real situation as the quality of the

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<sup>26</sup> See *Ming Taizong shilu* 223, p.4a(2203); 225, p1a-b(2211-12) and *Ming Xuanzong shilu* 明宣宗實錄 (Rpt. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo, 115 vols, 1961-66) 55, p. 4b (1314). See He Xiaorong, "Ming Chengzu Yu Fojiao" 明成祖與佛教, *Foxue yanjiu* 佛學研究, no.11(2002), pp. 206-15.

<sup>27</sup> More study about the enforcement of these policies on the local level is still needed. In addition, although North China usually had fewer monks and temples when compared with the Jiangnan region, this was not always the case. For example, *Zhengding fuzhi* 正定府志 (1752) (Rpt. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1968), records more than six hundred Buddhist temples within its jurisdiction.

<sup>28</sup> *Gusu zhi* 姑蘇志 (1542) (Rpt. in *Beijing tushuguan zhenben congkan* 北京圖書館珍本叢刊 [Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1998]), j. 29-30, pp. 414-74.

<sup>29</sup> See *Songjiang fu zhi* 松江府志 (1631) (Rpt. in *Riben Cang Zhongguo Hanjian Difangzhi Congkan* 日本藏中國罕見地方誌叢刊 [Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1991]), j.50-52. Nevertheless, thirty-two temples there remained independent without being incorporated.

<sup>30</sup> *Hangzhou fu zhi* 杭州府志 (1579) (Rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), j. 97-100.

<sup>31</sup> *Daming fuzhi* 大名府志 (1445) (Rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai guji shudian, 1981) 4, p.704a.

<sup>32</sup> See *Zhengding fuzhi* 正定府志 (1752) (Rpt. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1968), j.9; *Baoding fuzhi* 保定府志 (1680), j.29, and *Taiyuan fuzhi* 太原府志 (1612), j.24.

<sup>33</sup> *Shaoxing fuzhi* 紹興府志 (1673). (Rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), j.23.



resources,<sup>34</sup> it still reveals the regional difference in enforcing a central government order in the early Ming.

These regulations were frequently cited in subsequent generations and incorporated into the law, which remained in effect throughout the dynasty.<sup>35</sup> In reality, however, these rules were often neglected. For instance, the ruler often justified a newly built temple by giving it a name tablet.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that the strategy of limiting the construction of Buddhist temples worked rather well before the Wanli era, with an exception of Beijing which became the new capital after the 1420s. According to records, for instance, ninety-two temples in Huzhou Prefecture and one hundred and fifteen temples in Hangzhou were built, rebuilt or renovated in the Hongwu era, but this number dropped to nine in the former and eight in the latter in the Yongle period. Suzhou Prefecture was somewhat different because the number only dropped slightly from 63 to 57.<sup>37</sup> It is true that repairing those temples destroyed in the late Yuan rebellion was a more urgent task in the Hongwu era than in the Yongle era, but the fact that this number remained low until the Wanli era suggests the success of Hongwu's policies.

In contrast, the effort of the founding emperors to control the number of monks was less successful. If the rules had been strictly followed there should not have been more than ten thousand monks in the entire country. But in the Chenghua era (1465-1487) alone, as many as twenty-five thousand ordination certificates were issued.<sup>38</sup> More importantly, an ordination certificate was free for a candidate in the early Ming if he met relevant requirements, such as passing exams. In the second year of the Jingtai era (1451), however, it was decided that any novice monk could obtain the certificate if he delivered five *shi* 石 of rice to Sichuan for

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<sup>34</sup> For example, in *Hangzhou fuzhi* (1764), j. 28-32, only twelve temples were reported to be absorbed and forty two monasteries remained. Another example is Xuanmiao si 宣妙寺 which was in Shaoxing but was actually amalgamated in the Hongwu era. See, *Chenxian zhi* (1684) 6, p. 27b.

<sup>35</sup> *Da Ming lü* 大明律 (Shenyang: Liaoshen shushe, 1989) 4, pp. 46-47.

<sup>36</sup> For example, by Kangxi 24 (1685) eighty-nine Buddhist temples had steles showing that they were imperially built, and many of them were preserved from the Ming dynasty. See (*Kangxi*) *Shuntian fu zhi* (康熙) 順天府志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009) 3, pp.114-17.

<sup>37</sup> See *Huzhou fuzhi* 湖州府志 (1758) (in Luo Zikuang 婁子匡, ed., *Zhongguo Mingshu Zhi* 中國民俗志 [Taipei: Dongfang wenhua gongyin she, 1970], vols. 8-9), j. 9-10, *Suzhou fuzhi* (1693) (Rpt. Taipei: Dongfang wenhua gongying she, 1970), j. 38-40, and *Hangzhou fuzhi* (1764), j. 28-32. Given that its building projects related to Buddhist temples were much fewer than that of Hangzhou and of Huzhou, its relatively higher number in the Yongle era might be a supplement to its deficiency in the Hongwu era.

<sup>38</sup> He xiaorong, "Lun mingdai de duseng" 論明代的度僧, *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究, no. 1 (2004), p.31n14.

military use.<sup>39</sup> This marked a beginning of the notorious practice of selling ordination certificates (*yudie* 鬻牒) in the Ming dynasty, which later became a convenient recourse for the government to collect money for urgent purposes. For instance, during one year in the Chenghua era, seventy thousand ordination certificates were issued for this purpose. With the practice of selling ordination certificates, it was money that decided if a person could become a monk. The quality and quantity of monks and the *samgha* were thus out of control. By Jiajing 18 (1539), the emperor brought an end to the free ordination certificate, asking all novice monks to pay a fee if they wanted to get it.<sup>40</sup> But this is somewhat paradoxical because officially he had stopped ordaining monks in Jiajing 6 (1527),<sup>41</sup> a ban that would persist until the final years of the Wanli era.<sup>42</sup>

The Buddhism-related policy that was designed by early Ming emperors and enforced throughout the Ming dynasty had profound influence on the development of Buddhism. Meaningfully, in the entire study of Ming Buddhism, although scholars have paid particular attention to this field from the very beginning in the 1920s until most recently, many of them are still confused with Hongwu's real attitude toward Buddhism. Only recently has Timothy Brook convincingly argued that these policies nearly added up to suppression.<sup>43</sup> Also he pointed out that patronal arrangements between the throne and the *samgha*, which took place occasionally, were not a matter of state policy.<sup>44</sup> The reason for his finding lies in a shift of his attention from the policies themselves to the result they created. Although more studies are needed concerning the practice of these policies and their effects on Buddhism at the local level, it seems safe to say that the dynamics pushing Buddhism forward seriously weakened, especially in the mid-Ming period, as a result of the separation between the *samgha* and society,

<sup>39</sup> *Ming Yingzong shilu* 明英宗實錄 (Rpt. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo, 361 vols, 1961-66) 206, p.5b (4422). For the state of Buddhism in the mid-Ming, cf. Noguchi, "Mindai chūki no bukkyōkai: hidari zensei keigyō o megutte no nōto" 明代中期の佛教界—左善世繼曉をめぐてのノト, *Tōyōshi ronshū* 東洋史學論集, no. 7 (1965), pp. 189-232; Suzuki Masashi 鈴木正, "Mindai teishitsu zaisei to bukkyō" 明代帝室財政と佛教, *Rekishi kenkyū* 歴史研究 6.11 (1936), pp. 47-63.

<sup>40</sup> For the price of a ordination certification which varied over time and the major events of selling permits, see He, "Lun Mingdai De Duseng," p.33-34; Idem., "Lun Mingdai Zhonghou qi de yudie duseng" 論明代中後期的鬻牒度僧, *Nankai xuebao* 南開學報, no. 5 (2005), pp. 61-67.

<sup>41</sup> *JJSL* 83, pp. 8b-9a (1866-67).

<sup>42</sup> For a survey of Buddhism-related policies in the Ming dynasty, see Shimizu Taiji, "Mindai butsudō tōsei kō"; Idem., "Mindai ni okeru butsudō no torishimari."

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Note 11 in the introduction.

<sup>44</sup> Brook, *The Chinese State in Ming Society*, p. 150.

which constitutes the background of this study.

## 1.2 The “Institutional Weakness” in the Political Structure

In addition to policies, problems related to the political structure also had a profound, although often indirect, impact on Buddhism. Partly alarmed by the rapid collapse of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), Hongwu reorganized the political structure, and the key point in his work was to radically concentrate authority in the hands of the emperor at the cost of his officials. He further tried to maintain a balance through mutual control among the officials.<sup>45</sup> Instead of making a comprehensive examination of these reforms, the focus of this section is on his redefinition of the power structure at the central government level, with special emphasis on the ménage à trios consisting of emperors, the inner court, and the outer court.

### 1.2.1 Emperor Hongwu’s Centralization of Power

The political system which Hongwu inherited had a long history. Since the founding of the Qin dynasty (221 BC-209BC) in 221 BC, the basic political structure in China on the central government level was three-tiered, although this system would not reach its mature form until the Tang dynasty. An emperor was at the peak as the ritual head of the state and wielded supreme power in state affairs in the name of Heaven. Below him was the Chief minister (*zaixiang* 宰相) who was the executive head administering the country but was responsible for the emperor at the same time. The majority of bureaucrats were assigned to various posts which gradually formed six ministries by the Sui-Tang period. They dealt with different aspects of state affairs and were responsible for emperors and the chief ministers.

As powerful as they were, emperors were restricted in two main ways under this system. Firstly, they were expected to act in accordance with the Heavenly way which, as time passed, was “Confucianized”.<sup>46</sup> Secondly, they were not supposed to get too involved with state affairs

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<sup>45</sup> For studies on the political structure in the early Ming, see Edward L. Dreyer, *Early Ming China: A Political History, 1355-1435* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1982), and John W. Dardess, *Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites in the Founding of the Ming Dynasty* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

<sup>46</sup> By the late eleventh century, Confucianism had evolved into Neo-Confucianism as one of the several attempts to find an alternative to the orthodoxy of the age. With the Neo-Confucian Four Books becoming the basis of the civil service examination after 1315, Neo-Confucianism rapidly expanded its influence beyond the Jiangnan region, where it had taken shape, and was eventually promoted to be the Orthodoxy of Ming and Qing period China. As part of its effort to advance the human condition, Neo-Confucianism kept trying to regulate and thus transform an emperor, ranging from his behaviours to his most subtle thoughts. To justify its authority as such, Neo-Confucianism invented the lineage of the way (*daotong* 道統),

lest it disturb the chief minister's administration. As a result, the direct influence of a ruler on his officials and on public affairs was limited to some degree by the chief minister, while the possibility that the chief minister abused power increased accordingly. Therefore, it was in the emperors' interest to maximize their power while keeping the operation of the government smoothly. In this course various methods were deployed, especially in the early years of a dynasty when power remained dispersed. For example, Emperor Taizu of the Song (r. 960-976) reportedly gave his ministers large amounts of money in exchange for power that they had built up in the course of establishing the dynasty.<sup>47</sup>

Such a tendency of concentration of power in the hands of emperors reached an unprecedented level in the early Ming. Unlike the kindness and patience of Emperor Taizu of the Song, Hongwu substantially weakened the power of his ministers through waves of cruel purges.<sup>48</sup> More importantly, aiming at perpetuating his dynasty, he spent dozens of years in reshuffling the political system, particularly at the central governmental level, and refined the roles of an emperor, the chief minister and inner court elites, especially eunuchs.<sup>49</sup> The selection of a suitable heir was his major concern. Zhu Yuanzhang established his oldest son Zhu Biao 朱標 (1355-1392) as his successor in Zhizheng 24 (1364) when he proclaimed

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declaring that it had superiority to the lineage of sovereign (*zhitong* 治統) because it had been passed down from ancient sages. For the historical development of Neo-Confucianism and its complex relationships with the state, see Peter K. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008); Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); idem., "The Formation of 'Dao Learning' as Imperial Ideology during the Early Ming Dynasty," in *Culture & State in Chinese History: Conventions, Accommodations, and Critiques*, eds. Roy Bin Wong, Theodore Huters, and Pauline Yu (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp.58-82; Thomas A. Wilson, ed., *Genealogy of the Way: The Construction and Uses of the Confucian Tradition in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995); Peter Brian Ditmanson, "Contesting Authority: Intellectual Lineages and the Chinese Imperial Court from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries" (Ph. D. disser., Harvard University, 1999).

<sup>47</sup> Tuotuo 托托 et.al, eds., *Song Shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977) 250, p.8810.

<sup>48</sup> Zhao Yi 趙翼 and Wang Shumin 王樹民, *Nian'er shi zhaji jiaozheng* 廿二史劄記校證 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984) 32, p.742, had a comment on Zhu Yuanzhang's cruel treatment of his ministers. A famous story says that Zhu Yuanzhang burned most of his powerful ministers after enticing them to attend a banquet with an excuse to celebrate the final success of their insurgency. Although this is not a historical fact, it reflects how sinister this emperor was in the eyes of common people.

<sup>49</sup> See Edward L. Farmer, *Zhu Yuanzhang and Early Ming Legislation: The Reordering of Chinese Society Following the Era of Mongol Rule* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1995); idem. "Social Regulations of the First Ming Emperor: Orthodoxy as a Function of Authority," in *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, ed. Kwang-ching Liu (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 103-25; Charles O. Hucker, *The Ming Dynasty: its Origins and Evolving Institutions* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1978).

himself Prince of Wu and reaffirmed this decision in the first month of Hongwu 1 (1368).<sup>50</sup> In the first few years of his reign, he further established four rules concerning the crown prince by referring to Chinese traditional practice.

A) The first rule is that the *dizhangzi* 嫡長子 (the oldest son of the current empress) of an emperor has the priority to succeed to the throne, regardless of his capacity and morality.<sup>51</sup> This was a rule that Chinese people had practiced since the Spring and Autumn period (770 BC-476 BC).

B) In the case that a crown prince dies, his own *dizhangzi* will succeed to his privilege as the heir. So, after his crown prince Zhu Biao died in 1392, Zhu Yuanzhang arranged Zhu Yunwen 朱允炆 (1383-1402?), Zhu Biao's oldest son of his legal wife, as his heir.<sup>52</sup>

C) In the case that a *dizhangzi* dies without a son, his oldest younger brother with the same mother has priority over his other brothers to take over the throne.<sup>53</sup>

D) In the event that an empress has no son, the search for the crown prince will extend to all of the emperor's sons and seniority is the only gauge.

Although Zhu Yuanzhang followed the tradition in the selection of the crown prince, he made revolutionary changes in the fundamental framework of the central government. In the first decade of his reign, Zhu Yuanzhang structured his dynasty on the model of the Yuan, which was in turn the continuation of Chinese traditional practice. He appointed Hu Weiyong 胡惟庸 (?-1380) as the right (junior) prime Minister in Hongwu 6 (1373) and then the left (senior) prime minister four years later.<sup>54</sup> Before long, however, it was reported that Hu was abusing his power. In the ninth month of Hongwu 12 (1379), Hu was found not to have reported the arrival of the envoys from Champa as required. The outraged emperor thus ordered his arrest and further sentenced him to death three months later when more of his plots were disclosed. The authenticity of this accusation has long been controversial, but the alleged chief co-conspirators were executed with Hu as a result. Their families and friends, who reportedly numbered up to fifteen thousand, were also purged. Later, more civil and military officials were implicated in

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<sup>50</sup> Long Wenbin 龍文彬, *Ming Huiyao* 明會要 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956) 3, p.37.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 13, p.211. Cf. *Ming Taizu shilu* 103, p. 1b (1732).

<sup>52</sup> Long, *Ming huiyao* 3, p. 45.

<sup>53</sup> Zhu Yuanzhang, *Huang Ming zuxun* 皇明祖訓 (in *Zhongguo zhenxi falü dianji xubian* 中國珍稀法律典籍續編 [Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2002]), p. 496.

<sup>54</sup> For a brief account of Hu Weiyong's life, see *DMB*, pp. 638-41.

Hu's crimes and punished.<sup>55</sup>

Not satisfied with taking power back by killing, Zhu Yuanzhang further thoroughly reorganized the central government to minimize potential dangers to his descendants. The most significant step he took had two aims: to abolish the Central Secretariat (*zhongshu sheng* 中書省) and the Chief Military Commission (*dudu fu* 都督府), the highest civil and military offices, and at the same time promoted the chiefs of the six ministries and five chief military commissions (五軍都督) by allowing them to report directly to and thus be responsible for the emperor himself. In doing so, Hongwu said that it would avoid concentrating power in a single department.<sup>56</sup> To keep the newly-promoted six ministers under control, he devised a complicated system of censorship: censors were officials who were almost lowest in rank but had the privilege to surveil any officials and present suggestions to the emperor.<sup>57</sup> As a result, the central government became two-tiered, with the emperor in a still higher position less likely to be challenged but more accessible to his officials.

In addition to threats coming from the outer court, Hongwu also kept alert to dangers created by inner court members. In Hongwu 1 (1368), he ordered the compilation of a book titled the *nüjie* 女戒 (Admonitions to Women) and said, “The first step to govern the country is to rectify the family. The way to rectify the family begins with [a proper relationship of] husband and wife. Although the empress acts as the model mother for people under Heaven, they are not allowed to interfere with state affairs. As for other low rank court ladies (*binqiang* 嬪嬙), what they should do is nothing more than fulfill their duties and serve in bathing and hairdressing.” (治天下者，正家爲先。正家之道，始於謹夫婦。後妃雖母儀天下，然不可俾預政事。至於嬪嬙之屬，不過備職事，侍巾櫛).<sup>58</sup> For an empress who was in charge of the inner court, he clearly stipulated that, “[Although] as honourable as an empress, [she] is only in charge of things relevant to imperial consorts and not [allowed to] interfere with even the least

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<sup>55</sup> For a detailed discussion about this case, see Gu Yingtai 穀應泰, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 明史紀事本末 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958) 13, pp. 179-88. For a brief account of these purges and the overhaul of governmental structure following them, see Edward L. Farmer, *Early Ming Government*, pp. 79-86. For a comment on this event, see *Mingshi* 139, p. 3987. For a detailed discussion about this event, see Wu Han 吳晗, “Hu Weiyong Dang'an Kao” 胡惟庸黨案攷, *Yanjing xuebao* 燕京學報, no. 15 (1934), pp. 442-80; Chi-hoi To, “An unsuccessful coup in early Ming: the case of Hu Wei-Yung (?-1380)” (M.A. thesis, University of Hong Kong, 1997).

<sup>56</sup> *Ming Taizu shilu* 129, p.4a (2049).

<sup>57</sup> See Charles O. Hucker, *The Censorial System of Ming China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1966).

<sup>58</sup> *Mingshi* 113, p. 3505.

things happening outside the court gate.” (皇后之尊，止得治宮嬪婦之事，即宮門之外，毫髮事不預焉).<sup>59</sup> He imposed even more severe restrictions on court women from “receiving requests from outer court officials, burning incense in Buddhist and Daoist temples, performing exorcism and praying to stars.” (外臣請謁，寺觀燒香，禳告星斗之類，其禁尤嚴).<sup>60</sup> With regard to court women, he warned his descendants that “if receiving excessive fondness, [she] will be proud and overstep her position. This will cause the proper relation between above and below to become disordered. It is rare that there is no disaster in the ages when the governance is under the control of the inner court.” (恩寵或過，則驕恣犯分，上下失序。歷代宮闈，政由內出，鮮不為禍).<sup>61</sup> To minimize the effect that these women might exert, Hongwu stipulated that none of them could originate from powerful families.<sup>62</sup> In the twelfth month of Hongwu 30 (1397) when he became seriously ill, the emperor even ordered the suicide of a consort in a hope to avoid the reappearance of another usurper like Empress Wu (r. 690-705) of the Tang. These regulations remained effective throughout the Ming and proved efficient in precluding empresses and court concubines from interfering in state affairs.

Hongwu also took pains to keep eunuchs under control.<sup>63</sup> Eunuchs had a very particular position in the Chinese political system. On the one hand, they as a group were not assigned any formal role in the political system. Their sole responsibility was to offer services necessary for the operation of the inner court but avoid threatening the purity of the imperial pedigree, which both the ruler and officials saw as the top priority. On the other hand, their proximity to the ruler enabled them to influence him relatively easier when compared to court officials. Conscious of the potential danger that eunuchs might create, Hongwu made every effort to limit their effects on political life. Among his restrictions on eunuchs, four are particularly significant: Firstly, he clearly prohibited eunuchs from getting involved in politics. A story tells that he drove out a eunuch who had already served him many years only because the latter occasionally tried to express his opinion about a matter which the emperor was discussing with officials. In explaining this decision, the emperor said, “Since these people have daily intimate contact [with the ruler], even small loyalty and faithfulness on their part is enough to insinuate them into the ruler’s heart. When they [remain in the position] for a long time, they begin to usurp power and

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<sup>59</sup> *Ming Taizu shilu* 52, p.4a (1017).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* 52, p. 4b (1018).

<sup>61</sup> *Mingshi* 113, p. 3505.

<sup>62</sup> *Ming Taizu shilu* 52, pp. 4a-b (1017-18).

<sup>63</sup> See Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996).

interfere with state affairs and eventually cannot be restrained. Since the ancient age, many troubles have begun with things like these. Now [I] set up a rule prohibiting eunuchs from being involved in state affairs. [Thus, I] am determined to drive him out so as to warn the following generations [of eunuchs].” (此輩日在左右, 其小忠小信, 足以固結君心. 及其久也, 假竊威權, 以干政事, 遂至於不可抑, 自古以此階亂者多矣. 今立法不許寺人幹預朝政, 決去之, 所以懲將來也). He is also said to have set up an iron plank in front of a palace gate, warning that eunuchs would be executed if they intervene with politics.<sup>64</sup> Secondly, he ordered all eunuchs not to be educated, for a learned eunuch would be easier to interfere in state affairs but harder to control.<sup>65</sup> Thirdly, he tried to lower the status of eunuchs by preventing them from obtaining military and civil ranks.<sup>66</sup> Fourth, he ordered that the harshest punishment be applied to any collusion between eunuchs and outer court officials.<sup>67</sup>

Hongwu spent many years designing and modifying the political structure and its operation regulations. Finally he recorded his decisions in the *Huang Ming zuxun* 皇明祖訓 (The ancestral instruction of the Great Ming) and in the name of an ancestor forbade his descendants to change it in any way.<sup>68</sup> For better or worse, his reforms thus laid the foundation for the Ming government, and its unchallengeable status made it function like a constitution in the Ming dynasty. However, no regulation could be applied everywhere at all time. In the subsequent ages, Hongwu’s legacy, although with many modifications, persisted leaving profound marks on the fate of this dynasty.<sup>69</sup>

### 1.2.2 Variations Prior to the Jiajing Era

Despite his repeated warnings, Zhu Yuanzhang’s system collapsed very quickly. His rules concerning the succession were soon challenged. Zhu Yunwen, Hongwu’s grandson, succeeded to the throne as the Jianwen emperor (r. 1399-1402) after Hongwu’s death. Unfortunately for

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<sup>64</sup> Long, *Ming huiyao* 39, p. 699.

<sup>65</sup> Xia Xie 夏燮, *Ming tong jian* 明通鑒 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), dates this order to Hongwu 2 (1369), while *Ming huiyao* (39, p. 699) has Hongwu 10 (1377).

<sup>66</sup> Long, *Ming huiyao* 39, p. 697.

<sup>67</sup> *Ming Taizu shilu* 163, 1a (2523).

<sup>68</sup> Zhu, *Huang Ming zuxun*, p. 483.

<sup>69</sup> See Hucker, *Chinese Government in Ming Times: Seven Studies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969). Idem., *The Ming Dynasty: its Origins and Evolving Institutions* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1978); Hucker and Tilemann Grimm, *Chinese Government in Ming Times* (New York and London: Columbia U. P., 1969); Zhou Qi, *Mingdai Fojiao Yu Zhengzhi Wenhua*.



this new ruler, he soon faced a rebellion by his uncle Prince of Yan and, what's worse, he found no suitable generals to lead his army because his grandfather had killed most of them. In addition, his strict control had provoked eunuchs so that they kept leaking critical information to the insurgents.<sup>70</sup> Three years later, Prince of Yan won the war and established his own reign as the Yongle emperor (r. 1403-1424). Another violation of the regulation happened when Emperor Ying (r. 1435-49; 1457-1464) was captured by the Mongol army in Zhengtong 15 (1449). This defeat threw the court into chaos, leading his oldest son to be established as the crown prince. But this twelve-years-old boy proved unable to deal with such an extremely complicated situation. He was thus replaced one month later by his uncle Prince of Cheng to be known as Emperor Jing (r. 1450-1456). Prince of Cheng's assumption of the throne went against the rule of dizhangzi.<sup>71</sup>

Changes also took place at the central government level.<sup>72</sup> The abolition of the prime minister made the emperor's job far too strenuous, and finally led to the formation of the Grand Secretariat (*neige* 內閣). For example, it is said that Hongwu dealt with more than three thousand cases in eight days of the ninth month of Hongwu 17 (1384). Nobody could work under this pressure for a long time, and the emperor thus found himself in a dilemma: he needed competent persons to help him, but he feared the potential danger of promoting people with their own ambitions to a powerful position. He tried to appoint several Grand Secretaries (*daxueshi* 大學士) as his private advisors but cancelled this post three years later. Following Hongwu's example, Yongle chose seven people as his own consultants. Although given a rank under the fifth, these people offered opinions on important state affairs. The status of the grand secretary had been promoted by the time of Emperor Xuan (r. 1425-35), and an institution to be known as the Grand Secretariat (*neige* 內閣) was created. Nevertheless, the six ministers still outranked the grand secretary in status and power. Meanwhile, the system of the senior grand secretary (*shoufu* 首輔) came into being gradually within the Grand Secretariat. The grand secretary expanded its power significantly when Emperor Ying ascended to the throne at the

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<sup>70</sup> Long, *Ming huiyao* 39, p. 699.

<sup>71</sup> As for this event, see Xia, *Ming Tongjian*, j.24, Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo*, j. 33, 35; and Tan Qian 談遷, *Guoque* 國權 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), j.27, 30.

<sup>72</sup> For the Ming court as an arena of competition and negotiation which evaded the founder's legacy in many respects, see *Culture, Courtiers, and Competition: The Ming Court (1368-1644)*, ed. David M. Robinson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).

age of ten.<sup>73</sup> An author thus commented that after Emperor Ren, “The power of the Grand Secretaries made them look like the chief minister in the Han and Tang dynasties, although without the title of the chief minister.” (閣權之重儼然漢、唐宰輔，特不居丞相名耳).<sup>74</sup> The term *yanran* 儼然 reveals the ambiguous status of the grand secretary in the government structure: they began to function like the Chief Minister before, but they were not real chief ministers, which meant that they were never able to justify their power because it was against Hongwu’s designs. A vicious circle was thus created: the more powerful they were, the more likely they were charged with breaking the “Ancestral Regulation” (*zuzhi* 祖制). And the more they were attacked the more they tried to curb criticism against them, which in turn invited more criticism.<sup>75</sup>

With regard to eunuchs, Hongwu’s endeavor to keep them as nothing more than servants in the inner court eventually failed. In fact, it was said that the degree of Ming eunuchs’ abuse of power eventually exceeded any Chinese dynasties except the Han and Tang.<sup>76</sup> Hongwu first violated his own orders to keep eunuchs away from politics. Compared with him, Yongle relied more on eunuchs.<sup>77</sup> He assigned them to important positions, such as envoys to foreign countries and supervisors of armies. Also it is said that he built a school exclusively for eunuchs, in which high ranking officials were appointed as instructors. In the subsequent ages, eunuchs became even more influential. With the formation of the Grand Secretariat, the emperor introduced a regular procedure known as *piaoni* 票擬 (draft comments) and *pihong* 批紅 (writing in red),<sup>78</sup> in which the grand secretaries first reviewed memorials submitted by

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<sup>73</sup> For a short survey of the increase in influence of the grand secretary in this period, see CHC, vol. 7, pp. 286-88. Cf. Zhao and Wang, *Nian'er shi zhaji* 33, pp. 767-69.

<sup>74</sup> *Mingshi* 109, p. 3306.

<sup>75</sup> About the grand secretariat in the Ming dynasty, see Wang Qiqu 王其渠, *Mingdai neige zhidushi* 明代內閣制度史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), and Tan Tianxing 譚天星, *Mingdai neige zhengzhi* 明代內閣政治 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1996).

<sup>76</sup> See Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, *Mingyi daifang lu* 明夷待訪錄 (in *Huang Zongxi quanji* 黃宗羲全集 [Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1985] vol.1, pp. 1-47), p.44.

<sup>77</sup> Two eunuchs in the Yongle reign deserve to be singled out. The first was the legendary Gangtie 鋼鐵. A Beijing temple was named after him in honour of his military accomplishments and then gradually became the ancestral temple for eunuchs of the following generations. The other was Zheng He 鄭和 (1371-1434) who has long been well-known for his seven navigations.

<sup>78</sup> As for how eunuchs controlled the whole procedure from a memorial’s arrival at the hands of an emperor and its returning to the sender after commented by the emperor, see Liu Ruoyu 劉若愚, *Zhuozhong zhi* 酌中志 (in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 [Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002]) 13, pp. 481-83.

officials and then suggested appropriate responses by posting on each a draft comment for imperial approval. The emperor usually adopted their advice, and then asked eunuchs to transcribe the responses in red ink in his name so that these rescripts could be sent to the respective ministry for implementation. Due to a lack of strict supervision, eunuchs got much room to play for power in this procedure.<sup>79</sup> Ming historians commented on the result of this procedure as follows, “Then the *piaoni* of the Grand Secretariat had to be decided by the *pihong* of eunuchs, which made the power of the prime minister shift to eunuchs. The promotion and demotion of officials were all under the control of eunuchs. Hence, the mediocre officials were busy with meeting eunuchs’ requirements, and the few virtuous ministers which appeared occasionally worried about the situation but had no way to correct it.” (然內閣之票擬，不得不決于宦官之批紅，相權轉歸之寺人，於是賢士大夫之進退，悉顛倒於其手，伴食者承意旨之不暇，間有賢輔，卒蒿目而不能救).<sup>80</sup> Eunuchs thus became significant participants in the political arena. Nonetheless, no matter how powerful they might be, their roles in politics lacked a legal basis, just as did the Grand Secretariat.<sup>81</sup>

### 1.3 Political Troubles during the Jiajing-Wanli Era

In 1521, Zhu Houcong 朱厚熜 (1507-1567) started the second longest reign in the Ming as the Jiajing emperor. Originally a local prince, he got this chance only because his cousin the Zhengde emperor (r. 1505-21) died without a son or full brother. Zhu Houcong was fifteen years old when he came to the capital from his enfeoffment several thousand kilometres away in Hubei. Unsurprisingly, he thus faced big challenges, which in turn made court politics develop otherwise than Hongwu had designed.

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<sup>79</sup> For contemporary criticism about eunuchs’ manipulation of the *piaoni*, see *Ming Wuzong shilu* 明武宗實錄 (Rpt. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo, 197 vols, 1961-66) 66, p. 5a (1441); Yang Lian 楊漣, *Yang Dahong xiansheng wenji* 楊大洪先生文集 (in *Siku jinhui shu congkan* 四庫禁毀書叢刊 [Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000], vol.10) 1, pp.1a-b.

<sup>80</sup> *Mingshi* 72, p. 1730. For the change in the relationship between eunuchs and the grand secretary, see Huang Zongxi, *Mingyi daifang lu*, pp. 8-9. Zhao Yifeng 趙軼峰, “Piaoni zhidu yu mingdai zhengzhi” 票擬制度與明代政治, *Dongbei shifan daxue xuebao* 東北師範大學學報, no. 2 (1989), pp.35-41.

<sup>81</sup> In addition to the inner court, the influence of Ming eunuchs expanded to the local society. See David Robinson, *Bandits, Eunuchs, and the Son of Heaven: Rebellion and the Economy of Violence in Mid-Ming China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001); idem. “Banditry and the Subversion of State Authority in China: The Capital Region During the Middle Ming Period (1450-1525),” *Journal of Social History* 33.3 (2000), pp. 527-63.

### 1.3.1 Emperor Jiajing: Rituals, Daoism, and Court Politics

Jiajing's story began with the death of the Zhengde emperor without a suitable successor. Zhengde was infamous for his deeds. Although his officials repeatedly warned him of his lack of a son and presented various suggestions, including adopting a cousin's son, he paid little heed to these admonishments. Finally, when he died without a successor, because he also had no full brother, he had to entrust state affairs to court officials and his mother Empress Dowager Cishou 慈壽 (?-1541).<sup>82</sup> Since no regulations in the Ancestral Instruction were about the succession of an emperor who dies without a son and a brother, the senior grand secretary Yang Tinghe 楊廷和 (1459-1529) and Empress Dowager Cishou had to bend the rules and decided to take Zhu Houcong from his principedom in Hubei as the heir to the throne.<sup>83</sup> Zhu Houcong was only a cousin of Zhengde, with whom he shared a common grandfather, and his father was the eldest younger brother of Zhengde's father the Hongzhi emperor (r. 1487-1505). This decision was then announced in an edict issued in the name of Zhengde.

During the interregnum of thirty-seven days between Zhengde's death and Zhu Houcong's enthronement, Yang Tinghe was in sole control of state affairs. Through cooperation with Empress Dowager Cishou and eunuchs, he kept the government operating and maximized the power of the grand secretariat. He first issued an edict in the name of the new emperor, declaring correction to abuses of the reign just concluded and the inauguration of reforms. Among many steps he took, he dismissed a reputed 148,700 superfluous personnel in Beijing, drove away a host of Daoist priests, and arrested a dangerous military official Jiang Bin 江彬 (?-1521) who was executed three months later. All of these steps were widely applauded.

Unexpectedly, they were quickly challenged by Zhu Houcong, a fifteen-year-old boy. When arriving at Beijing's suburb, Zhu Houcong insisted that he should be welcomed as a successor rather than as an heir apparent. Yang Tinghe ignored this point when drafting the edict. Yang thought that the successor of the throne should consider himself as an adopted son of Emperor Hongzhi, thus Zhengde's younger "brother", so that the direct line of succession would nominally continue. Since Zhu Houcong declined to compromise, Yang and the court officials had no choice but give in. This started what was later called the "Grand Ritual

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<sup>82</sup> For precedents of an emperor's adoption of nephew as his successor of the throne, see Carney T. Fisher, *The Chosen One: Succession and Adoption in the Court of Ming Shizong* (Sydney; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1990), pp. 25-45. For Emperor Wuzong's arrangement of state affairs after his death, see *Ming Wuzong shilu* 197, p.4b (3680).

<sup>83</sup> For Yang Tinghe's life in the early Jiajing period, see Ye Shuping 葉淑萍, "Ming Zhongye shoufu Yang Tinghe zhi yanjiu" 明中葉首輔楊廷和之研究 (MA thesis, Guoli Zhongyang daxue 國立中央大學, 2008).

Controversy.”<sup>84</sup> Later, Jiajing further tried to treat his birth parents as if they were really emperor and empress when alive, but this made him face tremendous resistance from the majority of court officials. On the fifteenth day of seventh month of Jiajing 3 (August 14, 1524), many officials gathered before the Zuoshun 左順 gate to protest. This exasperated the emperor who then ordered one hundred thirty-four officials arrested and put in prison, and many were flogged. Sixteen lost their lives in this event. About one year later, Jiajing got a complete victory in this campaign and concluded it with the compilation and publication of an official history about this event, but it turned out that the aftermath of this debate would persist into the next decade.

It is worthwhile to know that this time-consuming and destructive debate was not as trivial as it appeared. During the forty or so days when Yang Tinghe was in sole control of state affairs, he had expanded the power of the Grand Secretariat to an unprecedented degree. In order to survive in the unfamiliar surroundings, however, Jiajing showed much flexibility in dealing with such violation of his authority. Despite Yang Tinghe’s oppositional stance in the “Ritual Controversy,” not only did Jiajing keep Yang in office to insure the smooth operation of the government, but he also granted him the title Grand Preceptor (*taishi* 太師). Yang Tinghe modestly declined the title, but he did not refuse to cooperate with the emperor. Together they launched an attack on imperial family members headed by Empress Dowager Cishou and the eunuchs.<sup>85</sup> After these people had submitted to their pressure, however, Yang Tinghe himself became the target of Jiajing’s attack by approving his request for resignation in Jiajing 3 (1524). Officials’ request for retirement in Ming China was a way to express their opinions in many cases,<sup>86</sup> and Jiajing had repeatedly refused Yang’s retirement before. This unexpected acceptance of Yang’s resignation suggests that the emperor had become strong enough to

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<sup>84</sup> For this debate, see Fisher, *The Chosen One*; Endō Takatoshi 遠藤隆俊, “Kasei no reisei kaikaku ni tsuite” 嘉靖の禮制改革について, *Hōseishi kenkyū* 法制史研究 (1993), pp. 398-400; Zhang Xianqing 張顯清, *Zhang Xianqing wenji* 張顯清文集 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2005), pp. 253-70; Nakayama Hachirō 中山八郎, “Futatabi Kaseichō no taireimondai no hottan ni tsuite” 再び「嘉靖朝の大禮問題の発端」に就いて, in *Mindaishi ronsō Shimizu hakushi tsuitō kinen* 明代史論叢: 清水博士追悼記念, ed. Shimizu Hakushi Tsuitō Kinen Mindaishi Ronsō Hensan linkai 清水博士追悼記念明代史論叢編纂委員會 (Tōkyō: Daian, 1962), pp. 37-84.

<sup>85</sup> For their attacks on the Empress Dowager and the eunuchs, Chen, “Mindai bukyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū,” pp. 46-67, has offered a good case study by analyzing their treatment of the imperial estate (*huangzhuang* 皇莊).

<sup>86</sup> As for officials’ use of request for retirement as a means to express their political opinions to the ruler, see Li Jia 李佳, “Ming Wanli Chao Guanyuan 'Qixiu' Xianxiang Fenxi” 明萬曆朝官員“乞休”現象分析, *Qishi xuekan* 求是學刊, no. 2 (2009), pp.133-38.

confront Yang. Yang's influence at court was further reduced by Jiajing 6 (1527). In an edict the emperor reproached his former minister as follows: "Yang Tinghe is the principal criminal. He harbours insubordinate ambitions and coerces the emperor. He regards himself as a meritorious minister who has established the state policy, and sees me, the son of Heaven, as a pupil." He continued to say that by law Yang "should be executed in a public market, (but) I treat him with particular leniency, only dismissing him from office and demoting him to commoner." (楊廷和爲罪之魁，懷貪天之功，制脅君父，定策國老以自居，門生天子而視朕，法當戮市，特大寬宥，革了職，著爲民).<sup>87</sup> The key words in this edict are that Yang Tinghe was not submissive to the emperor and violated the authority of the ruler.

Jiajing's victory over Yang Tinghe signalled his prevailing over those forces closely connected with previous reigns, but he quickly found that he had to deal with a structural problem with his ministers. In the "Ritual Controversy," a small group of officials who were newly appointed and had little connection with Yang's circle began to side with the emperor. Led by Zhang Cong 張聰 (1475-1539), they argued against those stubborn officials on behalf of the emperor. In reward for their service, Jiajing promoted them at an unprecedented pace and successively promoted them into the Grand Secretariat. To Jiajing's disappointment, however, once installed in this office, they were frequently found in a standing opposite to the emperor. To some degree this is not surprising because it was merely another instance of the structural tension between an emperor and the Grand Secretariat. As a result, the circle had begun again. Zhang Cong entered the Grand Secretariat in 1527 and became senior grand secretary three years later, but he experienced promotion and demotion several times only in a few years. Xia Yan 夏言 (1482-1548), although one of Jiajing's major supporters, was even beheaded in 1548 after having become senior grand secretary. Although his death partly resulted from strife among court officials, it was Jiajing who forced investigating officials to sentence him to death, reinforcing that "the right of mercy and penalty should be held by the ruler" (恩威當自上出).<sup>88</sup> Xia Yan's death was a sign that Jiajing had achieved a decisive victory in the war against his ministers.

In the latter half of his reign Jiajing remained the ultimate political authority. In Jiajing 20 Jiajing narrowly survived an attempted assassination, but his favourite, Concubine Duan, lost

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<sup>87</sup> *Ming shizong shilu* 89, p. 3b (2010).

<sup>88</sup> *JJSL* 335, p.1b (6130).

her life in the event.<sup>89</sup> From then on, the emperor took up his residence in Xiyuan 西苑 (Western Garden) and would not return to the inner palace quarters until a few days before his death. During the remaining twenty or so years, Jiajing confined himself to the enclosed small place and kept busy practising Daoist rituals. He entrusted state affairs to Yan Song 嚴嵩 (1480-1565) who replaced Xia Yan as the senior grand secretary. Yan Song was infamous at court, but he was loyal to the emperor and at the same time gained support from eunuchs. As a result, Yan Song stayed in that post for almost twenty years. Nevertheless, the emperor had power tightly in his hands, as evidenced by an observation that “although practicing Daoist magic in *Xinei* (i.e. Xiyuan), the emperor (Jiajing) still holds the reins of government and deals with memorials until the fifth watch of the night.” (上雖修玄西內, 而權綱總攬, 夜分至五鼓, 猶覽章奏).<sup>90</sup>

With regard to eunuchs, they were under the strictest restrictions in the first half of the Jiajing era. For example, it was said that half of court official knelt when looking at eunuch Wang Zhen 王振 (?-1449) in the Zhengtong era, three out of ten of them knelt when looking at eunuch Wang Zhi 汪直(?-1487) in the Chenghua era, and fourth five of them knelt when meeting Liu Jin 劉瑾 (?-1510) in the Zhengde era, but they did not do the same thing anymore in the Jiajing era.<sup>91</sup> In the second half, however, the emperor’s withdrawal gave eunuchs a better position to negotiate with court officials. They thus became more influential and much freer to act. An anecdote told by a eunuch in the Jiajing era shows this point very clearly: “Previously when Mr. Zhang [Cong] went to court, we bowed to him; later when meeting Mr. Xia [Yan], we looked at him equally. Now Mr. Yan [Song] will bow to us before entering [the palace].” (昔日張先生進朝, 我們多要打個躬. 後至夏先生, 我們只平著眼看他. 今嚴先生與我們拱拱手, 方始進去).<sup>92</sup> The three officials mentioned here served as the senior grand secretary in the early, middle, and late Jiajing era, respectively. Their different attitudes toward eunuchs reflect a steady growth of the latter in influence, although it might also have something

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<sup>89</sup> The reasons for this assassination are not clear. Some sources say that it was because that the emperor treated the palace girl harshly and harmed their health to make drugs for longevity. The selection of young girls before puberty was conducted several times indeed during the Jiajing reign.

<sup>90</sup> Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 52, p. 795. About Jiajing’s tight control of the court in the latter half of his reign, also see Tan, *Guoque*, j.64.

<sup>91</sup> Wang Shizhen 王世貞, *Gu bugu lu* 觚不觚錄. Quoted from Chen, “Ming dai zhong yi yiqian huanguang, sengguaan yu ting chen de lianjie guanxi,” p. 284.

<sup>92</sup> See Zhao and Wang, *Nian'er shi zhaji* 35, p.808.

to do with their personal characters.

### 1.3.2 Emperor Wanli: the Succession Issue and a Deadlock at Court

In 1567, Longqing succeeded to the throne after Jiajing's death, but his insufficient control of the court made the Grand Secretariat a battleground. As Longqing's former tutor, Gao Gong 高拱 (1512-1578) played a central role in the Longqing court.<sup>93</sup> In the first year of this reign, Gao Gong was driven out of the grand secretariat by Xu Jie, who had successfully trapped Yan Song in the final years of the Jiajing era, but he staged a comeback in Longqing 4 (1571). Not only did he become senior grand secretary this time but he also was concurrently in charge of the Ministry of Personnel. This brought him criticism because, given that the Ministry of Personnel was the most significant one among all six ministries,<sup>94</sup> this arrangement violated the rationale of balance and mutual control. To purge those opposed to him, Gao suggested to the emperor that nearly two hundred officials, particularly censors, be re-evaluated. Despite strong opposition from other officials, Longqing accepted this proposal. Finally, Gao Gong successfully expelled nearly thirty officials out of court.<sup>95</sup> However, his good time did not last long before it was ended by Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525-1582). Appreciated by Xu Jie, Zhang managed to win the trust of Gao Gong after Xu Jie was forced out of the court in Longqing 2 (1569). Several years later when Longqing died young, Gao Gong was entrusted with assisting his son Wanli with state affairs. However, Zhang took advantage of the chance of this transition period and, through collaboration with the mother of the new emperor Cisheng who we shall feature in Chapter 3 and eunuch Feng Bao 馮保 (?-1583), forced Gao Gong out of the court in an extremely sudden way and replaced him as senior grand secretary.<sup>96</sup>

In the subsequent ten years, Zhang Juzheng was in sole control of the court and became the most powerful politician in the Ming dynasty. Wanli was only ten years old when he ascended

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<sup>93</sup> Sakurai Toshirō 桜井俊郎, "Ryūkei jidai no naikaku seiji: Kō Kyō no kōka seisaku o chūshin ni" 隆慶時代の内閣政治: 高拱の考課政策を中心に, in *Minmatsu shinsho no shakai to bunka* 明末清初の社会と文化, ed. Ono Kazuko 小野和子, (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1996), pp. 27-59.

<sup>94</sup> See *ibid.* 33, pp.770-71.

<sup>95</sup> For details of this event, see Kawakatsu Mamoru 川勝守, "Jo Kai to Chō Kyosei" 徐階と張居正, in *Yamane Yukio kyōju taikyū kinen mindaishi ronsō jō*, pp. 243-62; Jiang Decheng 姜德成, *Xu Jie yu Jia, Long zhengzhi* 徐階與嘉·隆政治 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2002).

<sup>96</sup> As for the power struggle in this phase, see CAC, vol. 7, pp.518-522. For Feng Bao, see Zhang Chengxiang 張承祥, "Wangming huanguan Feng Bao zhi yanjiu" 晚明宦官馮保之研究 (M.A thesis, Guoli zhongyang daxue 國立中央大學, 2006).



to the throne, which made it necessary for the Grand Secretariat to take the major responsibility of administration. Zhang Juzheng was the teacher of the emperor and gained his trust.<sup>97</sup> With full support from both Cisheng and Feng Bao, Zhang launched a series of reforms which brought a golden age to the country.<sup>98</sup> In this course, his power swelled to such a degree that almost all voices against him were silenced. However, not unlike his precursors, his responsibility as senior grand secretary was not defined and his expansion of its power was technically unjustified. The more powerful he became, the more dangerous he was; there was little anyone could do. Although Zhang was lucky to have a peaceful death in Wanli 10 (1582), dozens of his family members were locked in a house and some starved to death when the emperor took revenge on him several months after his death.<sup>99</sup>

The Wanli court after Zhang Juzheng was much troubled by the establishment of the crown prince. Wanli got married in Wanli 6 (1578) at the age of sixteen, but the empress did not give birth to a boy for him even several years after the marriage. This became a concern pervading the inner and outer courts. Efforts were taken, including praying to gods and bringing more girls into the inner court. Then, it was suddenly reported that a court lady to be known as *gongfei* 恭妃 (Courtesan of Humility; cited as *gongfei* hereafter) had conceived Wanli's child. Finally, Wanli's first son Zhu Changluo 朱常洛 (r. 1620) was born in the eighth month of Wanli 10 (1582). However, the woman that Wanli really loved was not *gongfei* but Courtesan Zheng, who gave birth to Wanli's third boy named Zhu Changxun 朱常洵 (1586-1641) in Wanli 14 (1586). Shortly after the birth of Zhu Changxun, Wanli granted Courtesan Zheng a title of the Imperial Honoured Consort (*huang guifei* 皇貴妃), the second highest title for court ladies which *gongfei* would not get until twenty years later.<sup>100</sup>

This unusual favour alarmed court officials. Neither Zhu Changluo nor Zhu was mothered by the empress, but since Zhu Changluo was senior to Zhu Changxun, Zhu Changluo had the

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<sup>97</sup> For the relationship between Zhang Juzheng and Wanli, cf. J. K. Murray, "From Textbook to Testimonial: The Emperor's Mirror, an Illustrated Discussion (Di Jian Tu Shuo/Teikan Zusetsu) in China and Japan," *Ars Orientalis* 31 (2001), pp. 65-101; Fan Shuzhi 樊樹志, *Zhang Juzheng yu Wanli huangdi* 張居正與萬曆皇帝 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008); Ray Huang, *1587, a Year of no Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), Chapter One.

<sup>98</sup> For Zhang Juzheng's reliance on Feng Bao's support, see Iwai Shigeki 岩井茂樹, "Chō Kyōsei zaisei no kadai to hōhō" 張居正財政の課題と方法, in *Minmatsusinschoki no kenkyū* 明末清初期の研究, ed. Iwami Hiroshi 岩見宏 Taniguchi Kikuo 谷口規矩雄 (Kyoto: Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1989), pp. 225-69; Fan shuzhi, "Zhang Juzheng he Feng Bao" 張居正和馮保, *Fudan xuebao* 復旦學報, no. 1 (1999), pp. 225-69.

<sup>99</sup> *Mingshi* 213, p. 5651.

<sup>100</sup> *WLYH* 3, p.97.

priority over Zhu Changxun to succeed to the throne because he was senior to the latter. But since Courtesan Zheng had the emperor's special favour, officials began to worry that Zhu Changluo would be replaced by his younger half-brother. In the second month of Wanli 14 (1586), shortly after Courtesan Zheng had become the Imperial Honoured Consort, two officials presented a memorial requesting Zhu Changluo to be established as the crown prince. Wanli angrily said that he would observe the rule regarding the priority of a senior over a junior. This event signed the start of the "Debate over the National Foundation" (*guoben* 國本).

It took as long as about thirty years to completely solve the succession issue. Wanli was very likely not sincere when saying that he would observe the established regulation regarding the crown prince, but it was taken as a promise by his subjects. From then on, they repeatedly requested him to fulfill this promise, but Wanli invented various excuses to postpone its solution and frequently punished those who brought it up. Some important events punctuated this time-consuming process. In Wanli 18 (1590), for the first time Wanli gave a schedule to solve the problem under the condition that his officials should not bother him with the issue in the following year, but then he rebuked his officials for breaking the promise and refused to do so. In the first month of Wanli 21, he suggested granting his three sons the titles of prince at the same time, but court officials who saw through his intention to make Zhu Changluo undistinguishable from Zhu Changxun refused it. Next year, Wanli was forced to let Zhu Changluo receive formal education but refused to treat him like a crown prince. In the tenth month of Wanli 29 (1601), under tremendous pressure from both court officials and his mother, Wanli finally established Zhu Changluo as the crown prince, but Zhu Changxun remained a serious threat to Zhu Changluo until he left Beijing and took up residence in Henan in Wanli 42 (1614).<sup>101</sup>

Wanli's hesitation in designating the crown prince left enough room for his subjects to suspect his real purposes, which not only earned him criticism but also generated serious political crises. In Wanli 26 (1598), an event to be known as the first "evil pamphlet" case (*yaoshu an* 妖書案) took place. Courtesan Zheng was charged in this case with trying to establish Zhu Changxun as the crown prince, but she got through the crisis smoothly. By Wanli 31 (1603), although Zhu Changluo had become the crown prince three years before, suspicion that he would eventually be replaced still lingered in the capital. Against this background, the second "evil pamphlet" case took place. One morning of the tenth month of that year, a

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<sup>101</sup> See Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 67, pp. 1061-76.

pamphlet appeared everywhere in the streets of Beijing charging Courtesan Zheng with attempting to change the crown prince. In addition, two of the three current Grand Secretaries were accused of conniving with her in this scheme. The entire court was immediately thrown into chaos and more importantly, as we shall see in Chapter Five, it provoked vehement mutual attacks among bureaucrats which almost led the death of one of Zhu Changluo's teachers.<sup>102</sup> In Wanli 41 (1613), it was reported that a eunuch serving Courtesan Zheng was using black magic to curse Zhu Changluo, Wanli, and Empress Dowager Cisheng. Once again this created chaos in the inner court, but once again Wanli helped Courtesan Zheng survive the crisis.<sup>103</sup> Finally, in the fifth month of Wanli 43 (1615), a man called Zhang Chai 張差 barged into Zhu Changluo's palace with a wood club. He hurt old eunuchs who guarded the palace, but was caught before finding the crown prince. Although Zhu Changluo finally cooperated with his father to cover up this event without implicating Courtesan Zheng, it was seen as an unsuccessful attempt to murder him.<sup>104</sup>

Wanli's failure to place his favourite son as the crown prince poisoned his relationship with bureaucrats, which partly made him refuse to deal with state affairs. In fact, Wanli was diligent in administration in the first few years after Zhang Juzheng's death. Starting from Wanli 14 (1586), however, he refused to hold court, and the situation became even more serious two years later so that he cancelled almost all imperial audiences from then on. For example, during the twelve years that Shen Yiguan 沈一貫 (1531-1615) served as the grand secretary, he saw the emperor only twice. Zhu Geng 朱賡 (1535-1608) was the grand secretary for six years, including two years as the senior grand secretary, but he never obtained a chance to see the emperor. In addition, Wanli refused to respond to most memorials submitted to him and did not assign new officials to vacant positions. Disappointed with the situation, some officials chose to quit. The vacancies they left usually were not filled for years, which in turn increased the burden on other officials and forced more to quit. A vicious circle was thus generated.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> For these two cases, see Liu Ruoyu, *Zhuozhong zhi*, j. 1-2, pp. 437-51; Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 67, pp. 1067-68, 1070-72. Cf. Okazaki Yumi 岡崎由美, "Banreki no kaibunsho—yūkikōgi ni odorasareta hitobito" 萬曆の怪文書—「憂危竝議」に踊らされた人々, *Chūgoku bungaku kenkyū* 中國文學研究 no. 13 (1987), pp. 73-88.

<sup>103</sup> Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 67, p.1073. Wen Bing 文秉, *Xian bo zhi shi* 先撥志始 (in *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, vol. 437) 1, pp.19-20 (597).

<sup>104</sup> For a short description about the case of "the attack with the club," see CHC, vol. 7, pp. 554-56. Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 68, pp.1077-86.

<sup>105</sup> For the dearth of officials in the Wanli era, see Zhao and Wang, *Nian'er shi zhaji* 35, p.798. Cf. Wada Masahiro 和田正広,

Wanli still held power in his hands tightly even under such conditions, which increasingly caused dysfunction of the government. Wanli's cruel revenge on Zhang Juzheng declared an end to a relatively independent and powerful Grand Secretariat. With this return to the original design of the political system, however, it became simply impossible for court officials to solve the dilemma resulting from Wanli's refusal to take his responsibility. Ye Xianggao 葉向高 (1559-1627) had three chances to serve as the senior grand secretary and resolved several political crises in the late Wanli era. In a comment he expressed his frustration in that post, "The grand secretary in our dynasty is only a post of counselor, not the chief minister. One or two among them were slightly powerful, but it is because above they usurped the authority of the emperor and below encroached on the responsibility of the six Ministries, that in the end they suffered calamities. I have served in this post for six years. In state affairs I follow the decision of His Majesty, without the least bit imposing my own will. For things in the Ministries I leave them all to the officials in charge, without getting involved the least." (我朝閣臣，只備論思顧問之職，原非宰相。中有一二權勢稍重者，皆上竊君上之威重，下侵六曹之職掌，終以取禍。臣備員六年，百幾皆奉聖斷，分毫不敢欺負；部務盡聽主者，分毫不敢與聞).<sup>106</sup> An extreme story shows how weak the grand secretary finally became in relation to the ruler. When the Zhang Chai event happened in Wanli 43, Wanli did summon two Grand Secretaries to discuss it. But one did nothing but kowtow, and the other was even frightened into stupor by the angry emperor and relieved himself on the spot.<sup>107</sup>

As in the Jiajing era, eunuchs were under the control of Wanli. Eunuchs became so powerful during the period from the Longqing era to the early Wanli era that they were able to manipulate the selection of the grand secretary and exerted tremendous influence on their careers. For example, not only did Feng Bao help Zhang Juzheng become senior grand secretary, but it is said that without his full support the latter was not able to administer the country smoothly for ten years.<sup>108</sup> After Wanli started to rule independently, he cut off the relationship between the inner and outer courts and placed eunuchs under his strict control, just as he did with his ministers. He was very cruel to eunuchs and court ladies, frequently beating them to

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"Banreki seiji ni okeru inketsu no ichi" 萬曆政治における員欠の位置, *Kyūshū daigaku tōyōshi ronshū* 九州大學東洋史論集, no. 4 (1975), pp. 38-57.

<sup>106</sup> *SZSL* 501, pp.5a-b (9485-86).

<sup>107</sup> *WLYH* 1, p. 25.

<sup>108</sup> See *Mingshi* 305, p.7802; *WLYH* 9, pp. 232-33.

death and then confiscating their wealth.<sup>109</sup> And it was also said that even in the 1590s and 1600s when he sent eunuchs everywhere in the country to collect money,<sup>110</sup> the Eastern Depot (*dongchang* 東廠), the most powerful eunuch institution, fell into such a disrepair that green grass grew there.<sup>111</sup>

### 1.3.3 Cleavage in the Outer Court

Conflicts in this era abounded not only within the inner court but also among court officials, which had much to do with the ambiguous position of the grand secretary in the government structure.<sup>112</sup> In Wanli 21 (1593) when the emperor suggested giving titles to his three sons equally, Wang Xijue 王錫爵 (1534-1610; *jinshi*, 1562), then senior grand secretary, took vehement criticism from other court officials for yielding to the emperor in this regard.<sup>113</sup> To complicate things further, this was another personnel evaluation year in which the Minister of Personnel Sun Long 孫鑰 (1525-1594; *jinshi*, 1556), left Censor-in-Chief 李世達 (?-1600; *jinshi*, 1556), and the director (*langzhong* 郎中) of the Ministry of Personnel 趙南星 (1550-1627; *jinshi*, 1574) resolved to retrieve the evaluation power which had been lost to the grand secretary when Zhang Juzheng was in power. Wang Xijue, feeling the danger, first forced Zhao Nanxing out of the court through impeaching him for violating proper rituals. Later, with support of two directors at the Ministry of Revenue, Wang Xijue defeated five of his rivals.<sup>114</sup> In this year, Wang Xijue had a conversation with Gu Xianchen 顧憲臣 (1550-1612; *jinshi*, 1580). Wang said, “Currently, the weirdest thing is that common people always object to what the Imperial Court considers as right and wrong.” (當今所最怪者, 廟堂之是非, 天下必欲反之). Gu replied, “In my opinion it is instead that the Imperial Court always objects to what

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<sup>109</sup> For example, see *Mingshi* 236, p.6157, Wenbin, *Dingling zhulue* 1, p.17 and Liang Shaojie 梁紹傑, *Mingdai huanguan beizhuan lu* 明代宦官碑傳錄 (Hong Kong: Xianggang daxue Zhongwen xi, 1997), p. 196, 199, 202.

<sup>110</sup> One of the worst things that Wanli ever did was to send *Kuangjian* 礦監 (eunuchs of mining intendants) and *shuijian* 稅監 (eunuchs of tax collectors) to collect money everywhere. Cf. Zhao and Wang, *Nian'er shi zhaji*, 35, pp.796-97; Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 65, pp. 1005-1024. Nan Bingwen 南炳文 and Li Xiaolin 李小林, “Guanyu wanli shiqi de kuangjian shuishi” 關於萬曆時期的礦監稅使, *Shiehui kexue jikan* 社會科學輯刊, no. 3 (1990), pp. 95-101.

<sup>111</sup> Liang, *Mingdai huanguan beizhuan ji*, p.199, 202.

<sup>112</sup> For the factionalism at the Wanli court, see the first four chapters of Harry Miller, *State Versus Gentry in Late Ming Dynasty China, 1572-1644* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>113</sup> For criticism to Wang Xijue, cf. *Mingshi* 218, p. 5752; 231, pp. 6030-31, 6035.

<sup>114</sup> *Mingshi* 229, p. 6001-2.

common people consider as right and wrong.” (吾見天下之是非，廟堂必欲反之耳).<sup>115</sup> “The Imperial Court” here referred to the Grand Secretariat. This dialogue reveals a serious antagonism between the Grand Secretariat and other officials.<sup>116</sup>

Similar tension broke out again in Wanli 33 (1605) when another evaluation of officials came. This evaluation was under the charge of vice Minister of Personnel Yang Shiqiao 楊時喬 (?-1608; *jinshi*, 1565) and Censor-in-chief Wen Chun 溫純 (1539-1607; *jinshi*, 1565). They demoted all confidants of the grand secretary Shen Yiguan 沈一貫 (1531-1615; *jinshi*, 1571), but Shen refused to return the evaluation report to them and asked the demoted not to leave office. Liu Yuanzhen 劉元珍 (1571-1622; *jinshi*, 1595) thus submitted a memorial criticizing that Shen “is using the supreme sovereign’s power to gain his personal interest and stealing the court’s favour to win other’s appreciation [for himself].” (假至尊之權以售私，竊朝廷之恩以市德). Despite their exchange of intense attacks, Wanli put their memorial aside and said nothing.<sup>117</sup>

It was a noticeable phenomenon in the Wanli court that censors grew into an important political force. In some sense, this process began as early as 1577. Zhang Juzheng’s father had died that year and, according to the imperial law and rituals, he should immediately relinquish office to observe mourning at home for twenty seven months. He did submit such a request, but the young emperor exempted him from this obligation. Although such an exemption was not without precedent, a rumour spread at court that this result was manipulated by Zhang Juzheng who feared the loss of power. Four censors came out to remonstrate, but they were flogged with sticks and dismissed from office at the emperor’s order. As a result, opposition voices were suppressed, but unexpectedly the protesters attained a high reputation.<sup>118</sup>

The relationship between the Grand Secretaries and censors kept changing for the duration of the Wanli era. During the course that Wanli took revenge on Zhang Juzheng, the demoted censors were reinstated or promoted. As a result, a less powerful Grand Secretariat had to face

<sup>115</sup> Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 66, pp. 1025-60.

<sup>116</sup> For factionalism in this period of time, see Jie Zhao, “A Decade of Considerable Significance: Late-Ming Factionalism in the Making, 1583-1593,” *T’oung Pao*, no. LXXXVIII (2002), pp. 112-50; Kii Takashi 城井隆志, “Banreki nijū nendai no ribu to tōsō” 萬曆二十年代の吏部と黨争, *Kyūshū daigaku tōyōshi ronshū* 九州大學東洋史論集, no. 13 (1984), pp. 52-82.

<sup>117</sup> *Mingshi* 231, p. 6050. Cf. Kii Takashi, “Banreki sanjū nendai ni okeru Shin Ikkan no seiji to tōsō” 萬曆30年代における沈一貫の政治と黨争, *Shien* 史淵, no. 122 (1985), pp. 95-135.

<sup>118</sup> That Zhang Juzheng put pressure on court officials might be because of the lesson of Yang Tinghe who, as senior grand secretary, failed to control court officials and finally fell under their fire.

the censors who had been become more critical, and the conflict between them escalated. Shen Shixing 申時行 (1535-1614; *jinshi*, 1562) and Xu Guo 許國 (1527-1596; *jinshi*, 1565) were the first and secondary Grand Secretaries after Zhang Juzheng's death, but Xu Guo soon found the situation unwieldy. He complained "whenever a low-ranking official opens his mouth [to talk], no matter if he is right or not, he will be immediately considered as acting righteously. Whenever a high-ranking official opens his mouth [to talk], no matter if he is right or not, he will be immediately considered as conducting factionalism. If a low-ranking official slanders a high-ranking official, he will be immediately taken as failing to unyield to the powerful; if a high-ranking official affronts a low-ranking official, he will be immediately seen as impeding the channel of criticism because of his intolerance. How deplorable it is when society becomes such!" (小臣一開口, 不必是, 即爲風節; 大臣一開口, 不必非, 即爲朋比. 小臣百詆大臣, 輒以爲不可屈而抗威權; 大臣一侵小臣, 便以爲不能容而沮言路. 世道至此, 亦可歎已!)<sup>119</sup> Thus, when Shen Shixing was attacked by two censors in Wanli 12 (1584), Xu Guo refuted them vehemently, "Previously the imperious were the powerful and the noble, whereas now they are low ranking officials. Previously those who confused right and wrong were the base people, whereas now they are gentlemen. [The gentlemen] act on impulse and happen to accomplish one or two things. [Then they] boast of their upright conduct and form factions by calling on people who are frivolous and meddlesome. [They] are cheating on the superiors and seeking their own interests. This situation should not continue." (昔之專恣在權貴, 今乃在下僚; 昔顛倒是非在小人, 今乃在君子. 意氣感激, 偶成一二事, 遂自負不世之節, 號召浮薄喜事之人, 黨同伐異, 罔上行私, 其風不可長).<sup>120</sup> This comment exasperated censors. Although Wanli managed to defuse this controversy, the tension between the grand secretariat and censors increased, which initiated the debate about the political clique in this reign.

As time passed, this situation became even worse. In Wanli 15 (1587), a personnel evaluation was conducted, and some censors suggested dismissing the Minister of Works mainly because of his close relations with Zhang Juzheng. Wanli accepted the suggestion, but he ordered the retirement of the Censor-in-Chief, who was in charge of censors, because he thought there was clear partisanship in the impeachment. To Wanli's surprise, his punishment of the censorial office created intense criticism among censors because it was seen as a violation of the independence that censors had obtained since the Hongwu era. In the end, Wanli demoted

<sup>119</sup> Huang Jingfang 黃景昉, *Guoshi weiyi* 國史唯疑 (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1969) 9, p. 572.

<sup>120</sup> *Mingshi* 229, p. 6001.

some of them as punishment.<sup>121</sup> Later, as Wanli left almost all memorials unanswered, it virtually became a usual practice for officials to leave office once they were impeached by censors. Under this condition, censors became more powerful and aggressive than before. Moreover, as a result of Wanli's refusal to assign sufficient censors, the incumbent ones became rare resources who were eagerly courted by ministers.<sup>122</sup> Eventually, it was observed that "after the mid- Ming, censors divided into different groups and acted according to their relations with the grand secretary. Some censors connived with [the grand secretary] hoping to flatter [them] and secure [their] favour, while others who declined to do so fought with [the grand secretary]. The former [censors] were criticized by public opinion, while the latter obtained a high reputation. As a result, the Grand Secretariat became the target of constant attacks and state affairs got confused." (明至中葉以後, 建言者分曹爲朋, 率視閣臣爲進退. 依阿取寵則與之比, 反是則爭. 比者不容于清議, 而爭則名高. 故其時端揆之地, 遂爲抨擊之叢, 而國是淆矣).<sup>123</sup>

The 1593 evaluation also initiated the formation of the political clique which was central to late-Ming political life. Among these cliques was the so-called Donglin faction founded by Gu Xiancheng and his fellows after they had been expelled from court. This faction was committed to preaching the Cheng-Zhu teachings of Confucianism, but its members were concerned with contemporary politics and frequently evaluated court officials. Since most of the leaders of this faction were held in esteem, this faction became so attractive that it is said that there was no space to house the followers, many of them respectable officials who retreated from office to avoid court politics. Unfortunately, such a strong support it enjoyed among scholar-officials made it a target of various attacks.<sup>124</sup>

Other political cliques also took shape partly as a response to the appearance of the

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<sup>121</sup> Ray Huang commented that this incident "marked a deadlock in the struggle for supreme institutional power and authority" between the emperor and censors. See, Huang, *1587*, pp. 537-38.

<sup>122</sup> As for the increase in censors' influence, see *Mingshi* 236, p.6161.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. 230, p. 6027.

<sup>124</sup> See, for example, ibid. 231, p.6032-33. For study on the Donglin faction, see John W. Dardess, *Blood and History in China: The Donglin Faction and Its Repression, 1620-1627* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); Benjamin A. Elman, "Imperial Politics and Confucian Societies in Late Imperial China: The Hanlin and Donglin Academies," *Modern China* 15. 4 (1989), pp. 379-418; Ono Kazuko, *Minki tōsha kō: tōrintō to fukusha* 明季黨社考: 東林黨と復社 (Kyoto: Dohosha shuppan, 1996); Chen Yinque 陳寅恪, *Liu Rushi bie zhuan* 柳如是別傳 (Beijing: Shenghuo.dushu.xinzhishidian, 2001), Chapter Five; Hucker, "The Tung-Lin Movement of the Late Ming Period," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1967), pp. 132-62.



Donglin faction. When another evaluation of officials came in Wanli 39 (1611), Donglin members won in Beijing but failed in Nanjing. It was that year that three other factions formed among censors roughly based on the birthplace of its main members. Six years later when a new evaluation came, the Donglin party suffered a big loss under their joint attacks. In addition to the imperial court, factionalism was active at the local level as well. By the final years of the Wanli era, almost all court officials were involved in factionalism. Internal strife exhausted the energy of court officials and weakened their strength. On the other hand, Zhu Changluo died one month after he succeeded the throne in 1620 and was succeeded by his own son, the Tianqi emperor (r.1621-1626). This new emperor was interested in nothing but woodworking, leaving eunuchs unchecked in expanding their power rapidly. As a result, officials at the outer court were no longer able to withstand the eunuchs' encroachments on their power. Through "slaughtering and banishment" (殺戮禁錮), good officials were all driven out of the court in the six years of this reign, and the fate of this dynasty was thus sealed.<sup>125</sup>

#### 1.4 Concluding Remarks

No matter what their personal religious beliefs were, the early Ming emperors gradually set up stern restrictions on Buddhism. From then on, "control" and "political exploitation" became key words in the Ming policy related to Buddhism. Without denying that variations occurred in different regions and ages, the *samgha* generally retreated into a community whose connections with society were cut off. As a result, it lacked sufficient economical, intellectual, social, and political sources to keep itself healthy. Compared with previous dynasties, it was more isolated but, paradoxically, more dependent on other parts of society to support its development. Such a loss of independence made Buddhism far more sensitive to changes in politics, society, economy and culture.

Aiming to enhance greatly the weight of the emperor in state affairs at the cost of officials, Zhu Yuanzhang redesigned the basic framework of Ming government. However his design created some deep structural problems which were never resolved in subsequent ages. In this structure, ideally, the emperor was at the top of a hierarchy with the supreme authority in his hands, scholar-officials loyally served the ruler as officials and had a balance among them, and eunuchs were confined to the inner court and had nothing to do with politics. In reality, however, the emperor had to rely heavily on officials and eunuchs and the operation of this

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<sup>125</sup> *Mingshi* 231, p.6033. cf. Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 66, pp. 1025-60.

structure was decided by the interactions of these three forces.

From the top down all people were assigned a position in the system, but nobody felt completely comfortable with it. A qualified emperor in this dynasty had to work harder than his predecessors because he took an additional role as the executive head in place of the Grand Councillor. He was expected to act according to the Way that was largely defined in Confucian terms by his officials. His private life was under examination for political and moral reasons so that he was not able to decide things like which wife and son he should pay more attention to. He was not selected but decided by the birth, so nobody cared if he had capacity for or interest in administering the country. In contrast, scholar-officials had the capacity and enthusiasm to serve the country, but the “Ming constitution” did not offer them a suitable place in the system. To fulfill their political ambitions, some of them turned to unlawful ways which often brought tragic ends to them. As far as eunuchs were concerned, they were never defined as an independent force but in many cases their weight was enough to keep or destroy the relative balance in the political structure. When sought by both the emperor and officials for assistance, they sometimes got the chance to control them

Roughly beginning with the Jiajing era, negative elements in the structure quickly built up and, as time passed, formed a vicious circle which eventually led to the impasse in the Wanli court. Against this background, I will turn to examine the appearance and evolution of the late Ming Buddhist revival. The following chapters consist of two parts. In the first part I will trace how different social groups, in response to changes in the political surroundings, adjusted their relationship with each other and their attitudes toward and activities related to Buddhism. And in the second part I will examine how these fluctuations were conveyed in the *saṃgha* and eventually influenced the Buddhist revival.

## **Part I   Changes outside the *saṃgha***

## Chapter 2

### Emperor Jiajing (r. 1522-1566): Discriminating against Buddhism

Largely as a result of the unfavourable policy of early Ming emperors, Chinese Buddhism had lost the dynamics needed for development by the time that Jiajing succeeded to the throne in 1521.<sup>1</sup> Worse still is that this decline was followed by policies and practices of discrimination against Buddhism for more than forty years. This discriminating campaign was launched by Emperor Jiajing who was well known for having been enthralled with Daoism and for continuously treating Buddhism harshly.<sup>2</sup> But shortly after his reign, China saw a Buddhist revival in the Wanli era. Since the religious discrimination and the revival happened almost seamlessly, a good understanding of the former would help us understand the latter better.<sup>3</sup> Centering on this religious hostility, in this chapter I will first examine Jiajing's discrimination against Buddhism chronologically in relation to the changing political, intellectual and religious climate of the age, then highlight the feature of his acts in comparison with previous Buddhist persecution in imperial China, and finally identify direct impacts that this emperor and his ministers had on the development of Buddhism.

#### 2.1 Buddhism as a General Target

Buddhism was always under fire throughout the Jiajing era, but these attacks changed over

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<sup>1</sup> The decline of Chinese Buddhism was so telling that no scholar has shown interest in Chinese Buddhism in this period. For a brief survey of it, see Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*, pp. 21-45.

<sup>2</sup> For Jiajing's enthrallment in Daoism, see Miyagawa Hisayuki 宮川尚志, "Min no kasei jidai no dōkyō" 明の嘉靖時代の道教, in *Dōkyō kenkyū ronshū: Dōkyō no shisō to bunka: Yoshioka hakushi kanreki kinen* 道教研究論集: 道教の思想と文化: 吉岡博士還暦記念, ed. Yoshioka Yoshitoyo Hakushi Kanreki Kinen Ronshū Kankōkai 吉岡義豊博士還暦記念論集刊行会 (Kyoto: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1977), pp. 639-44; He Xiaorong, "Ming Shizong jin fo" 明世宗禁佛, *Mingshi yanjiu* 明史研究, no. 7 (2001), pp. 164-76.

<sup>3</sup> There are questions that remain concerning Jiajing's negative influence on the development of Buddhism of the age. Both Kubota Ryōen 久保田量遠, *Chūgoku judōbutsu sangyōshi ron* 中國儒道佛三教史論 (Kyoto: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1986), pp. 608-609, and Jiang, *Wan Ming fojiao conglin gaige*, thought that that influence was serious, while Du, "Mingdai gongting yu fojiao guanxi yanjiu," pp. 125-26, argued that such influence was superficial.

time in intensity, the objectives, and the ways in which these attacks were carried out. To fully understand these changes in relation to the contemporary political, religious and cultural context, I will first examine chronologically Jiajing's general discrimination against Buddhism, and then make a particular examination of his attacks on Tibetan Buddhism and nuns.

### 2.1.1 "How Far this could be from the Final Years of the Zhengde Reign"

In the first few years of his reign, Jiajing seems not to have shown strong personal religious preference. He imposed a ban on all religions, Buddhism and Daoism, Chinese Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism, and showed little tolerance to any religious institutions, practices, and priests, male and female alike. In the fourth month of Zhengde 16 (1521) when Jiajing declared his enthronement, he dismissed all Buddhist and Daoist monastic officials with a charge that their promotions had not followed the legal procedure but the Zhengde emperor's personal favour. One hundred and eighty-two Buddhist monastic officials and seventy-seven Daoist monastic officials were thus removed.<sup>4</sup> He also approved in the same year a memorial suggesting that people be punished if they built Buddhist and/or Daoist temples privately or ordained Buddhist and Daoist monks without official permission, and that the temple involved be dismantled and confiscated.<sup>5</sup> This act showed that Jiajing was to observe the Ancestral Instruction and adopted an orthodox stance which was welcomed by his ministers. In the same vein, he ordered the dismantling of Baoan si 保安寺 and the Buddhist statues in Great Nengren monastery 大能仁寺, both in Beijing.<sup>6</sup>

Beginning with Jiajing 2 (1523), the emperor's interest in Daoism began to be recorded. In the intercalary fourth month of that year, Yang Tinghe submitted a memorial in a hope to

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<sup>4</sup> *JJSL* 3, p.19a (151).

<sup>5</sup> Li Dongyang 李東陽 and Shen Shixing 申時行, *Da Ming hui dian* 大明會典 (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1985) 104, p.1578a. As for the dismantlement of illegitimate temples (*yinci* 淫祠) in the capital area, see Huanlun, *Shijian jigu lue xuji* 2, p. 949a.

<sup>6</sup> In a memorial Yang Tinghe requested Jiajing to abolish the Baoan monastery and other temples, see Yang Tinghe 楊廷和, *Yang shizhai ji* 楊實齋集 (in *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian* 皇明經世文編 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962] ) 121, pp. 5-6 (1162). Judging from a reference in Jiajing 10 (1531) which mentions the old foundation of the Baoan monastery (*JJSL* 121, pp. 9a-b [2895-96]), this temple was destroyed after Yang's suggestion, sometime between Jiajing 1 (1522) to Jiajing 6 (1527). However, this monastery was rebuilt with support from eunuchs from Jiajing 22 (1543) to Jiajing 26 (1547). This change in the fate of this temple reflected a general change in the inner court, as I will discuss soon in this chapter. For the rebuilding, cf. <http://www.bjmem.com/bjm/yjjs/showing.jsp?imgsrc=/bjm/yjjs/my/200711/W020080422492567188835.jpg> (available on June 30, 2010).

persuade the emperor from attending the Daoist service (*zhaijiao* 齋醮) in the inner court.<sup>7</sup>

Yang Tinghe aimed at eunuchs in his memorial, saying that Jiajing's presence at the Daoist service was misguided by "those bad guys who had messed up the political situation in previous years and now recklessly bring in Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist and Daoist monks to test Your Majesty." (此皆先年亂政之徒，妄引番漢僧道試嘗上心).<sup>8</sup> In his eyes, those eunuchs neither observed the rules established by the imperial ancestors nor paid respect to the views of people in the world. They cheated people by claiming that through Daoist service they can expel calamities and attain blessings. As a result, Yang Tinghe requested the emperor to severely punish eunuch leaders who were misguiding him and to banish the rest of the followers. He also asked for the punishment of Buddhist and Daoist monks who were outside the palace but conspired with eunuchs. For the emperor himself, Yang's suggestion was to stop all Daoist services and to take as the top priority "respecting Heaven and modeling the ancestors, cultivating virtues and protecting your own body." (敬天法祖，修德保身).<sup>9</sup>

A censor further compared the emperor's previous restrictions on Buddhism and Daoism with his current belief in vicious magic (*yaohuan* 妖幻), concluding "How far this could be from the final years of the Zhengde reign! We are secretly worrying about Your Majesty." (此其去正德末年復能幾何？臣等竊爲陛下憂之).<sup>10</sup> Jiajing's response was positive and showed his appreciation for their admonishment. This attitude is not surprising given that the emperor was then under the heavy shadow of Yang Tinghe, but it might be also because the censor's rhetoric touched his secret desire to differentiate himself from the notorious Zhengde emperor. Nevertheless, he did not make it clear if he would follow their advice.

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<sup>7</sup> Chinese people in the Huguang area allegedly have tended to be superstitious since the ancient time. It is hard to tell how this milieu influenced Jiajing's childhood, but his persistent devotion to religious Daoism, with its weird theories, and strange practices in search for a life without death seem to substantiate it. See Chen, "Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū," pp. 70-80. For faith in Daoist of Ming local prices, see Richard G. Wang, "Ming Princes and Daoist Ritual," *T'oung Pao* 95.1-3 (2009), pp. 51-119.

<sup>8</sup> Deng Shilong 鄧士龍, *Guochao diangu* 國朝典故 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1993) 35, pp. 614-15. For Emperor Wuzong's enthrallment with Tibetan monks, see Satō Hisashi 佐藤長, "Min no busō no katsubutsu geishō ni tsuite" 明の武宗の「活佛」迎請について, in *Bukkyō shigaku ronshū: Tsukamoto Hakushi shōju kinen* 塚本博士頌壽記念佛教史學論集, ed., Tsukamoto Hakushi Shōju Kinenkai 塚本博士頌壽記念會 (Tōkyō: Tsukamoto Hakushi Shōju Kinenkai, 1961), pp. 351-61.

<sup>9</sup> Yang Tinghe, *Yang shizhai ji* 121, p.9 (1164).

<sup>10</sup> Deng, *Guochao Diangu* 35, p. 615.

### 2.1.2 “I Fear that Some People might Satirize me for Partiality”

With the purge of Yang Tinghe and his removal from court, roughly beginning with Jiajing 6 (1527), the emperor obtained more freedom in his religious life. But he remained restrained in the first few years for two reasons: the Confucian education that he had received was still working on him, and the opposition from officials who had been recently promoted to important posts because of their contribution in the “Great Ritual Controversy” was still strong.

In the eighth month of Jiajing 6 (1527) when his birthday was approaching, Jiajing ceased traditional religious services held every year for the emperor’s longevity. He argued as follows:

If a ruler hopes to live , he cannot achieve it through Daoist service (*zhaijiao* 齋醮).

[Instead], he will get it for sure if [he] can pay respect to Heaven and stay cautious to what would hurt his body and impair his life. From now on, when the birthday of an emperor comes, all vegetarian feasts at the three inner court scripture workshops (*nei jingchang* 內經廠) and the two monasteries outside the palace will be prohibited. It is said that there will be a bit of benefit for every bit saved. Only the offerings in the Chaotian abbey should be preserved to model the sacrifices of praying (for harvest) in the spring and repaying [gods for their favours] in the fall. [In doing so], it is likely to demonstrate [our] intention to glorify the [Confucian] orthodoxy. 夫人君欲壽，非事齋醮能致，果能敬天，凡戕身伐命事，一切致謹，必得長生。今將內三經廠，外二寺，凡遇景命初度，一應齋事，悉行禁止。所謂省一分有一分益。止存朝天宮一醮，以仿春祈秋報，庶見崇正之意。<sup>11</sup>

The inner court scripture workshops were responsible for the compilation, carving, and printing of the Chinese Buddhist canon, Tibetan Buddhist canon, and Daoist canon, respectively.<sup>12</sup> The two monasteries outside the palace might refer to Great Xinglong temple 大興隆寺 and Great Longfu temple 大隆福寺 two gigantic monasteries outside the forbidden city but within Beijing city.<sup>13</sup> The Chaotian abbey was a Daoist temple which was originally built in Nanjing. When Beijing became the new capital, a new Chaotian abbey was built there

<sup>11</sup> Shen Defu 沈德符, *Wanli yehuo bian buyi* 萬曆野獲編補遺 (reprint with *WLYH*) 1, p.795.

<sup>12</sup> Liu, *Zhuozhong zhi* 16, pp. 36-37 (520). Cf. Wei Zuhui 韋祖輝, “Min sili jian dazang jingchang de shengshuai” 明司禮監大藏經廠的盛衰, *Beijing shiyuan* 北京史苑, no. 3 (1985), pp. 364-68; Chen Nan 陳楠, “Fayuan si yu mingdai fanjing chang zakao” 法淵寺與明代番經廠雜考, *Zhongguo zangxue* 中國藏學, no. 2 (2006), pp.138-43.

<sup>13</sup> Lu Rong 陸容, *Shuyuan zaji* 菽園雜記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985) 5, p. 59.

in Xuande 8 (1433) and renovated in Chenghua 17 (1481). It consisted of several thousands of houses and was the location of the Daoist registry.<sup>14</sup>

Jiajing's arguments here appeared very Confucian,<sup>15</sup> but in another account recording this event he is reported to have said, "I have wanted to say this for a long time, but I [keep silent] for fear that people might satirize me for partiality. Now in saying this to you [my ministers], I hope to demonstrate my intention to glorify orthodoxy." (朕此意欲言已久, 恐人譏朕偏向, 特於卿等言之, 庶見崇正之意).<sup>16</sup> This detail vividly demonstrates Jiajing's efforts to find a balance between the public opinion among court officials and his religious preference. He was consciously tailoring himself to match the Confucian expectation of his ministers. But no matter how hesitant he might be, he did not finally give up Daoism. In addition, the term "partiality" shows that he was comparing Buddhism with Daoism. Therefore, Jiajing's choice of a Daoist temple in this situation reveals his gradual independence from court officials and his initial support of Daoism at the cost of Buddhism.

Four months later, the emperor gave full support to a memorial requiring that strict restrictions should be placed on Buddhism. In this memorial, Huo Tao asked the emperor to reaffirm twelve established regulations, at least three of which were aimed at Buddhism: 1) making the "Register known everywhere" (*zhouzhi ce*) and circulating it everywhere; 2) prohibiting people from abandoning the household without official permission; and 3) forbidding any monasteries from having a field of more than sixty *mu* and distributing the rest to commoners.<sup>17</sup> Huo Tao pointed out that the purpose of ancestors in setting up these regulations was more political than religious, that is, they were more concerned with how to prevent the treacherous and swindlers from making troubles than with the problems of Buddhist and Daoist monks themselves.<sup>18</sup> But it is hard to know if Jiajing accepted his suggestions for the same reason.

By Jiajing 9 (1530), in collaboration with his ministers, Jiajing further deprived Buddhism

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<sup>14</sup> About the Chaotian abbey, see Liu Dong 劉洞 and Yu Yizheng 于奕正, *Dijing jingwu lue* 帝京景物略 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985) 4, pp. 184-87; *RXJW* 52, pp. 638-39.

<sup>15</sup> By "Confucian" I follow the traditional definition of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. These terms are convenient to use. In recent years, however, scholars like Peter K. Bol have revealed the complexity in the relationships of these intellectual and religious traditions, which already make it dubious to use these terms without a qualification. That I exempt myself from doing so is because I use these words here only in passing.

<sup>16</sup> Deng, *Guochao diangu* 35, p. 636.

<sup>17</sup> Tan, *Guoque* 53, p. 3369.

<sup>18</sup> Chen Zilong 陳子龍, *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian* 皇明經世文編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1962) 186, pp. 471-77.



of its reputation by removing the spirit tablet of Yao Guangxiao 姚廣孝 (1335-1418) from the imperial ancestral temple. Yao was a famous monk and the most important politician in the Yongle era. When Yongle was still Prince of Yan, Yao was the first to encourage him to revolt.<sup>19</sup> After Yongle usurped supreme power, Yao's contribution was ranked first among all of Yongle's assistants. Nevertheless, Yao remained a monk until his death. In memory of his merit, as the highest honour for an official in imperial China, his statue was brought in the imperial ancestral temple to receive sacrifice.<sup>20</sup> In the eighth month of Jiajing 9, however, Minister of Rites Li Shi, Grand Secretary Zhang Cong and others submitted a memorial requiring Yao's statue to be taken out. They admitted his great service to Yongle, but insisted that he had got sufficient repayment and that his statue should be moved to Great Longxing monastery to accept sacrifice by the Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichang* 太常) in spring and fall. By doing so, they concluded that "it will both make the rites of sacrifice in royal ancestral temple orderly and solemn and satisfy the need for the state to requite the meritorious." (庶宗廟血食之禮秩然有嚴，而朝廷報功之意兼盡無遺矣). Great Longxing temple was an important Beijing monastery where Yao Guangxiao had once resided and where the Central Buddhist Registry was held. Jiajing approved this suggestion, ordering the statue to be removed after reporting to the imperial ancestor.<sup>21</sup>

Obviously this change was to debase Buddhism, and an interesting point was that Jiajing himself facilitated the enforcement of this plan. Censor Liao Daonan 廖道南 (fl. 1540), who had sided with the emperor in the "Great Ritual Controversy", seems to be the first to propose the removal of Yao's statue. When Jiajing issued a decree to his ministers later, he first cited Liao's suggestion and then said, "Given that Guangxiao has long shared the sacrifice for his accomplishments established in the age of my imperial ancestor, probably it should not change abruptly. But Guangxiao was a Buddhist monk. [If he] is allowed to enjoy the sacrifice with

<sup>19</sup> For Yao Guangxiao, see Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, "Dōen den shōkō—Yō Kōkō no shōgai" 道衍伝小稿——姚廣孝の生涯, *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 18. 2 (1959), pp. 57-79; Kan Zhengzong 闕正宗, "'Heiyi zaixiang' Yao Guangxiao: Fojiao shiliao suo jian de Daoyan chanshi jian lun qi zhoubian renwu" "黑衣宰相"姚廣孝: 佛教史料所見的道衍禪師兼論其周邊人物, in *Taiwan fojiao shilun* 台灣佛教史論 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2008); Ishibashi Nariyasu 石橋成康, "Yō Kōkō ni miraneru min sho jubutsu kankei" 姚廣孝に見られる明初の儒仏関係, *Bukkyō daigaku bukkyō bunka kenkyūjo shohō* 仏教大學仏教文化研究所所報, no. 9 (1991), pp. 6-9.

<sup>20</sup> See Yao Guangxiao's biography in *Mingshi* 145, pp. 4079-82.

<sup>21</sup> *JJSL* 116, pp. 8a-b (2759-60).

other distinguished ministers on the side of Emperor Dezu and Emperor Taizu,<sup>22</sup> I am afraid that it is not reasonable. Although officials of rites say that [we should] observe the established regulations with awe, in reality this is not the [right] way of respecting ancestors.” (夫廣孝在我皇祖時建功立事，配享已久，或不當遽更。但廣孝系釋氏之徒，使同諸功臣並食于德祖太祖之側，恐猶未安。禮官雖曰遵畏成典，實非敬崇祖宗之道).<sup>23</sup> Such a change was politically sensitive, but in this decree the emperor showed his dexterity in handling complex situations. He turned toward Confucianism by highlighting Yao Guangxiao’s status as a Buddhist monk, which made it much easier to get support from court officials. As a result, he sacrificed Buddhism in the name of Confucianism which was seen as orthodox at the age.

This 1530 event seems to have tested officials’ attitude towards the emperor’s preference and had political significance. Given that Jiaging was then rather active in Daoist activities, it is highly unlikely that his ministers did not know that in doing so the emperor intended to check Buddhism. Although most officials chose to cooperate with the ruler, a censor was an exception and refused to do so. In the memorial he presented next month, the censor first praised the emperor for his cancellation of the sharing sacrifice of Yao Guangxiao, saying that people saw this action as a sign of the emperor’s revering the orthodox and repulsing the heterodox. Then he pointed out that *zhenren* 真人 (Genuine Person) Shao Yuanjie 邵元節 (1459-1539) was falsely favoured by the emperor and harmful to the government. Finally, he presented several ways to punish Shao Yuanjie, promising that they would “expel heterodoxy and glorify orthodoxy.” (異端斥而正道崇) Probably to the censor’s surprise, however, the emperor ordered the Imperial Bodyguard (*jinyiwei* 錦衣衛) to arrest him and to investigate who was instigating him. The emperor further ordered the Ministry of Rites to deliberate this matter, and Li Shi replied, “The cancellation of Yao’s sharing sacrifice in the imperial ancestral temple is to rectify the Sacrificial Corpus (*sidian* 祀典), while the use of Yuanjie is to pray for blessings and to exorcise evils. Since they are two different things, it is up to Your Majesty to decide how to deal with it.”<sup>24</sup> Given that the emperor’s partiality for Daoism over Buddhism in this event was palpable, Li Shi’s answer actually revealed that officials lacked the courage to defy the ruler. The censor was victimized, and the emperor gained a complete victory. In this sense, it is no coincidence that two years later those ministers were reported to have participated in a Daoist

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<sup>22</sup> “Dezu” was a posthumous title for Zhu Yuanzhang’s great-great grandfather.

<sup>23</sup> *JJSL* 116, pp.8a (2759).

<sup>24</sup> Deng, *Guochao diangu* 35, p 653.

service with the emperor himself.<sup>25</sup>

### 2.1.3 “Transforming Buddhist Monks to the Orthodoxy (*huazheng* 化正)”

Since Jiajing had obtained a more comfortable position in both political and religious life after 1530, some officials began to cater to him for their personal or ideological causes, which in turn encouraged Jiajing to suppress Buddhism more vehemently. Great Xinglong monastery was destroyed by fire in Jiajing 14 (1535). When learning of this event, a censor submitted a memorial:

When Your Majesty ascended the throne, [you] ordered [officials] to destroy Buddhist monasteries inside and outside the capital, to eliminate [unqualified] monks and nuns, and to ask all officials under Heaven to persuade Buddhist monks to return to the secular life. [You] are going to get rid of Buddhism gradually so as to bring the world back to the prosperity of the Three Dynasties. This is the heart of Heaven, which has been confirmed by the calamity of Great Xinglong temple. That Your Majesty expels Buddhism is in much agreement with the heart of Heaven. [Thus,] Heaven will assist you [with this undertaking] in secret, and Your Majesty will accomplish it without hindrance. 皇上禦極，命京師內外並毀寺宇，汰尼僧，申勅天下臣工勸諭僧人還俗，將漸除之，以挽回天下於三代之隆。此天之心也，即今大興隆寺之災可驗。陛下之排斥佛教，深契天心，天固默相，陛下順成之耳。<sup>26</sup>

This was an audacious memorial which was tailored according to Jiajing's desire. Shown above, in the early years of his reign Jiajing's attacks were on both Buddhism and Daoism, but Daoism was not even mentioned in this memorial. This exclusion must have been welcomed by the emperor because it avoided exposing the discontinuity in his policy. Also, in the previous edict Jiajing's purpose was to put Daoism and Buddhism, especially Tibetan Buddhism, under control rather than to eradicate Buddhism as this censor claimed. Finally, this censor justified the emperor's banishment of Buddhism and predicted its success in the name of Heaven.

The ways in which this censor suggested to curb Buddhism are aggressive, straightforward, but a little naïve. First, he suggested that the Ministry of Rites reiterate the prohibition of

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<sup>25</sup> *JJSL* 132, pp. 6b-7a (3134-35).

<sup>26</sup> Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, pp.28-29 (1627); cf. Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo*, j.52 and *JJSL* 174, p.7a (3787).

Buddhism and make it known to people everywhere. Second, he requested statues in all Buddhist temples to be destroyed and thrown into water and fire. By doing so, he asserted, “We do not even bother to expel Buddhist monks; they will lose what they can rely on and scatter automatically. Decades later, people under Heaven will neglect Buddhism.”(則僧人不必逐, 失其所依, 彼將自散, 數十年, 天下將不識所謂佛矣). Although this censor believed that abolishing these statues could bring a permanent end to Buddhism, the emperor was not so simple minded. He only responded, “Since the monastery (Great Xinglong temple) has been destroyed, it will never be rebuilt...the vegetarian feast held at Great Ci’en temple 大慈恩寺 will be cancelled as well.” (寺既毀, 永不復...並大慈恩寺一應修齋, 盡行革去). Given that the Buddhist registry and Yao Guangxiao’s spirit tablet had been housed in this monastery before the fire, the Ministry of Rites requested that they both be moved to Great Longshan temple, and that monks originally affiliated with this monastery be dismissed to other temples. These officials also hoped to encourage monks to return to [Confucian] orthodoxy and render obedience to the government (*guizheng conghua* 歸正從化). The emperor agreed with pleasure to reward those who were willing to shift from Buddhism to [Confucian] orthodoxy.<sup>27</sup>

By Jiajing 16 (1537), this emperor was found to suppress Buddhism in two directions. Positively, he ordered officials to enforce his decree regarding transforming Buddhist monks to orthodoxy (*huazheng* 化正). Monks were encouraged to return to the secular life. Negatively, he forbade people from renovating Buddhist temples so that they would decay naturally over time. He also prohibited children from being sent into temples and being ordained privately; otherwise parents and neighbours of the children should be punished as accomplices.<sup>28</sup> Obviously, with the command of absolute power at court, now Jiajing felt so safe that he no longer veiled his attack on Buddhism.

From a retrospective analysis, in his entire life it was in the second decade of his reign that Jiajing treated Buddhism in the harshest ways. First, this period witnessed a gradual removal of high ranking officials who had lent support to the emperor in the “Great Ritual Controversy,” and Jiajing was thus able to handle with confidence protests against his religious preference. Secondly, the influence of Daoism on the ruler increased rapidly. Jiajing was restrained in his interest in Daoism in the first decade of his reign, but it became much more intense since

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<sup>27</sup> For citations in this paragraph, see Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p.1627; cf. Gu, *Mingshi jishi*, j.52 and *JJSL* 174, p.7a (3787).

<sup>28</sup> Sheng, *Da Ming huidian* 104, p.7 (1578).

Jiajing 15 (1536).<sup>29</sup> The competition between Daoism and Buddhism was not a new story. So, it is not a coincidence that when Buddhism was suffering from crueler persecutions, Daoist monks were enjoying a rapid rise in the inner court. Two more edicts were issued to impose further bans on Buddhism in Jiajing 22 (1543).

#### 2.1.4 “Vicious People and the Bandits have been on the Same Path since Ancient Times”

After having survived an assassination attempt in 1542, Jiajing moved to the Western Garden, which he would not leave until a few days before his death in 1566. During those twenty or so years in the secluded place, Jiajing cut off regular connections with the outer court but maintained his absolute authority. He kept busy by practicing Daoist rituals for long life. All of his restrictions on Buddhism were at work, but he was in a state of indifference to Buddhism as long as it was not involved in big political or social troubles. In such a state of being neglected, Buddhism survived the latter half of the Jiajing era.

In Jiajing 25 (1546), at the request of a censor, Jiajing ordered the arrest of Dharma Master Tong 通 and the abbot of Tianning si 天寧 in Beijing. In this document to be cited in Chapter Seven, the censor first said that monks had become very active at Tianning si 天寧寺, and then asked the emperor to arrest and punish their leaders and Dharma Master Tong, charging that they had consumed a lot of donations and caused social troubles. He also suggested prohibiting people from gathering to preach on Buddhist sutras when their number was more than one hundred. The emperor sanctioned this memorial, asking the Imperial Bodyguards to arrest leading monks of the temple and the Ministry of Rites to restrict the patrons.<sup>30</sup> This order, especially its taking patrons as the target of attack, made both the *samgha* and its patrons avoid much attention by restraining themselves throughout the latter half of the Jiajing era.

Twenty years later, Jiajing 45 (1566) was witness to another blow to Buddhism. In the ninth month of that year, Jiajing issued a decree asking officials of Shuntian Prefecture to strictly prohibit monks and nuns from going to the ordination platform to preach Buddhist teachings or receiving commandants. Meanwhile, Ward-inspecting Censors (*xuncheng yushi* 巡城御史) were ordered to thoroughly examine Buddhist temples inside and outside the city of

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<sup>29</sup> A case in point is Jiajing's unprecedented promotion of Daoist Tao Zhongwen 陶仲文 in Jiajing 18 (1541) and 23 (1544), see *Mingshi* 307, pp.7896-7897. See Shi Yanfeng 石衍豐, “Ming Shizong chongxin de daoshi Shao Yuanjie yu Tao Zhongwen” 明世宗寵信的道士邵元節與陶仲文, *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究, no. 2 (1989), pp. 89-94.

<sup>30</sup> *JJSL* 313, pp.4a-b (5859-60). cf. Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p.1628.

Beijing, arresting people still staying in the ordination platform and repatriating monks coming to Beijing from other areas.<sup>31</sup> The prohibition was so strict that censors were asked to “count the numbers of both Buddhist temples and monks in their own jurisdiction, register them clearly, and check the name list at any time. In the case that a monk is not present, the abbot (of the temple involved) will be punished and set a deadline to solve the problem.”(各查本處僧寺若干, 僧徒若干, 明白登簿, 不時查點, 不到者罪坐住持, 立限投銷). These censors also got orders to investigate and punish those claiming to receive precepts but committing adultery and other unlawful things.<sup>32</sup> This prohibition of the ordination platform was connected with the White Lotus teaching that was then popular in North China and that was charged with having pillaged an ordination platform earlier that year.<sup>33</sup> A censor thus presented a memorial declaring that “vicious people and bandits have been on the same path since ancient times” (自來妖盜爲一途). After having cited several recent rebellions, he concluded that they were all agitated by sinister and seductive arts (*xiemeidao* 邪媚道) at the beginning and developed into disasters at the end. Therefore, he requested to ban traveling monks from deluding the populace. This suggestion got an echo from the Ministry of War and was authorized by the emperor.<sup>34</sup>

## 2.2 Nuns and Tibetan Buddhism as Specialized Targets

Not only did Jiajing take Buddhism as a whole as a target of attack, but he also fired shots at Tibetan Buddhism and nuns in particular, especially in the early years of his reign.

### 2.2.1 Tibetan Buddhism

Tibetan Buddhism was under fire from the very beginning of Jiajing’s reign, and these attacks lasted for at least twenty years. In the third month of Jiajing 1 (1522), Jiajing decreed that the property of Qi Ruizhu 齊瑞竹 at Great Nengren monastery 大能仁寺 be confiscated and that Buddhist statues in the Yuanming palace 元明宮 be destroyed. As a result, more than one thousand taels of gold bits were scraped from those statues and given to merchants to pay

<sup>31</sup> *JJSL*, 562, p.5a-b. cf. Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p.1628

<sup>32</sup> Shen, *Daming huidian* 104, p.1578.

<sup>33</sup> Tan, *Guoque* 64, p. 4030.

<sup>34</sup> *JJSL* 562, pp.5a-5b. cf. Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p.1628. This ban on the ordination platform was Jiajing’s last restriction of Buddhism, but it was one of most negative legacies he left to Buddhism which would last over fifty years after his death.

arrears. Qi Ruizhu was a monk whom the Zhengde emperor had granted jade and gold imperial seals (*yuxi* 玉璽) as well as other valuables.<sup>35</sup> Great Nengren monastery was originally Nengren monastery built in the Yuan dynasty but got the present name after a renovation project in 1425. In the first half of the Ming, it housed a large number of *fanseng* 番僧 (foreign monks), a term mainly referring to Tibetan monks. Together with Great Ci'en monastery 大慈恩寺 and Great Longshan huguo monastery 大隆善護國寺 which also had many *fanseng*, they were called Beijing's three great Buddhist monasteries.<sup>36</sup>

Both Great Nengren monastery and Qi Ruizhu were related to Tibetan Buddhism, and this was an important reason for Jiajing to act against them. Tibetan Buddhist monks were important for maintaining the peace in Tibetan contact regions. Accordingly, in the early years of the Ming dynasty, the presence of Tibetan Buddhism at the Ming court was limited to the minimum degree sufficient to keep the western frontier safe.<sup>37</sup> Yongle had some real interest in Tibetan Buddhism and bestowed many titles to Tibetan monks, but he never forgot to send those monks back after giving them awards. By the Xuande era (1426-1435), however, Tibetan monks were allowed to stay in the capital rather than needing to return to Tibet as before.<sup>38</sup>

The growing interest of Ming emperors in Tibetan Buddhism gave Tibetan monks a privileged position, as evidenced by the jade and gold seals granted to Qi Ruizhu.<sup>39</sup> According to the Ming Code, only Tibetan monks who had administrative responsibilities could be given seals, and those Tibetan monks in Beijing had only honourable titles without jurisdiction.<sup>40</sup> In reality, however, Ming emperors frequently overruled this regulation to patronize their favoured

<sup>35</sup> See Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p.1626; Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 52, p. 783.

<sup>36</sup> See Toh, "Tibetan Buddhism in Ming China"; Chen Nan, "Lun mingdai liujing zang seng de shehui gongyong" 論明代留京藏僧的社會功用, in *Zhongyang minzu daxue xuebao* 中央民族大學學報, no.5 (2008), pp. 19-25; Idem. *Mingdai Daci fawang yanjiu* 明代大慈法王研究 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2005); Ryūchi, "Mindai pekin ni okeru rama kyōdan" 明代北京に於ける喇嘛教團, *Bukkyō kenkyū* 佛教研究 4. 6 (1941), pp. 65-76.

<sup>37</sup> See Chen Nan, "Mingchu 'guanxing zhaoyu' zhizang fangce tangjiu" 明初"廣行招諭"治藏方策探究, *Zhongyang minzu daxue xuebao* 中央民族大學學報, no. 4 (2006), pp. 55-65.

<sup>38</sup> See Chen Nan, "Shijiayeshi zai nanjing, wutai shan ji qi yu Ming Chengzu guanxi shishi kaoshu" 釋迦也失在南京·五臺山及其與明成祖關係史實考述, *Xizang yanjiu* 西藏研究, no. 3 (2004), pp. 99-106.

<sup>39</sup> For the relationship between Ming emperors and Tibetan Buddhism, see Satō Hisashi, "明廷におけるラム教崇拝について", *Ōryō shigaku* 鷹陵史學 8. 2 (1982), pp.109-38; He Xiaorong, "Mingdai huangdi chongfeng zangchuan fojiao qianxi" 明代皇帝崇奉藏傳佛教淺析, *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 中國史研究, no. 4 (2005), pp. 119-37.

<sup>40</sup> *Ming Xianzong shilu* 明憲宗實錄 (Rpt. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo; 293 vols) 179, p.5b (3224). As for the seals granted to Tibetan monks, cf. *WLYH* 27, p. 682.

Tibetan monks, and later it even became a regular practice for monks with the titles Dharma King (*fawang* 法王), Son of Buddha (*fozi* 佛子), and Great Master of the State (*da guoshi* 大國師) to obtain gold seals.<sup>41</sup> In addition, Ming emperors gave Tibetan monks fields and tenants.<sup>42</sup>

With the increase in the influence of Tibetan monks, some Chinese people were attracted to learn Tibetan Buddhism and became Tibetan monks. Beginning with Zhengtong 14 (1449), a special test was announced for those who wished to be ordained as Tibetan monks.<sup>43</sup> In Chenghua 2 (1466), the number of the ordination certificates for Tibetan monks amounted to 3,400,<sup>44</sup> but the government lacked a clear policy regarding how to deal with Chinese people taking the test under a Tibetan name.<sup>45</sup> By Hongzhi 13 (1500), this situation finally changed when it was stipulated that all Chinese people learning Tibetan Buddhism be sent back to their native places, without consideration if they had received the ordination certificates, and that a Chinese person be exiled to a frontier to do military service if he pretended to be a Tibetan person.<sup>46</sup> In the Zhengde reign, although many Tibetan monks were reported actually to be Chinese, the emperor still gave a Tibetan Dharma King three thousand ordination certificates and allowed him to choose his disciples at will.<sup>47</sup>

Dissatisfaction of court officials with Tibetan monks accordingly grew and reached the highest point by the Zhengde era. The Zhengde emperor was enthralled with Tibetan Buddhism and threw the court into disorder. For example, this emperor declared himself to be the Dharma King of Daqing 大慶 out of a belief that he was the reincarnation of a god of Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>48</sup> He declined to reside in traditional palaces. Instead, he resided in a building called Baofang 豹房, where he was said to commit unorthodox sexual acts with Tibetan monks. So, these monks were expelled from the inner court immediately after the emperor died.<sup>49</sup>

Jiajing's punishment of Qi Ruizhu and destroying of Buddhist statues demonstrated his political wisdom. On the one hand, these acts could be seen as a political declaration to distinguish him from the Zhengde emperor and to please his ministers. On the other hand, the

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<sup>41</sup> *Ming Xianzong shilu* 260, p.3b-4b (4392-94). As for the title granted to Tibetan monks, cf. *WLYH* 27, p. 684-85.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, *Ming xianzong shilu* 50, 7b-8a (1028-29), *Mingshi* 184, p. 4885, and *Ming Wuzong shilu* 99, p. 5b (2068).

<sup>43</sup> *Ming Yingzong shilu* 177, p. 10a (3425).

<sup>44</sup> *Ming Xianzong shilu* 273, p. 6b (4607).

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, *ibid.* 59, p. 6b (1210); 260, p. 4b (4394); 273, p. 6b (4607).

<sup>46</sup> *Da Ming huidian* 104, p.1578.

<sup>47</sup> *Ming Wuzong shilu* 106, p. 3b (2172).

<sup>48</sup> Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p. 1626a.

<sup>49</sup> *Mingshi* 307, p. 7887, 7891; 331, pp. 8578-79.



choice of Qi Ruizhu as an object of punishment was clever because this monk was very likely not a genuine Tibetan monk but a so-called *xitian seng* 西天僧 (monks of west heaven). *Xitian seng* referred to Chinese people who learned Tibetan Buddhism and were ordained as Tibetan monks.<sup>50</sup> These monks took Great Nengren monastery as their base.<sup>51</sup> Judging from his surname, it is highly possible that Qi Ruizhu was Chinese. *Xitian seng* were lower than *fanseng* in both political and religious importance. Thus, choosing a *xitian seng* rather than a *fanseng* to punish probably was a tactful act: it gave a warning to Chinese people who intended to become Tibetan monks but avoided offending *fanseng* directly.

When Great Xinglong monastery was ruined by fire in Jiajing 14 (1535), Jiajing's treatment further revealed his disfavour for Tibetan Buddhism. First built in 1165, this monastery became the best monastery in the capital after a seven-year rebuilding starting in Zhiyuan 12 (1276). It was then called (Great) Qinshou si 慶壽寺. In the Zhengtong era (1436-49), it was rebuilt again and renamed as Great Xinglong monastery. Emperor Yingzong granted it a name plaque reading *diyi conglin* 第一叢林 (the first Buddhist monastery).<sup>52</sup> This monastery quickly became one of the most important bases for Tibetan monks in Beijing in the Ming dynasty and got many rewards from emperors.<sup>53</sup> In Jiajing 14 when this monastery was ruined by fire, Jiajing's first response was to prohibit it from being repaired.<sup>54</sup> In addition, he was generously supportive of monks there who were willing to return to secular life, promising to give them the land of the temple and to exempt them from labour tax and corvee for six years. In doing so, obviously he was to weaken the economic basis of the temple and to entice monks to abandon it. Therefore, some people even believed that the burning of this monastery was a conspiracy in which the emperor was involved. Seven years later in the third month of 1543, some monks from the western region (*xiyu* 西域) were found living at the former site of this temple.<sup>55</sup> Jiajing felt that the site was close to the inner court and that the foreign monks were

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<sup>50</sup> It was Zhi Guang 智光, one of the most important Tibetan monks in the Ming dynasty, founded the *Xitian* tradition in the Yongle era. See Chen Nan, "Dazhi Fawang Kao" 大智法王考, *Zhongguo zangxue* 中國藏學, no. 4 (1996), pp. 68-83.

<sup>51</sup> Du, "Mingdai Gongting Yu Fojiao Guanxi Yanjiu," p.114.

<sup>52</sup> *Mingshi* 164, p. 4457.

<sup>53</sup> For example, in Zhengde 8 (1513), Emperor Wu ordered Ministry of Work to repair it with the aid of more than 3,000 soldiers. See *Wuzong shilu* 99, p. 2b (2062).

<sup>54</sup> Against Jiajing's order, however, this monastery would be rebuilt at least twice, one in the Chongzhen reign and the other in the Qianlong reign.

<sup>55</sup> When recording the same event, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p.1628, misses a character and says it was Daci rather than great Ci'en monastery.

evil and filthy (邪穢), so he ordered officials to drive the monks away.<sup>56</sup>

Jiajing brought down another heavy blow on Tibetan Buddhism in Jiajing 15 (1536). In the fourth month of this year, the emperor told the Ministry of Rites that he wanted to dismantle a Buddhist hall in the inner court and build two palaces on the site. His plan got full support. This hall was called the Dashan hall 大善殿. First built in the Yuan dynasty, this hall had gold and silver Buddhist statues, as well as gold and silver cases which stored relics of Buddha's bone, head, and teeth.<sup>57</sup> The two palaces referred to Ciqing 慈慶 and Cining 慈寧.<sup>58</sup> Next month, Jiajing invited some officials into the inner court to look over the Dashan hall.<sup>59</sup> Minister of Rites Xia Yan said that those bones, teeth, and skulls were not genuine the Buddha relics but bones used by the foreign monks to defraud Chinese believers.<sup>60</sup> He suggested burying them in the wild fields, but the emperor declined it saying that the relics might be dug out by people who considered them sacred. In order to get rid of them permanently, Xia Yan thus suggested burning them in public at the Datong bridge 大通橋.<sup>61</sup> Jiajing agree,<sup>62</sup> and finally one hundred and sixty nine Buddhist statues were destroyed and more than thirty thousand *jin* 斤 of relics were burn.<sup>63</sup>

Unlike the passive role that he played in the 1522 event, Jiajing actively led the 1536 purge aimed at Buddhism. He first required the Buddhist hall to be destroyed and then ordered the relics to be burned rather than buried lest anything more than ash to be left to those he called gullible people. What drove Jiajing to do so? The first key lies in the statues and bones. Xia Yan called them filthy statues (*huixiang* 穢像) which had extraordinary forms (*guiyi zhi xing* 詭異

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 134, p. 1628.

<sup>57</sup> *SZSL* 187, pp. 4b-5a (3956-57); Huanlun, *Shijian jigou lüe xueji* 3, p. 945b.

<sup>58</sup> Gu, *Mingshi jishi* 52, p. 785. Xu, *Guochao dianhui* j. 134.

<sup>59</sup> It is not clear in *JJSL* if there was still a building on it at that time, but *Guochao dianhui* suggests that the hall had been destroyed.

<sup>60</sup> Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p. 1627.

<sup>61</sup> Yu Shenxing 于慎行, *Gushan bichen* 穀山筆塵 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997) 17, p. 197. The Datong bridge was located in the southwest of Beijing and marked the north end of the Grand Canal which connected the capital with the Jiangnan region. There were monastic markets nearby. Therefore, it must have been very busy and thus a good place to get around Jiajing's prohibition of Buddhism even to the Jiangnan region.

<sup>62</sup> This is what recorded in *JJSL* and *Guochao dianhui*. But according to *Mingshi jishi benmo* 52, p. 785, it was Jiajing who said that those relics should destroyed in public.

<sup>63</sup> *JJSL* 187, pp. 4-5. Besides the bones, *Guochao dianhui* also mentions that Xia Yan suggested to destroy *jinyingtongjiang* 金銀銅匠 (goldsmith, silversmith, and coppersmith), but it is hard to understand what these words meant.

之形).<sup>64</sup> In another record, the author made it clear that these statues featured obscene sexual acts of gods and ghosts (象神鬼淫褻之狀). Obviously, they were not conventional Buddhist statues with which Chinese people were familiar, but what is called the “happiness god” (*xishen* 喜神) coming from Tibetan Buddhism. This kind of statue had appeared during the Yuan inner court, and an author clearly pointed out that although different in names, they were all closely related to sex.<sup>65</sup> As for the bones, they were not necessary relics or bone remains of monks. There are records about some Tibetan monks in the Ming who stole skulls from tombs nearby the capital and used them to defraud commoners. Therefore, when Jiajing declared that a wise man would consider these things as evil and filthy (*xiehui* 邪穢) and declined to even have a look at them, he was distinguishing himself from those “gullible people.” In this sense, his rebuke was more out of moral concern and cultural bias than political need. In fact, he had previously destroyed some “happiness gods” in Great Cien monastery in the first month of Jiajing 10 (1531).<sup>66</sup> So, it is no coincidence that this act was hailed by some as an elimination of the evil and filthy in the inner court.<sup>67</sup>

### 2.2.2 “Nuns are Different from Buddhist and Daoist Monks”

In addition to Tibetan monks, nuns were another target discriminated against by Emperor Jiajing because they “are harmful to the social morals.” It was recorded that in the twelve month of Jiajing 6 (1527),

Minster of Rites Fang Xianfu and others said, “Buddhist and Daoist nuns are harmful to social morals. They should be sent back [to their native places] to marry people so as to produce more population. For the elders, give them suitable maintenance and let them live with their relatives. The chapels and cloisters where they live should be demolished and sold, and the imperially bestowed sutras and imperial decrees of protection be taken back. [In addition], imperial family members should be admonished not to ordain [nuns?] privately”. A decree came sanctioning all of their suggestions. ...The emperor again told Xianfu, “Huo Tao is really right when he recently said that the flourishing of Buddhism and

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<sup>64</sup> Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p.1627.

<sup>65</sup> These statues were still preserved in the Ming inner court to teach young emperors about sex before they got married. See Yu, *Gushan bichen* 17, p. 200.

<sup>66</sup> *JJSL* 121 p.8-9. *Ming huiyao* 75, p.1464, says what destroyed was the great Cien monastery, but it cannot be substantiated.

<sup>67</sup> Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p.1627.

Daoism is [the sign] of the decline of kingly rule. Now, I order officials to check Buddhist and Daoist monks who have no certifications. From now on, it is not allowed to ordain [monks] and privately found Buddhist and Daoist temples. Violators will all be punished without exception.” 禮部尚書方獻夫等言尼僧道姑有傷風化，欲將見在者發回改嫁以廣生聚，年老者量給養贍，依親居住。其菴寺拆毀變賣，敕賜尊經護敕等項追奪，戒諭勳戚之家不得私度。詔悉如其言...上復諭獻夫曰：“昨霍韜言‘僧道盛者，王政之衰也，’所言良是。今天下<sup>68</sup> 僧道無<sup>69</sup>度牒者，其令有司盡爲查革。自今不許開度及私創寺觀。犯者罪無赦。”<sup>70</sup>

According to this account, Jiajing sanctioned Fang Xianfu’s memorial asking both Buddhist and Daoist nuns to be sent back to marry people. However, in another account only Buddhist nuns were the object of prohibition but Daoist nuns were exempted.<sup>71</sup> As a result, more than six hundred nunneries were destroyed in Beijing.<sup>72</sup>

Jiajing obviously agreed with Fang’s accusation that Buddhist and Daoist nuns were harmful to the social morality.<sup>73</sup> In the same memorial, Fang suggested that Huanggu baoming nunnery 皇姑保明寺 be set aside to accommodate old nuns whose nunneries had been destroyed and had nowhere to go. But the emperor insisted that all nunneries be destroyed without exception. Very clearly, he explained that it was because “nuns are different from Buddhist and Daoist monks in that that they are more harmful to morals, and [because] nunneries are different from Buddhist and Daoist temples.” (尼僧與僧道不同，風俗之壞者甚

<sup>68</sup> The *Shizong baoxun* lacks the sentences from “僧道盛者” to “今天下,” which makes it unclear whether the following sentences are Jiajing’s order or Huo Tao’s suggestion.

<sup>69</sup> 無 is missing in *Guochao dianhui* 134, pp.1626-27.

<sup>70</sup> For Jiajing’s order, although *Mingshi* and *JJSL* both include “check and abrogate monks and Daoists who had no ordination certifications,” *Mingshi* has no reference concerning the permanent prohibition of ordination and privately founding of Buddhist and Daoist temples. Instead, it says that Jiajing approved Huo Tao’s suggestion destroy the privately founded temples. Cf. *Mingshi* 196, p. 5189.

<sup>71</sup> Tan, *Guoque* 53, p.3369. This point could be substantiated by other evidence. For example, see Zhang, *Xiyuan wenjian lu* 105, p. 28 (400) and *Nanhai xianzhi* 南海縣志 (1687) (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe), j. 11.

<sup>72</sup> Zhang, *Xiyuan wenjian lu* 105, p. 28 (400), and Huo Tao 霍韜, *Huo Wenmin Gong Quan Ji* 霍文敏公全集 (10vols; Rpt. Nanhai: Shitou shuyuan, 1862), j. 7. But this large-scale destruction cannot be substantiated. For example, Chen, “Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū,” p.152, located only one instance in the entire North Zhili where Beijing existed.

<sup>73</sup> Soon thereafter, Fang Xianfu further claimed that the royal ancestors (*zuzong*) had prohibited nuns from being ordained. The “royal ancestor,” according to the context, refers to the Yongle emperor.

之，而尼僧寺與僧寺道觀又不同).<sup>74</sup> Huanggu baoming nunnery was central to the religious life in the Ming inner court, and many of its followers and patrons were royal family members and eunuchs. Jiajing was eager to destroy this nunnery and scatter its nuns, for he thought it was the root (*gen* 根) of all other nunneries. To the emperor's disappointment, however, it turned out that Huanggu baoming nunnery was strongly backed by two empress dowagers, including his own mother, and he finally had to countermand the dismantling of this nunnery under their pressure. Over this affair Jiajing once complained to a minister, saying that things like this were really detrimental to the governance and the transformation of people (此等委傷陰陽治化).<sup>75</sup>

This event reveals that Jiajing discriminated against Buddhist nuns mainly because of their religious belief and their gender.<sup>76</sup> This comes as no surprise if we recall that at that time the emperor and his ministers were in a Confucian style debate about Rites. Seen from a broader view, it reflects a deteriorating situation faced by Buddhist nuns. The ordination of Chinese women as nuns can be traced back to the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420). By Kaiyuan 24 of the Tang dynasty (736), there were over fifty thousand nuns who, unbelievably, comprised 40 percent of Buddhist priests.<sup>77</sup> Their population reached the highest point in Tianxi 5 of the Song dynasty (1021) but their percentage of the entire number of Buddhist priests fell to around 14. After that, both the percentage and number of nuns kept falling. This continuous decline in

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<sup>74</sup> WLYH, 27, p. 685.

<sup>75</sup> A detailed recounting of the whole event is still available in *JJSL* and *Daming Shizong su huangdi baoxun* 大明世宗肅皇帝寶訓 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo, 1967), most part of the two identical. Some scholars have argued that Jiajing's failure showed that the protecting power of Buddhism was very strong in the inner court. Chen Yunü shifted the focus from the result to the motivation driving the emperor to carry out such a campaign, aptly pointing out that it was part of his attacks against the privileged interest group which was left from the previous ages and represented by Empress Dowager Zhaosheng 肇聖, Jiajing's auntie. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that by Jiajing 6 the emperor had placed his rule, at least he thought, on a rather stable base. This point can be seen from his confidence in eliminating Yang Tinghe and re-registering imperial estates near the capital (*huangzhuang* 皇莊) in the same year. So, although it is true that Jiajing did not confront his aunt directly until five years later by putting her brother in prison, it does not necessarily mean that he was not able to sustain her pressure. Instead, his yielding was very likely a result of his reluctance to defy his mother and her aunt. Nevertheless, this event really reflects the strong support Buddhism enjoyed in the inner court.

<sup>76</sup> Prof. Brook has reminded me of the economic factors behind this suppression of Buddhist nuns, and I will make a more detailed study on this problem later. For the political and religious significance in this event, see Chen Yunü, "Min Kasei shoki ni okeru gireiha seiken to bukyō shukusei—"Kōkoji jiken" o kōsatsu no chūshin ni shite" 明嘉靖初期における議禮派政權と仏教肅正—「皇姑寺事件」を考察の中心にして, *Kyūshūdaigaku tōyōshi ronshū* 九州大學東洋史論集, no. 23 (1995), pp.1-37, and T. S. Li and S. Naquin, "The Baoming Temple: Religion and the Throne in Ming and Qing China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48, no. 1 (1988), pp. 131-88.

<sup>77</sup> See *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), j.43.

the situation of nuns had much to do with the Confucianization of society during late imperial China. Against this background, it is easier to understand why this decree would be reissued sixteen years later on the request of the Ministry of Rites. On the latter situation, Buddhist nuns were singled out as the only object of prohibition; Daoist nuns were exempt.<sup>78</sup>

### 2.3 Significance and Characteristics of Jiajing's Discrimination against Buddhism

To sum up, Jiajing's harsh treatment of Buddhism in his forty-five-year reign included: 1) prohibiting people from ordaining monks privately; 2) ordering nuns to be sent back to their homes and to marry people; 3) placing a ban on the gathering of monks inside and outside the capital, and arresting some of them; 4) depreciating eminent monks like Yao Guangxiao; 5) emphasizing the ordination certificate as the only legal document of monks and driving those without it back to secular life; 6) destroying Buddhist monasteries, particularly nunneries, and confiscating them; 7) forbidding people to build or renovate Buddhist temples so that they would disappear naturally over time; 8) dismantling Buddhist statues, especially those related to Tibetan Buddhism; 9) burning a large amount of Buddhist relics and bones in public; 10) closing the ordination platform.

Jiajing changed the religious milieu in the inner court. Tibetan Buddhism had been amassing momentum in the inner court since the early Ming, but Jiajing virtually brought its popularity to an end at the Ming court.<sup>79</sup> After that, Tibetan Buddhism still lingered in Beijing but would not be able to enter the inner court until the early Qing.<sup>80</sup> With regard to Daoism, Jiajing placed it in a better position in the inner court. An intriguing case in point is the Huanggu nunnery again. This Buddhist nunnery gained vitality after escaping destruction, but from then on it was trying to have more Daoist flavour. For example, Daoist elements came to dominate over Buddhist ones in its *baojuan* 寶卷 (precious scripture) edited after that event. Daoist deities were erected near Buddhist statues to receive worship from Buddhist nuns, and Buddhist

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<sup>78</sup> Xu, *Guochao dianhui* 134, p.1628a.

<sup>79</sup> *Mingshi* 331, p.8579. Cf. Chen Nan, "Mingdai zangchuan fojiao dui neidi de yingxiang" 明代藏傳佛教對內地的影響, *Zhongguo zangxue* 中國藏學, no. 4 (1998), pp. 45-60.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Sano Tomoko 佐野智子, "Kaette Kita Shikimoku Jin——Mindai Kotei Kenryoku to Pekin Juntentu No Chibetto Bukkyō 帰ってきた色目人—明代皇帝権力と北京順天府のチベット仏教," *Yokohama ichiritsu daigaku ronsō jinbunkagaku keiretsu* 横浜市立大學論叢: 人文科學系列 51.1 (2000), pp. 247-82.

nuns there dressed like Daoist nuns without shaving.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that the emperor failed to make Daoism accepted widely in the inner court, if he ever tried.

Several things can be said about Jiajing's Buddhism-discrimination campaign relative to previous persecutions in Chinese history. First, it lasted long but with little violence. Jiajing never favoured Buddhism from the early years of his reign when he was so enthralled with Daoism until the last year of his life when he closed the ordination platform. In contrast, previously the longest suppression by Emperor Taiwu (r. 423-452) of the Northern Wei dynasty lasted only seven years. On the other hand, the ways that Jiajing enforced his orders were relatively lenient. For example, although it is said that more than six hundred nunneries in Beijing and several hundred Buddhist and Daoist temples in Nanjing were destroyed, no monks or nuns were reported to be killed as had happened in the suppression in 845 by Emperor Wuzong (r. 840-846) of the Tang dynasty and that in 955 by Emperor Shizong (r. 954-959) of the Later Zhou dynasty.<sup>82</sup> It might be because Buddhism had been crippled so seriously since the early Ming that it no longer deserved a violent attack. Meanwhile, as evident in the case of Huanggu nunnery, the emperor was wise enough to know when to give in. Obviously, using gradual and mild restrictions of Buddhism, he was able to achieve his aims at the least cost.

Secondly, although Daoist monks certainly had a hand in Jiajing's suppression of Buddhism, they as a group did not play as a significant role as they had played in the cases of Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei and of Emperor Wuzong of the Tang. In fact, when Daoism took absolute predominance over Buddhism at court in the second half of Jiajing's reign, it was the most peaceful period for Buddhism in the entire Jiajing era. For example, Daoist Tao Zhongwen 陶仲文 (1475-1560) was in Jiajing's great favour for twenty years and given the highest rank, but he was always cautious and avoided acting recklessly.<sup>83</sup> This result was very

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<sup>81</sup> Liu, *Dijing jingwu lue* 5, p.215. Cf. Ma and Han, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi*, pp.672-74.

<sup>82</sup> For the persecutions of Buddhism prior to the Ming dynasty, See Yu, *Gushan bichen* 17, p. 197; Kasuga Reichi 春日禮智, "Kaishō hō'nan no igi" 會昌法難の意義, *Tōhō shūkyō* 東方宗教, no. 29 (1967), pp. 1-16; Harumoto Hideo 春本秀雄, "Hokugi taibutei no haibutsu ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu" 北魏太武帝の廃仏についての一考察, *Taishōdaigaku sōgō bukkyō kenkyūjo nenpō* 大正大學綜合佛教研究所年報 10 (1988), pp. 1-13; Makita, "Gosyū sesō no bukkyō seisaku" 後周世宗の佛教政策, *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 11. 3 (1951), pp. 10-20.

<sup>83</sup> See Tao Zhongwen's biography in *Mingshi* 317, pp.7896-98. Cf. Ishida Kenji 石田憲司, "Kasei-Chō dōkyōkai no konran ni tsuite: Shō Gensetsu, Tō Chūbun to Chō tenshi" 嘉靖朝道教界の混亂について: 邵元節、陶仲文と張天師, in *Mindai chūgoku no rekishiteki isō: Yamane Yukio kyōju tsuitō kinen ronsō* 明代中國の歴史的位相: 山根幸夫教授追悼記念論叢, ed. Yamane Yukio Kyōju Tsuitō Kinen Ronsō Henshū Iinkai 山根幸夫追悼記念論叢編集委員会 (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 2007), pp. 267-86.

different from the performance of Daoist monks in previous dynasties when they had obtained an upper hand at court. In addition to Tao's character, this result might have had something to do with the general decline of Daoism at the time. More importantly, it suggests that Jiajing was controlling Daoism rather than vice versa, even when he was engrossed with Daoism.

Thirdly, although moral breaches in the Buddhist world were still a factor instigating Jiajing and his officials to go against Buddhism, like that in previous persecutions, their arguments against nuns and Tibetan Buddhism, were more cultural than moral. No reference shows that nuns of the time performed less satisfactory than monks or that the Ming emperors made serious efforts to understand Tibetan Buddhism. The uninterrupted pressure that Jiajing placed on them appears to be driven mainly by Confucian ideology.<sup>84</sup>

The last but not least significant characteristic of this religious discrimination is that economy was not a major factor driving the emperor and his officials to act against Buddhism. The financial pressure on the state caused by the increased number of temples and monks had prompted the persecution by Emperor Wuzong of the Tang. However, it is not applicable to Jiajing's case. Financial factors appeared occasionally in this campaign, but it seems that it was never a major concern during the forty-five years. Such a lack of concern with economic factors becomes more conspicuous if we recall that there were serious financial crises in the Jiajing era partly due to Japanese pirates' invasions in southeast coastal regions and Mongol's attacks in the northern frontier.<sup>85</sup> For this unusual phenomenon, the explanation might lie in the success of Emperor Hongwu's policy related to Buddhism. Examined in Chapter One, Hongwu thoroughly transformed the Buddhist institution, weakened the monastic economy, and precluded the possibility of its future dramatic expansion. As a result, the monastic economy was not seen as a threat to secular society in the Jiajing era.

## 2.4 Concluding Remarks

Jiajing's discrimination against Buddhism was mainly for religious, political, social,

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<sup>84</sup> Jiajing witnessed the increasing popularity of the Lu-Wang school of Confucianism. He also benefited from the arguments of the Wang Yangming school in the Great Ritual Controversy. However, he turned back on this school once he had obtained the victory in the debate. His harsh treatment with nuns actually reflects his stance of the Cheng-Zhu school of Confucianism which, when compared with the Yangming school, stresses more on unchallengeable "principle" rather than personal choice of "feeling." See Luo Zongqiang 羅宗強, *Mingdai houqi shiren xintai yanjiu* 明代後期士人心態研究 (Tianjin: Naikai daxue chubanshe, 2006).

<sup>85</sup> For a short description of these economic crises, see *CHC*, vol. 7, pp.485-88.



moral, and cultural reasons, and it is remarkable that generally speaking economy was no longer a significant concern motivating this emperor and his ministers to act against Buddhism. Although well known as an emperor in command of his imperial powers, Jiajing was not always able to act independently. He kept strict control of Buddhism throughout his reign, but he had to adjust his strategy according to the contemporary socio-political situation and yield to certain pressure, especially in the first half of his reign. Generally speaking, his treatment of Buddhism became more and more relentless in the first two decades, culminating in around the 1540s. With his retreat to Xiyuan in the latter half of his life, although his discriminating policy was still at work, Jiajing no longer bothered Buddhism as long as it did not make trouble.

Jiajing left profound marks on the development of Buddhism in mid- and late Ming China. He forced Tibetan Buddhism out of the court in the first two decades of his reign, but he did not let Daoism benefit much from this vacancy. He was in control of Daoist monks even when he was so enthralled with Daoism. That he paid little attention to Buddhism during the second half of his reign gave Buddhism a better chance to survive.

Besides the direct effects, however, as the moral and political leader of the country, Jiajing's influence on Buddhism also relied on the enforcement of his discriminating policies and the change in other people's attitudes towards Buddhism under his influence. More importantly, as shown in similar events in Chinese history, the result of a suppression of Buddhism was largely decided by what happened in the subsequent reign. For that reason, I will move to the Wanli era to see what Buddhism would face after having experienced such a harsh time and how its fate would change accordingly.

## Chapter 3

### Empress Dowager Cisheng's 慈聖 (1545-1614): Lavishing on Buddhism

Although the restrictions that Jiajing imposed on Buddhism relaxed somewhat in the second half of his reign, they still left an enormous negative impact on Buddhism, which I will discuss in Chapters Four and Seven in more detail. Emperor Longqing who succeeded Jiajing only gave Buddhism a little breathing room at the cost of Daoism,<sup>1</sup> but Buddhism flourished shortly later in the early Wanli era. To observe this Buddhist boom closely, I will examine in this chapter how religious activities were profoundly influenced by contemporary politics at the top of the hierarchy in the Wanli era. The major subject herein is Dowager Empress Cisheng who, as the birth mother of the reigning emperor Wanli, played significant roles in the political arena and the Buddhist world of the age. I will first examine how court strife evolved in the Wanli court centering on the succession issue and, at the same time, how religion was used in this course. Then I will trace Cisheng's activities related to Buddhism and analyze their spatiotemporal features, revealing the relationship between the fluctuations in her activities and changes in the political climate. In the last section I will conduct a few small case studies to demonstrate their direct influence on Buddhism.

#### 3.1 Cisheng, Wanli, and Court Strife

Not only did court strife throw the outer Wanli court into chaos, but it also tore the inner court apart. Although not as evident as what happened in the outer court, evidence shows that, centering on the succession issue, Wanli and his mother became the leaders of two opposing parties. During this court strife, religion was widely used both as a protecting shield and as a weapon.

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<sup>1</sup> Shen, *Daming huidian* 204, pp. 8-9 (1578-79). For more discussion on the treatment of Buddhism at the Longqing court, see Chen, "Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū," pp. 103-107.

### 3.1.1 A Brief Biography of Cisheng

Cisheng has not received sufficient scholarly attention, although she played significant roles in both the political and religious life of the Wanli era.<sup>2</sup> In fragmentary records about her life, Cisheng is described to have been engrossed in Buddhism and, with support from her emperor son, spent an enormous amount of money in building Buddhist temples within and outside Beijing. Zhang Juzheng tried to curb her expense in this respect but failed. Her roles in preventing Wanli from establishing his favourite son as the crown prince are mentioned.<sup>3</sup>

Cisheng was born in a commoner family in Huo 鄆 county, Beijing. Her ancestors moved to Beijing as soldiers from Shanxi province in the Yongle era, but the state of this family seems to have not much improved by the time of her entering the inner court. Her father was a bricklayer, but nothing is known about her mother. Despite this background, however, she attained good education.<sup>4</sup>

A drastic change came as Cisheng was selected into the court of Prince of Yu 裕, then the crown prince and future Longqing emperor. She entered the court only as a court lady, but the time of her entering court cannot be identified. Although most of these court ladies had lamentable lives, fortunately for her, she got the chance to give birth to Prince of Yu's first son in 1563 at the age of eighteen. Four years later when Prince of Yu ascended the throne, Cisheng was promoted as the Honoured Consort. There was little reference about her life at this phase, but she obviously obtained Longqing's favour, as evidenced by the birth of two more children

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<sup>2</sup> Cisheng's biography can be found in *Mingshi* 114, pp.3534-36; *Dictionary of Ming Biography (1368-1644)* (ed. Luther Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 856-59. About her religious life, see Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life*, pp.156-61; Nie Furong 聶福榮, "Wanli chao Cisheng Li taihou chongfo kao lun" 萬曆朝慈聖李太后崇佛攷論 (M.A. thesis, Jilin University 吉林大學, 2007). Cf. B. H. Hsieh, "From Charwoman to Empress Dowager: Serving-Women in the Ming Palace," *Ming Studies* 42, no. 1 (1999), pp. 26-80.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Chen, *Liu Rushi bie zhuan*, chapter 5, pointed out that Cisheng played an important part not only in the Wanli court but also in the factionalism in the Southern Ming court even after her death.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Cisheng was said to read Confucian classics and historical books (*Ming chaoben Wanli Qijuzhu* 明抄本萬曆起居注 [Beijing: Zhonghua quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2001] 1, p.414) and read the *Lengyan jing* (Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎, *Kuaxue tang ji* 快雪堂集 [Nanjing: Huang Ruheng 黃汝亨 and Zhu Zhifan 朱之藩, 1616; cited as *KXT* afterwards]) 56, p.156). It was not very rare for women from gentry families in south China, especially in the Jiangnan region, to receive education roughly after the sixteenth century. It is hard to know how and to what degree the education that Cisheng had received contributed to her success in the inner court, but her case in this regard still deserves more attention, considering that she was brought up in a family with lower status in North China. See Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang, *Writing Women in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994).

in the following few years. She kept on good terms with her major rival, Empress Chen, who was the formal wife of Emperor Longqing but had no child. This demonstrates her wisdom to maximize her interests through cooperation with rivals, which would be seen frequently in her life.

Cisheng was recorded to have turned to religion for supernatural help at this time.<sup>5</sup> In one case she donated to Huanggu baoming nunnery which had already become the base of a sect called Xi dacheng jiao 西大乘教 (Western Mahayana Teaching). This sect has been categorized as popular religion by modern scholars, but very likely it was only a kind of Buddhism in Cisheng's eyes.<sup>6</sup> In fact, it is worth noticing that what is called popular religion was an integral part of Cisheng's religious life with which she would keep connecting throughout her life. It is also worth noticing that her reliance on popular religion was not accidental. In fact, popular religion had been spreading quickly in North China, where her hometown was, roughly since the middle sixteenth century.<sup>7</sup> In addition, Daoism was part of Cisheng's religious life as well. She might not have been a Daoist follower, but it seems that she tended to turn to Daoism for help when she or her family members had problems in health.<sup>8</sup> For example, Cisheng had problems with her eyes as early as Wanli 12 and was afflicted by it until her death thirty years later. She seems to have preferred Daoism over Buddhism in such a case, although she got help from Buddhist monks sometimes.

Although Cisheng was well known for her patronage of Buddhism, information about the practical situation of her personal religious life is still scarce. She had contact with Chan masters, but no evidence shows that she ever practiced Chan meditation. She paid attention to the Buddhist doctrine, especially the *Lengyan jing*.<sup>9</sup> She chanted sutras in her palace in morning and afternoon. She seems to have had a strong faith in Guanyin (*Avalokiteśvara*), but her relationship with Guanyin was complicated. She hung up an embroidered portrait of Guanyin in her palace for prayer. She carved an image called Propitious Lotus and Guanyin

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<sup>5</sup> For the religious belief of women in the Ming dynasty, see Chen, "Mingdai funü xin fo de shehui jinshi yu zhizhu kongjian."

<sup>6</sup> For this sect, see T.S. Li and S. Naquin, "The Baoming Temple: Religion and the Throne in Ming and Qing China."

<sup>7</sup> A high percentage of court elite, including eunuchs and court women, came from places near Beijing where popular religion was widespread since the mid-Ming dynasty. The interaction between the two deserves further exploration.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Yu Minzhong 于敏中 and Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊, *Rixia jiuwen kao* 日下舊聞攷 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe 1983; cited as *RXJW* hereafter) 59, p.959; *Beijing tushuguan cang zhongguo lidai shike taben huibian* 北京圖書館藏中國歷代石刻拓本彙編 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1989; 101 vols; cited as *SKHB* hereafter), vol.58, pp.186-87.

<sup>9</sup> For Cisheng's interest in the *Lingyan jing*, see Feng, *KXT* 56, pp.156; Hanshan Deqing, *HSMY* 30, p.645.

(*ruilian dashi xiang* 瑞蓮大士像), print and circulated it to many monasteries. But later she herself was said to have become a so-called Bodhisattva of Nine Lotus (*jiulian pusa* 九蓮菩薩).<sup>10</sup>

Cisheng demonstrated her extraordinary wisdom in the political life after Wanli succeeded to the throne at the age of ten. Since Wanli was too young to rule independently in the early years, it could have become a disastrous situation. However, not only did Cisheng manage it well, but she also helped to make this period of ten years the last golden age in the Ming dynasty. As discussed before, her major strategy was to cooperate with Zhang Juzheng and eunuch Feng Bao and to entrust them with state affairs without reservation for as long as ten years.<sup>11</sup> When Zhang Juzheng's mother came to Beijing in Wanli 6 (1578), it was said that Cisheng treated her almost like a family member. In return for her favour, Zhang Juzheng and Feng Bao served her, Wanli, and the state with loyalty, thereby stabilizing the shaky situation. Their alliance continued until Zhang Juzheng's death in Wanli 10 (1582), representing an ideal collaboration of the three major political forces.

Cisheng was very resolute and rational in educating young Wanli, thereby shaping the basic mode of the mother-and-son relationship. On the one hand, through working with Zhang Juzheng and other officials with this task, she made every effort to create the best environment for the young emperor. On the other hand, she was strict with him. For example, according to Zhang Juzheng's suggestion, she resided in the same palace with Wanli before his marriage so that she could keep an eye on him at any time. Cisheng always woke him up in the early morning, even in cold winter. An extreme case occurred in Wanli 8 (1580). One night this young emperor happened to get drunk and, at the enticement of a eunuch, asked another eunuch to sing a song. When the latter declined, Wanli threatened to kill him but finally, jokingly, cut his hair instead. Cisheng got a report about this event next day. In a rage, she had Wanli kneel

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<sup>10</sup> This carved image could be found at

<http://res4.nlc.gov.cn/home/search.trs?method=showDetail&channelid=11&id=bj2538&searchWord=%28+bookname%2F1+%3D+%27%E6%85%88%E5%9C%A3%E5%AF%BA%27+and+subchannel%3D3+%29> (available on June 30, 2010). For the mysterious origin of this image and its wide circulation, see *Ming chaoben Wanli qiju zhu* 4, pp. 380-82; 469-70; *HSMY* 33, p.697a. Given that devotion to Guanyin is also popular in tantric Buddhism and popular religion and that the so-called Bodhisattva of Nine Lotus had a strong flavor of popular religion, it is hard to know if and to what extent Cisheng's devotion to this Budhisattva could be seen as her belief in Pure Land Buddhism. For faith in Guanyin in the Ming dynasty, see Yü, *Kuan-yin: the Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*; Xu Yizhi 徐一智, "Mingdai Guanyin Xinyang Zhi Yanjiu" 明代觀音信仰之研究 (Ph. D. disser. Guoli zhongzheng daxue, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> See Zhang Juzheng's biography in *Mingshi* 213, p. 5645. Cf. Huang, *Guoshi weiyi* 8, p.525.

down before her and began to scold him. She even summoned Zhang Juzheng and other top officials to the palace, implying that she was considering replacing Wanli with his brother as the ruler. This shocked all people, including Wanli himself. Finally, this event was settled only when the emperor issued an edict showing regret for his misdeed and drove his favoured eunuchs out of the court.<sup>12</sup> Zhang Juzheng prepared this edict, and it is said that its scathing and humble words soured the relationship between Wanli and his chief minister and his mother.<sup>13</sup> In this way, Cisheng eventually established herself as a mother Wanli never dared to defy directly.

At the same time, Cisheng appears to have kept alert not to abuse her power. Even in the early Wanli years when she was most influential, Cisheng was consciously trying to avoid interfering with state affairs directly. For example, out of the Buddhist belief of non-killing, she asked Zhang Juzheng to put off or temporarily cancel capital punishment on two occasions. When Zhang said that these exemptions would be against the law and declined, she gave in.<sup>14</sup> Also she did not reopen the Buddhist ordination platform as many monks expected.<sup>15</sup> Another instance concerns a corruption case in which her father and brother were convicted. When learning of it, she gave them a box which contained a tool used by bricklayers. This gift made them embarrassed because it reminded them how base their original status was.<sup>16</sup> Cisheng was restrained in treating the emperor son, with an exception of her last will in 1614.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.1.2 Cisheng, Wanli, and Secret Wars among Court Women

Wanli was well known for his filial piety to Cisheng,<sup>18</sup> but we cannot assume that the mother-son relationship remained stable all the time. When other women entered Wanli's life as he got married, Cisheng's role and weight in his life changed accordingly. These women were important not only in his private life but also in the political life when they gave birth to Wanli's sons. Discussed in Chapter One, the outer center split asunder because of the

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<sup>12</sup> *Mingshi* 114, p. 3535.

<sup>13</sup> See Wen Bing, *Ding ling zhu lue* 定陵注略 (Taipei: Weiwen tushu chubanshe, 1976) 1, p.18.

<sup>14</sup> *Wanli qiju zhu* 1, pp.253-54, 261-67.

<sup>15</sup> The precept altar which had been closed by Jiajing would not reopen until Wanli 45 (1617). See Yinguang 印光, *Qingliang shanzhi* 清凉山志 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980) 3, pp.26-28 (146-48). Cf. *WLYH* 27, p.679.

<sup>16</sup> But the Li's was still very powerful in Beijing. It is also said that Cisheng spent tens of thousands taels of silver building the house for her father. See Yu, *Gushan bichen* 4, p. 47.

<sup>17</sup> For Cisheng's last will which was issued in the form of edict, see *Ming chaoben Wanli qiju zhu* 1, p.548.

<sup>18</sup> For example, see Wen, *Ding ling zhu lue* 1, p.13, 15.

succession issue, and this was the case with the inner court.

The first woman who was to play a key role in Wanli's life was his Empress Wang. This woman married Wanli in the second month of Wanli 6 (1578). Her biography says that she was cautious and clever and got Cisheng's favour, but she did not obtain the emperor's love and, more importantly, failed to give birth to a male heir. Although poor in health, she managed to live with Wanli for more than forty years and died only a few months before he did.<sup>19</sup> In the eyes of Wanli, this longevity might have been her biggest fault because it made futile many of his plans, as we shall see soon.

The 1578 wedding also brought into the inner court another girl crucial to Wanli's life, not as an empress but as a court lady. This girl, surnamed Wang, was assigned to serve Cisheng in the Cining palace. One day three years later when Wanli went to the Cining palace, Cisheng was out. The young emperor, then at the age of nineteen, suddenly found the girl so attractive that he made love to her. A thing like this was not uncommon for an emperor, but it became complicated when she was found pregnant. Wanli first tried to deny when asked by his mother, but his lie was disclosed because this event had been witnessed on the spot.<sup>20</sup> Several months later, this court lady gave birth to Wanli's first son Zhu Changluo 朱常洛 (1582-1620), the future Taichang emperor (r. 1620).

Little information is available now about this woman who later became *gongfei* (the Courtesan of Humility), and some of it is confusing or even mistaken. For example, it has long been said that she was much older than the emperor, and that it was an important reason that he did not like her; but the unearthing of her epitaph in 1958 reveals that she was three years younger. Moreover, her relationship with the emperor, at least in the first few years, does not seem as bad as people might have believed, for she had chance to give birth to a daughter for the emperor in Wanli 12 (1581). History did not repeat itself, however. Although so far *gongfei*'s experiences were similar to what Cisheng had undergone previously, it eventually proved a nightmare rather than a dream for her. Wanli first declined to treat her in the way suitable for her status as the mother of his first son, and then abandoned her in an isolated palace forever, not even allowing her son to visit her. In Wanli 39 (1611), she died lonely at the age of 46.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Mingshi* 114, p.3536. Empress Wang produced only a girl in the twelfth month of Wanli 9 (1581).

<sup>20</sup> Zhu Quan 朱權, *Ming gongci* 明宮詞 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1987), p. 149.

<sup>21</sup> *SKHB*, vol.59, p.38. As for Wanli's children and their mothers, including his fourth daughter born to *gongfei*, see Liu, *Zhuozhong zhi* 22, pp. 17-18 (575).

Courtesan Zheng was largely responsible for Courtesan of Humility's tragedy. Beautiful, smart, and well educated, Zheng quickly defeated her rivals in the inner court and became a courtesan in Wanli 10 (1582).<sup>22</sup> She reportedly competed with other court women for procreating Wanli's first son, but unfortunately for her she did not give birth to Zhu Changxun until Wanli 14 (1586).<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the boy immediately brought her a title of Imperial Honoured Consort 皇貴妃 (*huang guifei*), a title inferior in rank only to the empress. After that, taking advantage of Wanli's favour, Courtesan Zheng made all efforts to make her son the crown prince, many of them evil. It was said that Wanli even promised her to do so in a written note which was preserved in a box.<sup>24</sup> She and her family were infamous for their misdeeds,<sup>25</sup> yet she maintained Wanli's love throughout his life. Ten years after his death in 1620, she died.

Due to the pressure of court officials, in the first month of Wanli 18 (1590) the emperor promised senior grand secretary Wang Xijue that he would settle the succession issue two years later. This schedule stirred the inner court immediately. Interestingly, those involved all turned to gods.

Courtesan Zheng was very active in this battle. At the request of Courtesan Zheng, Wang Xijue wrote an inscription to the Dongyue temple of Beijing in the third month of Wanli 20 in which he said,

Imperial Honoured Courtesan Zheng and the Crown Prince who is third in seniority among his brothers, together with royal family members, eunuchs, and other, make hats, clothing, belts, incense, paper money, paper horses, palaces, corridors for Emperor and Empress [of Mount Tai], and pay due respect to [other] deities according to their status. The grand

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<sup>22</sup> It is hard to decide when Courtesan Zheng entered the inner court. In the eighth month of Wanli 9 (1581), an edict was issued to select "Nine Consorts" (*jiubin* 九嬪) from commoner families. In the second month of Wanli 10, ceremonies were held to acknowledge the winners, Courtesan Zheng included. See *SZSL* 120, pp. 2245-2246; 121, p. 2276. However, Cheng Sizhang 程嗣章 said that Courtesan Zheng entered the inner court in Wanli 6 (1578) when Wanli got married. See Zhu, *Ming gongci*, p. 149.

<sup>23</sup> Liu, *Zhuozhong zhi* 22, p. 202-203, says that Courtesan Zheng gave birth to Wanli's second, third (i.e. Zhu Changxun), fourth sons and second and seventh daughters. But *Mingshi* 120, p. 3649, only says that Wanli's second son died at about one year old but does not specify his mother. Additionally, according to *SZSL* 143, p. 9b (2676), Courtesan Zheng gave birth to Wanli's second girl on the *yisi* day of the eleventh month of Wanli 11 (January 9, 1584). Nevertheless, the fact that *gongfei* had the chance to conceive another child who was born in the sixth day of seventh month of Wanli 12 (August 11, 1584) suggests that the emperor had not exclusively favoured Courtesan Zheng before Wanli 14.

<sup>24</sup> See Wen Bing, *Xian bo zhi shi*, j. 1; Huang, *Guoshi weiyi* 11, p. 697. Cf. *Mingshi* 231, p. 6040; 233, p. 6089.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, *Mingshi* 218, p. 5753; 233, p. 6072.



ceremony has accomplished over three years from *gengyin* (Wanli 18; 1590) to *renshen* (Wanli20; 1592). 皇貴妃鄭氏暨皇三太子集諸宮眷、中官等制帝后冠服、束帶、香幣、紙馬及宮殿廊廡，神祇咸致禮有差。自庚寅迄壬辰，曆三載，盛典告成。<sup>26</sup>

Although the eunuch messenger told Wang that Courtesan Zheng did so just for the blessing of the emperor and people all over the country, there are several points deserving special attention. First, it is incredible that Wang Xijue used the term “*huang san taizi*” which could be translated as “the Crown Prince, third in seniority among his brother.” This epitaph was written in an extremely sensitive time in politics because two months earlier, the first month of this year, Wanli had severely punished many censors and officials who pressed him to keep his promise to declare Zhu Changluo as the crown prince. As a result, nobody was pronounced as the crown prince. A question thus arises: why did Wang Xijue, the head of officials, use such a term? The second point concerns the temple itself. The Dongyue temple involved was very popular in the capital region and had a large number of followers. This might partly explain why Courtesan Zheng and her son chose it as the place to pray. But it is worth noticing that *dongyue* actually refers to Mount Tai. Mount Tai had strong political implications in imperial China and constantly received offerings in important national events.<sup>27</sup> This mountain was also closely linked to the crown prince because it was located in east China, and east in Chinese traditional thoughts was the direction of the crown prince so that the latter was called the eastern palace (*donggong* 東宮).<sup>28</sup> The last point was about a eunuch who was singled out in the first line on the back of this stele to show his contribution to this project. This eunuch was in a high post in the Qianqing palace where Wanli lived, which makes us wonder what role the emperor himself played in this project.

These doubtful points reappear in three inscriptions recently found in a Daoist temple Sanyang 三陽觀 at Mount Tai.<sup>29</sup> It was Daoist Zan Fuming 詹複明 (?-1597) who was in charge of this temple during the period under discussion. Zan Fuming held at least three Daoist

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<sup>26</sup> *SKHB*, vol.58, pp. 23-24.

<sup>27</sup> For example, official sacrifices to it were held over forty times in the Ming dynasty to pray for rain, heir, or to declare the establishment of crown prince and ascend to the throne.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Akiyama Motohide 秋山元秀, “Gozan: Taizan—gensei to meikai o musubu tōgaku” 五山: 泰山—現世と冥界を結ぶ「東嶽」, *Gekkan shi'nika* 月刊しにか 11. 8 (2000), pp. 16-19.

<sup>29</sup> As for the Sanyang abbey, see Nie Wen 聶紋, *Taishan daoli ji* 泰山道里記 (in *Siku Quanshu cunmu congshu*, 史 vol.242), p. 106.

sacrifices (*jiao* 醺) on behalf of Courtesan Zheng, which were recorded on steles erected in the tenth month of Wanli 17 (1589), the first month of Wanli 22 (1594), and ninth month of Wanli 24 (1596), respectively. All of the three inscriptions include conventional words about wish for the benefit of the emperor and the country. Further, the 1589 stele says,

Fan Teng, imperially dispatched attendant of the Qianqing palace, a eunuch from Directorate of the Imperial Stud, according to the order of Courtesan Zheng of the Great Ming, now pays respect to the Holy Mother at the peak of Mount Tai...to protect the Courtesan [Zheng's] health and *huangzi's* [prince] safety. 欽差乾清官近侍、禦馬監太監樊騰，遵奉大明皇貴妃鄭淑旨，敬詣東嶽泰山岱頂聖母娘娘陛前...佑保貴妃聖躬康泰，皇子平安。

Differently, however, the 1594 stele says:

Chao Feng and Li Feng, imperially dispatched attendants of the Qianqing palace, eunuchs from the Directorate of the Imperial Stud and Directorate of Palace Delicacies, by the imperial decree, now pay respect from a distant place to the Holy Mother of Mount Tai ... [we] respectfully wish...the Courtesan live long... and that the crown prince enjoy thousands of blessing. 欽差乾清宮近侍，禦馬、尚膳監太監曹奉、李奉，今承明旨，遙叩泰山聖母娘娘...上祝...貴妃遐齡，衍天年於不替。四海澄清，太子納千祥之吉慶。

The content of the 1596 stele is similar to the 1594 one except the name of the eunuch involved. Comparing the 1589 inscription with the latter two, there are two noticeable differences. First, the term *huangzi* (prince) in 1589, which evidently referred to Zhu Changxun, was replaced by *taizi* 太子 (the crown prince). Given that Wanli did not pronounce the crown prince until 1601 and that Courtesan Zheng's deep-seated animosity to Zhu Changluo, the term *taizi* here must have referred to Zhu Changxun. Secondly, more importantly, eunuchs from the Qianqing palace were involved in all three events. They were ordered by Courtesan Zheng in 1589 but, as evidenced by the term *mingzhi* (the imperial decree),<sup>30</sup> by Emperor Wanli himself in 1594 and 1596. In addition, both Fan Teng and Li Feng here were present in the stele of the Dongyue temple in Beijing. Therefore, it seems safe to say that the term *huangsantaizi* at the Dongyue temple in Beijing was not a carving error. Instead, these four steles together form

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 1997), vol. 5, p.601.

clear evidence regarding Wanli's endorsement of Zhu Changxun as the crown prince, at least during the period from Wanli 20 (1592) to Wanli 24 (1596).

In the face of Courtesan Zheng's aggressive attacks, it was Cisheng who frustrated her efforts and at the same time protected Empress Wang, Courtesan of Humility and Zhu Changluo.

Empress Wang was always at risk because she appears to have been the only obstacle for Courtesan Zheng to become the empress and thus naturally make her son the crown prince. With Wanli's announcement of a schedule to solve the succession problem, she was at increasing risk because the emperor might have felt relieved had she disappeared for any reason.<sup>31</sup> Without powerful family members or court officials to rely on, she thus turned to supernatural powers. In the first month of Wanli 20 (1592), she sponsored the printing of the *Guanyin ling ke* 觀音靈課,<sup>32</sup> and her fears were revealed in her prayer:

The empress of the Great Ming frequently recites the *Guanyin ling ke* after having fasted, having a bath, and burning incense ... [it] often responds efficaciously. [I thus] order the carving and printing of one hundred copies of it for distribution... [I] wish the inner court pure and propitious, and all over the country peaceful.大明中宮皇后，每齋沐焚香，捧誦《觀音靈課》...屢屢感應。遂命鋟梓，印施百卷...願宮闈清吉，海宇萬安...

It could not be a coincidence that this sutra was printed at the same time as that of Wanli's schedule to solve the problem of the crown prince, and her wish that the inner court be pure and propitious actually reflected her anxiety. Since other scholars have analyzed the purpose of Empress Wang to print this sutra,<sup>33</sup> a point I would like to make is that Yanfa si 衍法寺, where this project was carried out, had a tie with both Empress Wang and Cisheng. According to a

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<sup>31</sup> See *Mingshi* 235, p. 6133. Huang, *Guoshi wei yi* 10, pp. 638-39. For the danger facing Empress Wang in Wanli 18 (1590), for example, see Wang Xijue submitted a memorial saying that “臣適又聞外間宣傳中宮有疾，嫌疑之間，甚而以小人極曖昧之心窺皇上，臣竊痛之。”

<sup>32</sup> As the title shows, the *Guanyin ling ke* shows people how to make divination with copper coins. Various version of this text are still extant. See [http://openarmed.blogspot.com/2009/08/blog-post\\_19.html](http://openarmed.blogspot.com/2009/08/blog-post_19.html) (available on June 30, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> As for the quotation above and an analysis of this text, see Xin Deyong 辛德勇, “Shu shiyin Ming wanli keben “guanshiyin ganying lingke” 述石印明萬曆刻本《觀世音感應靈課》”, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化, no. 3 (2004), pp. 106-11; Zhang Xuesong 張雪松, “Zai shu shiyin Ming wanli keben “guanshiyin ganying lingke” 再述石印明萬曆刻本《觀世音感應靈課》”, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化, no. 4 (2009), pp. 29-35.

stele inscription, both of them and other court women contributed to the renovation of this temple from 1591 to 1594.<sup>34</sup>

Cisheng also lent support to *gongfei* on a rare occasion. In a stele erected in Wanli 23 (1595), the author said that Cilogong si 慈隆寺 was built by *gongfei* and that Cisheng granted it a name tablet. This epitaph is now hard to read due to its long exposure to weather, but the term *huang zhangzi* 皇長子 (the first son of an emperor) appears many times.<sup>35</sup> Obviously, *gongfei* built this temple for the sake of her son, and it got endorsement from Cisheng. On another occasion, *gongfei*'s name appeared together with Princess of Ruian 瑞安, Cisheng's only daughter, at the Dongyue temple mentioned above in the third month of Wanli 18. Probably she was dreaming the same dream as Courtesan Zheng, but she was not able to afford the same sumptuous expenses as her rival.<sup>36</sup>

Although fragmentary, the above material suggests that Empress Wang and Courtesan Wang had much shared interests and that Cisheng's protection was very likely to be the key for them to get through the crisis. Cisheng was cautious not to abuse power and always tried to avoid direct collision with her emperor son, but she refused to yield in the affairs of the inner court because it was a realm where she was supposed to lead as the Empress dowager. In her eyes, the establishment of an Empress and the crown prince were family affairs which were within the scope of her authority. For that reason, it is not surprising that she made every effort to protect them. In addition, as much as she could Cisheng was making efforts to curb Courtesan Zheng. On one occasion, for instance, Wanli asked her mother to give him a utensil on Zheng's behalf. This kind of utensil was supposed to be used only by an empress. Cisheng did not turn down Wanli's request, but she also gave it to many other courtesans the next day. It is also recorded that Cisheng was so influential in the inner court that Wanli dared not to make Courtesan Zheng empress even after Cisheng's death in 1614.<sup>37</sup>

Zhu Changluo's receiving formal education in the second month of Wanli 22 (1594) marked a temporary end of a crisis which started with Wanli 18 (1590) in the selection of the crown prince.<sup>38</sup> In this battle, through alliance with court offices, Cisheng helped Empress Wang, Zhu Changluo, and *gongfei* to survive. From then on, although disappointed at the result,

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<sup>34</sup> *SKHB*, vol.58, pp. 131-32.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* vol.58, pp.61-2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.57, pp.177-78.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Wenbin, *Dingling zhulüe* 1, p. 18, 19.

<sup>38</sup> *SZSL* 270, p.5248.

Wanli seems to have been tired of these intrigues and made little effort to change the result, even if he continued to postpone the establishment until Wanli 29 (1601).

However, this narrow victory cost Cisheng and officials a high price because they were forced to stand directly opposite to a reigning emperor. Neither the mother nor the son was willing to yield, and their relations got worse accordingly. It is very likely that the turning point appeared around Wanli 23 (1595). In the spring of that year, Wanli arrested Buddhist monk Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546-1623), who had been treated as a personal Master by her mother, and exiled him to south China. At the end of that year, Wanli did not attend the ceremony for his mother's birthday, and this was his only absence from such an occasion during her life.<sup>39</sup> In Wanli 24 (1596), Zhang Cheng 張誠 (fl. 1596), then the leading eunuch who had a good reputation and was respected even by officials in the outer court, was demoted and exiled to Nanjing with a charge that his younger brother was related by marriage to Earl Wuqing, Cisheng's brother and Wanli's maternal uncle.<sup>40</sup> Cisheng fell ill sometime before Wanli 29, and its seriousness could be suggested by the necessity to build a temple for the gods after her recovery. This construction project was sponsored by Princess of Rongchang 榮昌.<sup>41</sup> Since this princess was Wanli's first daughter born by Empress Wang,<sup>42</sup> her praying for Cisheng's recovery could be seen as a way to express gratitude to Cisheng as the protector of Empress Wang. As for Wanli, to my knowledge, nowhere can we see his efforts to cure his mother. In fact, in Wanli 28 (1600) he even granted Geng Yilan 耿義蘭 (1509-1606) the title *fujiao zhenren* 扶教真人 (Authentic Man of Protecting Teaching) and a copy of the Daoist canon. Given that Geng was the person initiating Deqing's arrest and exile, Wanli would not have ordered this provocative act if the relationship with his mother had improved.<sup>43</sup>

This impasse continued,<sup>44</sup> and the turning point appears to have come in Wanli 30 (1602) when the emperor narrowly escaped death. Wanli was famous for his filial piety and his relationship with his mother became sour only because of the choice of the crown prince. In the tenth month of Wanli 29, Wanli eventually announced Zhu Changluo to be the crown prince,

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<sup>39</sup> See Nie, "Wanli chao Cisheng Li taihou chongfo kao lun," pp. 37-39.

<sup>40</sup> *Mingshi* 305, p. 7804; *WLYH* 6, p. 171.

<sup>41</sup> *RXJW* 60, p. 955.

<sup>42</sup> Liu, *Zhuozhong zhi* 22, pp. 202-203.

<sup>43</sup> As for the complex story between Geng Yilan, Hanshan Deqing, Wanli, and Courtesan Zheng, see Chapter Five.

<sup>44</sup> Nie, "Wanli chao Cisheng Li taihou chongfo kao lun," said that Cisheng's patronage of Buddhism recovered soon, but this obviously is not the truth.

thereby paving the path to reconcile with his mother. The biggest driving force, however, might not have come until the following year. In the second month of Wanli 30, Wanli got an acute illness so that he even left his last will before losing consciousness. He mysteriously recovered the next day, but this event reportedly enabled him to find that it was his mother and Courtesan Wang rather than Courtesan Zheng who were really worried about him.<sup>45</sup> Later, as a way of expressing his appreciation to his mother, the emperor granted Earl Wuqing (武清伯), his mother's brother, some gifts.<sup>46</sup>

The mother-son relationship improved from then on until Cisheng's death in Wanli 42 (1613), especially after Wanli 33 (1595) when Zhu Changluo fathered Wanli's first grandson. During this period, Wanli built a few temples for Cisheng's health.<sup>47</sup> They sometimes supported the same Buddhist temples and monks. Cisheng was present in public life again, but with a much lower frequency than in the first half of the Wanli era. Her main focus was to protect her first grandson by repeatedly frustrating Courtesan Zheng's efforts to change the crown prince. Courtesan Zheng even stooped to black magic to try to curse her to death,<sup>48</sup> but Cisheng finally forced Zhu Changxun out of the capital, which was a big help to her first grandson whom she spent most of her last thirty years protecting.<sup>49</sup>

### 3.2 Cisheng the Greatest Patron of Buddhism in the Ming

Taking advantage of her privileged position as the mother of the reigning emperor, Cisheng got herself involved in almost all aspects of Buddhism. To observe them closely, I group her relevant activities into three fields: financial support for Buddhist temples, spreading the Buddhist canon, and direct connection with monks.<sup>50</sup> If information is available, Wanli's activities in these respects will be traced and analyzed as well.

Patronizing temples was costly, but Cisheng financially supported at least forty-seven

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<sup>45</sup> See Chen, "Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū," pp. 146-47. Cf. Hung, *Guoshi weiyi* 10, p. 643, for comments about this event.

<sup>46</sup> Wen, *Dingling zhu lüe*, p. 245.

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, *RXJW* 59, p. 959; 110, p. 1840.

<sup>48</sup> *Mingshi* 120, p. 6233.

<sup>49</sup> Wen, *Dingling zhu lüe*, pp. 417-20. *Mingshi* 120, p. 3650; 240, pp. 6232-33.

<sup>50</sup> Cisheng was also involved in less expensive projects. For instance, she often provided monks with vegetarian food. She made hundreds of *Samghati* and gave them to monks. Also she ordered eunuchs to travel everywhere and to confer the purple robe in her name to monks they thought were qualified.

Buddhist temples with their foundation, renovation, rebuilding, erecting statues, and even the purchase of monastic land in a few cases.<sup>51</sup> These benevolent acts could be further categorized to see their spatiotemporal features.

Table 1: A Spatiotemporal Analysis of Cisheng's Monastery Projects

Place		Time	W1 1-10	W1 11-22	W1 23-32	W1 33-42	Total
North Zhili	Non-North China						
	North China	Non-Beijing	2	1			3
		Beijing	10	11	2	3	26
Shanxi	North China		2	2			4
	Non-North China						
Henan				2			2
Shandong				2			2
Zhejiang	Non-Jiangnan						1
	Jiangnan			1		1	2
South Zhili	Jiangnan				1	2	3
	Non-Jiangnan				1		1
Huguang					1		1
Jiangxi				2			
Sichuan					1	2	3
Total			14	21	6	8	49

For convenience, I have singled out North China and the Jiangnan region. By North China I actually mean Shuntian and Baoding prefectures in North Zhili (Northern Metropolitan Region) and Taiyuan prefecture in Shanxi province.<sup>52</sup> Because of the central importance of Beijing, I deal with it separately for comparison purposes. By Jiangnan I refer to the area consisting Yingtian, Zhenjiang, Changzhou, Suzhou, and Songjiang prefectures in South Zhili (Southern Metropolitan Region), and Huzhou, Jiaxing, Hangzhou, Shaoxing, and Ningbo prefectures in Zhejiang province.<sup>53</sup> From this Table, fluctuations in Cisheng's patronage

<sup>51</sup> See Appendix C. For Cisheng's patronage of Buddhist temple, cf. Marsha Weidner, "Imperial Engagements with Buddhist Art and Architecture: Ming Variations on an Old Theme," in *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), pp. 117-44.

<sup>52</sup> Beijing area and Shanxi province had much in common due to their proximity and a shared history after they fell into the hands of non-Chinese regimes since the middle Tang (766-835). I choose these three prefectures here as a unit of analysis for two reasons: first, Buddhism had rooted deeply there since the medieval era (See, for example, Yamazaki, *Shina chūsei bukkō no tenkai*, pp. 241). Secondly, they must have become even closer in religious belief after the early Ming when hundreds of thousands of people were ordered to move to Beijing area from Shanxi, especially Taiyuan prefecture. For this migration, see *Ming Taizu shilu* 62, pp. 1199, and *Ming Taizong shilu* 12b, pp. 217.

<sup>53</sup> The term Jiangnan is both a geographic and, maybe more importantly, a cultural concept. Here I define this term geographically according to the tradition. In cultural terms, however, it also included Yangzhou which was north of the Yangtze River, at least in late imperial China. Cf. Antonia Finnane, *Speaking of Yangzhou: A Chinese City, 1550-1850* (Cambridge,

become very clear. Geographically, 55 percent of her resource was used in Beijing and 67 in North China. In contrast, only 10 percent was invested in the Jiangnan region, the only region comparable to Beijing and North China in term of its weight in the entire Buddhist world of the age. But it is worth noticing that, after Wanli 22, temples getting her support in south China - mainly Jiangnan and Sichuan - outnumber those in Beijing/North China roughly by a ratio of 2 to 1, and that she did not support any temples in some provinces, like Fujian, Guangdong, and Guizhou. Her interest was completely limited to North China in the first decade of the Wanli era, and then extended southward to the central China and the Jiangnan region in the second decade while Beijing and North China remained the areas obtaining the most patronage. These two phases together took up 71 percent of the monasteries obtaining Cisheng's financial support. In the next ten years, the number of Cisheng-sponsored temples dropped by 75 percent from that of the preceding eleven years, and then there was a slight recovery in the final ten years of her life. Shortly after Wanli 20 (1592) there was a drastic shrinking in Cisheng's patronage of Buddhist temples.<sup>54</sup> In addition, from now on, it seems that none of Cisheng's projects, no matter how small the scale was, could not be finished in as short a time as before, and some of them were not completed at all.<sup>55</sup>

Wanli patronized Buddhist temples as well. Even if we exclude his patronage before Wanli 10 on the assumption that at that time he was too young to act independently, he finally supported Buddhist temples in more than ten cases. His patronage started with Wanli 25 (1597) and then appeared relatively frequently from Wanli 30 (1602) until the final years of his era. His patronage was far less extensive and intensive than Cisheng's, and distributed over Beijing and the Jiangnan region almost equally. It is worth noticing that three out of six Beijing temples were sponsored after Wanli 30 for the benefit of his mother, which proved a gradual improvement in their relationship. Moreover, the majority of his investment in the Jiangnan region was in the Putuo Island which, together with the bestowal of the Buddhist canon to be discussed below, facilitated the formation of this island as a new Buddhist sacred site.<sup>56</sup>

In addition, Cisheng and Wanli contributed a lot to the circulation of the Buddhist canon at

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Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 29-30, p.339 n. 55.

<sup>54</sup> In fact, the names appearing on the few steles erected after Wanli 22 commemorating Cisheng's contribution was less than ten, thereby forming a sharp contrast with the thousands of names appearing in her projects in the early Wanli years.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, *RXJW* 59, p. 959.

<sup>56</sup> Although Cisheng's strong faith in Guanyin did not necessarily reveal her belief in Pure Land Buddhism, as discussed in note 10 of this chapter, it seems safe to say that this faith still encouraged her to invest more resources in the Putuo Island, the center of the Guanyin cult.



an unprecedented speed. There were at least four editions of the Buddhist canon that were carved and circulated in the Ming dynasty, among which the northern version (*Ming beizang* 明北藏), of which Cisheng arranged the compilation and carving of its sequel,<sup>57</sup> is best in quality.<sup>58</sup>

There are two versions, northern and southern, of [the Buddhist] canon in our dynasty. Since the northern version is preserved in the inner court and cannot be obtained without an imperial bestowal, those held by various temples are mostly the southern version. However, [the quality of the southern one] is really bad.<sup>59</sup> Sometimes several words or even lines are dropped so that it is no longer comprehensible. On the rare occasion that [people] get a northern version, [they feel] no less lucky than if they personally visit the Vulture Peak (i.e. the Mount *Gr̥dhrakūṭa* at which the Buddha was believed to have lectured often) to listen to the preaching of the Buddha.<sup>60</sup> 我朝大藏有南北二本，北本定大內，非敕賜不可得，故諸山所有南本爲多。然差之爲特甚，或脫數字數行至不成讀。間得北本，不減躬詣靈山，聞廣長舌親宣也。<sup>61</sup>

In addition to its good quality, the northern version was used explicitly as a gift by the royal family to the temple and monks they favoured. Therefore, its bestowal had strong imperial flavour, which in turn made its reception a great honour and an asset for a Buddhist temple.

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<sup>57</sup> Hanshan Deqing, *Hanshan dashi mengyou ji* 憨山大師夢遊集 (hereafter cited as *HSMY*) (in *Wanzi xuzang jing* 卍續藏經 [Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1968-1970; hereafter *XZJ*] vol. 127, no.1456) 29, p. 622a-b.

<sup>58</sup> For study on the Buddhist canon in the Ming dynasty, see Li Fuhua and He Mei, *Hanwen Fojiao Dazangjing Yanjiu*. Ming people stressed on the significance of Buddhist canon, as evidenced by Yuan Hongdao's 袁宏道 claim that "just as a school cannot have no [Confucian] classics, a Buddhist temple cannot lack the Buddhist canon." (精舍中不可無藏，猶校序中不可無經也). See *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao* 袁宏道集箋校 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), p.1585.

<sup>59</sup> For the southern version of the Buddhist canon, see Nozawa, *Mindai daizōkyō shi no kenkyū: nanzo no rekishigakuteki kiso kenkyū*.

<sup>60</sup> 廣長舌 (a wide and long tongue) is one of the Buddha's thirty-two characteristic marks. And it is often used to refer to the Buddha.

<sup>61</sup> *KXT* 26, p. 6b.

Table 2: The Spatiotemporal Feature of the Northern Canon Distribution in the Wanli era<sup>62</sup>

Place \ Time		1-10	11-22			23-32			33-42	43-48	unclear	Total
			11-13	14-15	16-22	27	28	29-32				
North Zhili	Non-North China											
	NC							1		2		3
	Beijing	9	2	6	1		1	3			2	24
Shanxi	North China	2		3		3	2		2			12
	Non-North China										3	3
Shaanxi				1							1	2
Liaodong			1									1
Henan				1								1
Shandong				1		1		1				3
Zhejiang	Non-Jiangnan			1			1				1	3
	Jiangnan			2		2	2		4		1	11
South Zhili	Jiangnan	1		4	3	3	1	3	5		2	22
	Non-Jiangnan					1	1		1		1	4
Fujian					1	1	1			1		4
Huguang					1			1			1	3
Jiangxi			1	1		1		1	1		1	6
Guangdong											1	1
Guangxi								1				1
Sichuan				1		1			1			3
Yunnan				1	1			1				3
Guizhou								1	1			2
Total	Sub-total		4	19	12	13	8	10				
	Total	12	35			31			19	1	14	112

Table 2 above provides a general look at these bestowed copies of the canon, which will be followed by further spatiotemporal analysis. Several points in this Table deserve special attention. First, the distribution was very uneven in time. Generally speaking, there were four waves of bestowal in Wanli 14-15, 17, 27-28, and 42. More concretely, twelve copies were sent out in the first ten years, but this number rose by about 190 percent to thirty five in the next twelve years. In the decade after Wanli 22 the bestowed copies decreased slightly, and then further dropped by 39 percent in the fourth decade. During the five years from Cisheng's death to Wanli's death, only one copy was issued. Wanli 14-15 and 27-28 were two periods in which the highest number of copies was distributed, but some years, from Wanli 23 (1595) to Wanli 26 (1598) for instance, had no canon to be sent out at all. Geographically, North China got 39 copies while the Jiangnan region got 33, together taking up 64 percent of all canons granted. Moreover, in the first twenty or so years North China received 45 percent while Jiangnan 21 of

<sup>62</sup> For recent studies on the bestowal of the northern version of the Buddhist canon, see He, *Mingdai Beijing fojiao siyuan xiujuan yanjiu*, pp.317-22, and Nozawa Yoshimi 野沢佳美, "Mindai hokuzō kō 1: kashi jōkyō o chūshin ni" 明代北藏考(一): 下賜状況を中心に, *Risshō daigaku bungakubu ronsō* 立正大學文學部論叢, 117 (2003), pp. 81-106.

all given canons. After that, Jiangnan overweighed North China with a ratio of 39 % to 22%. Beijing's change in these two phases deserves special attention. Beijing got 24 copies and ranked first among all places obtaining canons, but its percentage among the whole country dropped from 38 to 8 from the first half to the second.

So far scholars have assumed that these canons were sent out by Cisheng, at most in the name of Wanli, but this assumption is open to question. The bestowed canon each had a protecting edict (*huchi* 護敕) which was carved on a stone stele and erected in front of the temple. These edicts, as long as they belonged to the same period, are identical in content and different only in the time of bestowal, the name of the temple and its abbot. There are three types among all of such edicts. When a canon was given to Huayan si 華嚴寺 at Mount Jizu 雞足 (i.e. Mount *Kukkuṭapāda*, where *Kāśyapa* was believed to have entered into *nirvāṇa*) in Yunnan in the third month of Wanli 14, a protecting edict says, “Now, the Holy Mother, Empress Dowager Cisheng xuanwen mingshu, ordered the carving and printing of the forty-one cases of the sequel to the [Northern] Buddhist canon and, together with six hundred and thirty-seven cases of the old version of Buddhist canon, bestowed it on this monastery.”(茲者, 聖母慈聖宣文明肅皇太后, 命工刊印續入《藏經》四十一函, 並舊刊《藏經》六百三十七函, 通行頒佈本寺).<sup>63</sup> That year Cisheng bestowed fifteen copies of the canon on fifteen temples, Huayan si included. This edict makes it clear that these copies were given out following Cisheng's order. Three years later, Cisheng herself issued an edict to Dajue si 大覺寺 at Mount Jizu in which she said, “[Since I] enjoy a peaceful time without doing anything, [I] want to express my gratitude. [I] thus donate my own silver preserved in the inner court and ask the Chinese Sutra Plant in the Directorate of Ceremonial to print more than twenty copies of the esteemed Buddhist canon. [I] distribute them to famous mountains and temples in every province and invite [monks] to recite them.”(...坐享清平, 思惟感酬. 乃自捐內幣銀兩, 命司禮監漢經廠造佛尊經二十餘部, 散施各省名山寺院, 延請課誦).<sup>64</sup> It is very clear that Cisheng printed and distributed these copies at her own cost. In Wanli 27, the emperor granted a copy to Wenshu si 文殊寺 at Mount Wutai with an edict saying, “I appreciate the reliability of the good way (i.e. Buddhism). Considering that its distribution is not wide enough, I order officials in charge to print the complete canon, which has six hundred and seventy-eight cases, and give

<sup>63</sup> *Jizu shanzhi* 雞足山志 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980) 8, p. 1b (474).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 8, p. 2a (475).

them out to famous mountains and temples inside the national capital and the whole country in a hope to make [Buddhism] eternal.”(朕嘉善道之可依，念傳佈之未廣，爰命所司印造全藏六百七十八函，施捨在京及天下名山寺院，永垂不朽).<sup>65</sup> Obviously, Wanli was the major driving force in the waves of granting the canon in Wanli 27 (1599) and 28 (1600).

The shift from Cisheng to Wanli as the major driving force to distribute the canon has a strong political flavor. Wanli said in the 1584 edict, “I think that Buddhist teachings have all been included in the canon, and that it is helpful to protect the state and assist the people by using [the canon] to transform and guide good people and to enlighten the deluded.”(朕惟佛氏之教，具在經典，用以化導善類，覺悟群迷，于護國佑民，不爲無助).<sup>66</sup> This is a traditional way to justify his act. In the 1587 edict, Cisheng said, “[In doing so, I wish] that the emperor and the crown prince rule the world under Heaven forever and that the ministers be loyal and children be filial.”(祝皇帝皇儲而永禦萬邦，願臣忠子孝).<sup>67</sup> These wishes were suitable for Cisheng’s status as Wanli’s mother and the head of the inner court, but it is noticeable that she mentioned the crown prince which, according to her stance, must have referred to Zhu Changluo. In fact, this was not the only case in which Cisheng prayed for the benefit of her oldest grandson.<sup>68</sup> Compared to them, the political flavor is strongest in the 1599 edict. Wanli then said, “I sincerely resolve to print the Buddhist canon and bestow their copies on famous mountains and monasteries in the capital area and all over the country to worship.... [I wish] it should make me healthy and peaceful and keep the inner court stable and in order. [In doing so, I] repent for [my] previous wrongdoings and pray for longevity and never-ending blessings. [I wish that] the people should be tranquil, the country be safe, and the world under Heaven be peaceful. [In this way], [people] in the four seas and eight directions will all return to the teaching of benevolence and sympathy, whereby helping me to fulfill my non-action way of ruling the state.”(朕發誠心，印造佛《大藏經》，頒賜在京及天下名山寺院供奉...保安眇躬康泰，宮壺肅清，懺已往愆尤，祈無疆壽福，民安國泰，天下太平。俾四海八方，同歸仁慈善教，朕成恭己無爲之治道焉).<sup>69</sup> The emperor himself was the only key word in this edict.

<sup>65</sup> Yinguang, *Qingliang shanzhi* 7, p. 9a (221).

<sup>66</sup> *Jizu shanzhi* 8, p. 1b (474).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid* 8, p. 2a (475).

<sup>68</sup> See, for example, Mizang Daokai 密藏道開, *Mizangkai chanshi yigao* 密藏開禪師遺稿 (in *Jiaxing dazangjing* 嘉興大藏經 [Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1986-87], vol. 23, no.118) 1, pp.11b, 12c-13a.

<sup>69</sup> Yinguang, *Qingliang shanzhi* 7, p. 9a (222).

His first desire was to keep the inner court stable and in order through circulating these canons. Given that Wanli would not formally establish Zhu Changluo as his successor until two years later, this edict reveals how troubled and tired he felt about court strife. In addition, he expressed regret for his wrongdoings. Wanli was anything but a fool. He admitted that he had made mistakes but had no intention to change. Instead, he wished that he could continue rule in the so-call “non-action” way, which was a euphemism for his laziness in administration.

Finally, I will proceed to examine the relationship between Cisheng and Wanli with monks. It is said that “our reigning emperor and Empress Dowager Cisheng esteem the Three Jewels (i.e. Buddhism) and have invited all eminent monk in the country [to the capital].” (今上慈聖皇太后崇重三寶，域內名僧靡不延之).<sup>70</sup> They appointed monks as abbots, awarded them with honourable titles or purple robes, helped them to build or repair temples, and invited them to expound the Buddhist teaching. The number of Wanli’s cases in this regard was too few to be analyzed, whereas Cisheng was much more active in this respect.

The bracketed number in Table 3 below refers to the number of monks whose biographies have been collected in the five Biographies of Eminent Monks (*gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳) of the Ming, which I will analyze in detail in Chapter Seven. Based on this Table, we can see: 1) Two out of three monks linked to Cisheng were eminent monks and that most of them established links with her in North China. Also, a tendency is clear that Cisheng was expanding her links to monks outside the capital: from Wanli 23 onward, for example, in her all connections with monks the percentage of monks in North China dropped from 61 to 38. 2) The Jiangnan region was the major rival of North China, but it is worth noticing that the latter’s loss was not the former’s gain. In fact, the latter’s share in the entire country decreased from 14 percent to 13 from the first phase to the second. In other words, Cisheng seems to have paid little attention to monks in the Jiangnan region. 3) After Wanli 22 there were five monks who were persecuted because, or largely because, of their links with Cisheng. At the same time, the number of monks linked with Cisheng dropped by 57 percent from 14 in the first twenty-two years to 6 in the later twenty years in Beijing, or by 43 from 28 to 16 in the whole country.

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<sup>70</sup> “Huhang Yunqi Lianchi dashi taming” 古杭雲棲蓮池大師塔銘, in Huang, *Ming wenhai* 明文海 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), j. 679. When this text was included in *HSMY*, however, the sentence “域內名僧靡不延之” in this inscription is missing. Moreover, there are other differences between the two versions of this inscription.

Table 3: Cisheng's Connection with Monks

Time \ place			Wanli 1-22	Wanli 23-42		Total
					Victimized	
North Zhili	Non-North China					
	North China	Non-Beijing Beijing	14 (11)	4 (2)	2 (2)	20 (15)
Shanxi	North China		3 (2)	2 (1)		5 (3)
	Non-North China					
Henan			1		1	2
Shandong						
Zhejiang	Non-Jiangnan		1 (1)			1 (1)
	Jiangnan		3 (2)			3 (2)
South Zhili	Jiangnan		1 (1)	2		3 (1)
	Non-Jiangnan			1 (1)		1 (1)
Fujian			1			1
Huguang			1 (1)	1 (1)		2 (2)
Jiangxi					1	1
Sichuan			2 (2)		1 (1)	3 (3)
Yunnan			1 (1)			1 (1)
Guizhou				1		1
Total			28 (21)	11 (5)	5 (3)	44 (29)

Taking into account Cisheng's activities in these three fields together, some points have become clear: 1) In time, Cisheng was very active in patronizing Buddhism in the first two decades of the Wanli era, which was followed by a drastic reduction roughly from Wanli 23 to Wanli 30 (1602), and finally became active again in the remaining part of her life but on a very moderate degree. In contrast, Wanli did not show special interest in Buddhism, but his involvement increased a little bit in the second half of his reign. He was relatively active in Wanli 27 to 28 (1600), when he was constantly bothered by the issue of the crown prince, and in the last few years of his life. 2) With regard to her way to patronize Buddhism, Cisheng kept active in financially supporting temples in the first half of this era, and bestowed the Buddhist canon in a large quantity during the period from Wanli 14 to Wanli 22. She was also actively linking herself with monks during this period. After that, she had several ways to support Buddhism. On Wanli's part, evidenced by his activities at Mount Wutai and the Putuo Island, his main contribution was the distribution of the Buddhist canon. Unlike Cisheng, he did not have close links with monks, with a few exceptions I will examine in chapter 5. 3) Geographically, Cisheng took Beijing and Mount Wutai as the center of her activities related to Buddhism, but she gradually expanded her circle beyond North China to other areas as time passed. In contrast, Wanli's focus was on the Jiangnan region and had little interest in North China. As a result, the mother and the son simultaneously appeared in a few cases in Jiangnan.

Based on analysis above, it has become evident that the rise and fall in Cisheng's and Wanli's involvement with Buddhism match changes in the political climate and in their relationship very well. This parallel relationship strongly suggests the profound influence of politics on their acts related to Buddhism. And an important reason for it was largely because Cisheng's income was limited so that she had to financially rely on cooperation with Wanli and other members of the court elite to carry out those costly projects.<sup>71</sup>

### 3.3 Cisheng's and Wanli's Direct Influence on Buddhism

I have traced and analyzed Cisheng's and Wanli's involvements with Buddhism, but statistics alone cannot tell vivid stories about their influence on Buddhism. Moreover, as a woman living in the inner court, Cisheng was not able to exert influence as directly as Jiajing did. In this section I will thus turn to case studies to get a sense of her direct influence on Buddhism.

Cisheng's Buddhist activities were concentrated in Beijing and Mount Wutai in the first two decades of the Wanli era. In the first six years of Wanli era, eight monasteries were built or renovated by the imperial family.<sup>72</sup> Shen Defu 沈德符 (1578-1642), a famous and reliable observer of late Ming society, observed:

There is a monastery named Haihui south of the capital...it was rebuilt in Wanli 2 (1574) and looks magnificent. In the same year, Cheng'en si was also constructed at the southwest corner with more splendors...The one outside the city [of Beijing] is called Cishou si. Eight *li* far from the Fucheng gate,<sup>73</sup> its construction was sponsored by Dowager Empress Cisheng...This project started in Wanli 4 (1576) and finished two years later. A stupa

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<sup>71</sup> For a discussion on the money that Cisheng spent on Buddhism, see Chen, "Ming Wanli shiqi Cisheng taihou de congfo," pp. 209-20. Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life*, p.169n.145, said that "Ray Huang has noted that Empress Dowager Li had an annual income from palace estates of nearly fifty thousand ounces of silver. If the preceding estimates are roughly correct, this sum could have accommodated even her energetic religious activities." For the figure she mentioned, see Huang, *Taxation and Governmental Finance in Sixteenth-Century Ming China* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 303, 325. However it seems that Naquin did not notice that this figure included Dowager Empress Rensheng's income as well. Or else she might adjust her judgment regarding if the silver was sufficient to support Cisheng's religious activities.

<sup>72</sup> They were Yanshou si 延壽寺, Haihui si 海會寺, Cheng'en si 承恩寺, Puan si 普安寺, Xiyu shuanlin si 西域雙林寺, Cishou si 慈壽寺, Cishan si 慈善寺, and Wanshou si 萬壽寺.

<sup>73</sup> One "*li*" in the Ming dynasty is about one-third mile.

named Yong'an stands directly behind the mountain gate. Beautiful, splendid, and tidy...it cost a large amount of money. Cisheng's donation was followed by assistance from other members of the royal family; hence it could be completed so rapidly. ...By the third month of Wanli 5 (1577), our reigning emperor began to build Wanshou si for himself seven *li* outside of the Xizhi gate<sup>74</sup>...Compared with Cishou si, it is even grander...it occupies more than four *qing* (fifty-six acres) of fields and moreover was completed within one year. At that time, Feng Bao, the powerful eunuch who was leading the Directorate of Ceremonial, was in charge of the project. He first assisted it with ten thousands taels of [his own] silver, and then, from Prince of Lu, princesses, Honoured Consorts, to eunuchs, everyone donated to it. Its luxuriousness is more than several times that of the three biggest monasteries in Jinling (i.e. Nanjing) in colors and decorations. In terms of the prosperity of Buddhist monasteries, it is almost comparable to those recorded in the *Luoyang qielan ji*.<sup>75</sup> When I visited Wanshou si again, it happened that monks there were praying for blessing on the emperor's behalf. Almost one thousand people were chanting Buddhist sutras, and they sounded like the sea tide. Among them was the leading monk, who was under twenty years old and looked as beautiful as a pretty woman. All monasteries mentioned above were supported by the emperor and the dowager empress with their surplus. As for gathering labour and collecting construction materials, they were all charged by powerful eunuchs and generally had nothing to do with officials. [Thus], the populace can hardly feel that there were those labour-consuming projects...Previously, Dowager Empress Rensheng (?-1596) also gave out her surplus money to build Renshou si at a place several *li* south of the city. 今京師城南有海會寺者, ...今上萬曆二年重修, 已稱鉅麗. 本年又於城之西南隅鼎建承恩寺, 其壯偉又有加焉. ...其在城外者曰慈壽寺, 去阜成門八里, 則聖母慈聖皇太后所建...始於萬曆四年, 凡二歲告成, 入山門即有牽堵坡高入雲表, 名永安塔...所費甚多. 蓋慈聖既捐帑, 各邸俱助之, 因得速就如此. ...至五年之三月, 今上又自建萬壽寺於西直門外七里. ...視慈壽寺又加麗焉. ...凡占地四頃有奇, 亦浹歲即成.

<sup>74</sup> For Wanshou si, see Hu Jiamei 胡佳梅, "Wanshou si mingchao shishi kao lue" 萬壽寺明朝史事攷略, *Beijing wenbo* 北京文博, no. 2 (2005), pp. 80-85.

<sup>75</sup> This book was written by Yang Xuanzhi 楊銓之 (fl. 547) and is well known for its detailed description of the prosperity of Buddhism in Luoyang in the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534). See Yang Yong 楊勇 and Yang Xuanzhi, *Luoyang qielan ji jiaojian* 洛陽伽藍記校箋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006). It has been translated by Wang Yi-t'ung into English under the title of *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).



時司禮故大槓馮保領其事，先助萬金。潞邸及諸公主諸妃嬪，以至各中貴，無不捐資。其藻繪丹雘，視金陵三大刹不啻倍蓰。蓋塔廟之極盛，幾同《洛陽伽藍記》所載矣。予再遊萬壽時，正值寺衲爲主上祝釐，其梵唄者幾千人，聲如海潮音。內主僧年未二十，美如倩婦。....以上諸刹，俱帝后出供奉之羨，鳩工聚材，一以大槓蒞之，有司例不與聞，民間若不知有大役。...先是，萬曆二年，仁聖太后亦出羨金，建仁壽寺於城南數里。<sup>76</sup>

Cisheng was central to most of these Buddhist projects. But more importantly, she established a relatively close relationship with the monks involved. Deqing lived more than twenty years in Beijing and Shanxi and was very familiar with the *sangha* in the capital region during the Jiajing-Wanli period. He spoke of Cisheng's patronage of Buddhism in Beijing as follows:

Only in the *xingyou* year of the Longqing era (1572) did the late emperor begin to glorify Buddhism. [He] held a ritual for good fortune at Puan si. The master was in charge of the temple, and his sincerity was responded [by Heaven]. [As a result], [he] received immense imperial favours and obtained vegetarian food and gifts from the inner court. In the first year of our current emperor, the Holy Mothers of the two palaces performed Buddhist ceremonies at a great scale for the benefit of the country. When holding religious rituals, in most cases they chose the master's temple. 隆慶壬申，先帝始崇佛道，就普安建吉祥道場。師主壇筵，精誠感格，恩渥頒隆，齋饋盡從中出。今上元年，兩宮聖母爲社稷祈福，大作佛事，凡建立齋壇，多就師所。<sup>77</sup>

The master refers to Gufeng Juechun 古風覺淳 (1511-1581). The two palaces refers to Cining 慈寧 palace and Ciqing 慈慶 palace where Cisheng and Empress Dowager Rensheng 仁聖 lived respectively.

During the period from the late Jiajing to early Wanli Puan si was an important monastery linked to the imperial family members, eunuchs, and court officials. It was originally built in the early Ming. When it was repaired by a group of eunuchs in Jiajing 40 (1561), it was senior

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<sup>76</sup> WLYH 27, pp. 686-87.

<sup>77</sup> HSMY 29, p. 622a.

Grand Secretary Xu Jie 徐階 (1503-1583) who wrote a piece to record this event. Moreover, an extant stele lists its patrons consisting of the most powerful eunuchs of the age, although the list is not that long.<sup>78</sup> After the completion of this project, Juechun was invited by those eunuchs to be the abbot of this temple. Juechun was native to Baoding prefecture, north Zhili, and learned from Baozang Zicheng 寶藏自成 (1472-1560) at Guangji si 廣濟寺 in Beijing.<sup>79</sup> He was versed in Buddhist doctrines, especially the *Huayan jing* and the *Yuanjue jing*. He stayed in Puan si for almost twenty years in the Jiajing era and discussed the Tiantai and Huayan doctrines with Dharma masters like Yijiang Zhenfeng 一江真澧 (fl. 1560) and Daqian Changrun 大千常潤 (1514-1585). He managed to secure support from eunuchs in such a tough time. With Jiajing's death, therefore, his close relationship with the inner court brought him to the front of the imperial family who just revitalized interest in Buddhism. In Wanli 2 (1574), Cisheng renovated Puan si at her own cost. One of Juechun's disciples was also appointed Wanli's "substitution monk" (*tiseng* 替僧).<sup>80</sup>

In Wanli 6 (1578) when Cisheng finished building Cishou si 慈壽寺, very likely the most important temple in her religious life, she invited Juechun to be its abbot. Originally the house of an influential eunuch, Cishou si was built to pray for longevity for Cisheng. With support from Wanli, eunuchs, and other inner court members, this project was completed in two years. It had four halls and about one hundred rooms. Cisheng invested much of her money and time in it and held Buddhist services there. Accordingly, acting as its abbot was both attractive and challenging, as Deqing described as follows:

By the time of our Holy Mother, [she] has exceeded previous ages in preaching and spreading the Three Jewels. [As a result,] temples scatter everywhere like stars and chess pieces, [among which] this one alone is the place adored by people all over the country. Endless Dharma treasury flows out of this temple, and all virtue flows into it. It is the hinge of *dharmaparyāya* (*fameng*; doctrines) and the storage of knowledge. The person heading it will hold the cardinal principle of the great teaching (i.e. Buddhism) and act as the model [of people] within the four seas; this task is definitely

<sup>78</sup> *SKHB*, vol. 56, p. 109. This low profile of these most powerful people was characteristic of eunuch's patronage of Buddhism in the final years of the Jiajing era, as I will discuss in Chapter Four.

<sup>79</sup> *HSMY* 29, pp. 625b-27a.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid* 29, pp. 621b-22b.

not slight. 至我聖母，弘通三寶，超越前代。琳宮紺宇，棋布星分。獨此寺爲天下大觀，無盡法藏，從此而出；一切功德，從此而入。爲法門之樞紐，知識之蘊蘊。當其任者，持大教之綱維，爲四海之觀望，殊非細事。<sup>81</sup>

Deqing was right in saying so. In fact, by Wanli 18 (1590) when Dafang Ruqian 大方如遷 (1538-1598) headed Cishou si, there were more than one thousand residents there.<sup>82</sup> However, not only did Juechun serve as its abbot until his death in Wanli 9 (1581), but he also passed this position on to his disciple and his “Dharma-grandson”.

In addition to the Beijing region, Cisheng’s influence also expanded to Mount Wutai where the *samgha* was intertwined with Beijing. With regard to Cisheng, it was reported that in the early Wanli era,

[She] performed Buddhist services on a large scale to pray for posthumous blessings for the deceased emperor and to protect the reigning emperor. She selected Mount Wutai out of all the prominent mountains as the first site to do so. She invited twelve eminent monks, with Chan Master Erhu of the Fenglin monastery as the head. The master...was native to Taiyuan, Shanxi...the Holy Mother built Fenglin si for him to live in. After having built this temple, considering that the Wutai mountain is one thousand li away from the capital and the mountain itself several hundred *li* in depth, [she] ordered a reception temple to be built by the Fangshun bridge of Mancheng county, Baoding sub-prefecture, and granted it with a name Daci xuanwen. ...the Way of the master is admired even by people outside the territory, and his reputation reaches the inner court. ... People like eunuch Mr. Xu and others all respect him deeply. 爲資先帝，保聖躬，大作佛事。天下名山，自五臺始。延高僧十二員，以鳳林寺二虎禪師爲首座。師...山西太原人...聖母爲建鳳林寺以居之。寺完，以臺山去京千里，山深數百里，仍就保定府滿城縣方順橋邊，置接待寺一所，額名大慈宣文...師道重方外，名達內庭...若供奉徐公...輩，皆深重師。<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> HSMY 21, pp. 519b-520a.

<sup>82</sup> See Xingtong 性統, *Xu deng zheng tong* 續燈正統 (in *XZJ*, vol. 84, no. 1583) 37, p. 927b.

<sup>83</sup> HSMY 22, p. 528a.

Chan Master Erhu referred to Zhuoan Chetian 卓庵徹天 (?-1577),<sup>84</sup> and Fenglin si was located in a quiet valley eight kilometres away from Taihuai town. Several points here deserve special attention. First, Mount Wutai had attracted Cisheng's attention since the early phase of her religious life. Secondly, since Master Erhu practiced Buddhism mainly in the Wutai Mountain, it is likely that he got support from Prince of Shen and Prince of Dai who were enthusiastic for Buddhism.<sup>85</sup> Thirdly, Shanxi was then an ideal location for monks to live. In addition to the patronage of local princes, its proximity to Beijing made it possible for them to project their influence to the imperial capital from a safe distance.<sup>86</sup>

Fourthly, the eunuch surnamed Xu might well refer to Xu Zhengguang 徐正光 (1550-?) on whom Cisheng heavily relied.<sup>87</sup> According to his biography by Deqing, Xu was a native of Baoding county which was close to Beijing. He was brought into the inner court in Jiajing 34 (1555). "[He] serves the Holy Mother in her daily life...His virtue and status is increasing every day. [He] firmly believes in the Three Jewels, building Mingyin si outside the Chongwen gate of the capital, to which he donated a copy of the Buddhist canon and invited *śramana* Yongqing as its abbot. He rebuilt Longquan si at the Jiulu ridge at the Wutai Mountain, Shanxi province...Also [he] rebuilt Fengxiang si north of Qüyang county, Zhending [prefecture]... He silently helps the Holy mother to fulfil her favours to famous mountains and big monasteries within the realm and publicizes her teachings. (奉聖母起居...德位日崇, 篤信三寶. 於都城崇文門外, 建明因寺一區, 印施佛大藏經一部, 延沙門永慶爲住持. 於山西五臺舊路嶺, 重修龍泉寺...又於真定曲陽縣北, 重修鳳祥寺一所...域內名山大刹, 凡聖母功德所被者, 靡不默助皇猷, 敷揚慈化).<sup>88</sup>

Yongqing refers to Yangya Yongqing 仰崖永慶 (fl. 1590).<sup>89</sup> Longquan si and Mingyin si, although located in the Wutai region and Beijing respectively, had close relations. Longquan si was founded in the Jiajing era by Master Wuzhuding 無住定 who had once studied in Shaolin si 少林寺. Later, Wuzhu's disciple Yunya 雲崖, a native of Baoding 保定 who was versed in

<sup>84</sup> Yinguang, *Qingliang shanzhi* 2, p. 19a (77).

<sup>85</sup> We shall see more information about the patronage of these two local princes of Buddhism in Chapter Five.

<sup>86</sup> For example, it took Xu Xiake 徐霞客 (1586-1641) six days to reach the Jiulu ridge from Beijing in 1633. See "Wutai shan youji" 五臺山遊記 in Xu Hongzu 徐弘祖, *Xu Xiake youji* 徐霞客遊記 (Rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980).

<sup>87</sup> *SKHB*, vol. 58, p. 50.

<sup>88</sup> *HSMY* 29, p. 625a.

<sup>89</sup> For Yongqing, see Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可, *Zibo zunzhe bieji* 紫柏尊者別集 (*XZJ*, vol. 73, No. 1453) 1, p. 104b.

the precepts, went to Beijing and rebuilt a temple called Sansheng 三聖.<sup>90</sup> Five years after Yunya's death in Wanli 13 (1585), his Dharma-grandson Yangya Yongqing inherited Sansheng si. Cisheng gave Yongqing money to renovate this temple and renamed it Mingyin si, and Yongqing changed it into a public temple (*shifang* 十方).<sup>91</sup> Once again this case proved frequent communications of Buddhist society between Beijing and Mount Wutai.

Cisheng had various kinds of activities in the temples she sponsored. She often held Buddhist services there, first for the deceased Longqing emperor and the young Wanli emperor in the early years, and then for her eldest grandson and herself. She invited eminent monks from other places to these temples to expound Buddhist teachings. More importantly, these monasteries were places linking Cisheng and the Buddhist world. In the early years, most of the residents there were local monks of North China. As time passed, more and more eminent monks were attracted into these temples from other parts of the country, especially the Jiangnan region and Sichuan. For example, Hanshan Deqing and Zibo Zhenke, both from the Jiangnan region, were often found active in Cishou si and Longquan si. Zhenke was also active in Mingyin si.<sup>92</sup> And Deqing actually spent much of his time in these temples during the period of more than twenty years when he was in North China. Cisheng was in the inner court where monks were not allowed to enter, but one case shows how effective their connection was. On the fifteen day of the fourth month of Wanli 20 (1592/5/25), Zhenke arrived in Tanzhe si from Mount Wutai. Although this temple was located in secluded mountains over eighty *li* west of Beijing, Cisheng soon dispatched two eunuchs bringing vegetarian food to him. On the thirteen day of next month (1592/6/22), Zhenke happened to find Buddhist relics at Yunju si which were buried there in 615. He immediately informed one of the two eunuchs and, by the first day of the sixth month (1592/7/9), those relics appeared before Cisheng in the inner court.<sup>93</sup>

At the same time when these monks were moving northward, Cisheng was expanding her circle southward through the bestowal of the Buddhist canon. She always assigned a few eminent monks to accompany a granted canon to the favoured temple,<sup>94</sup> which facilitated the communication of Buddhist society in different places. For example, Yangya Yongqing was

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<sup>90</sup> *RXJW* 58, p. 947.

<sup>91</sup> *HSMY* 22, pp. 525b-27a.

<sup>92</sup> *RXJW* 58, p. 947.

<sup>93</sup> *HSMY* 22, pp. 619a-b.

<sup>94</sup> In addition to accompanying monks, eunuchs were also included in the escort. For those canons granted by Wanli, however, monks were excluded in most cases. One of the reasons for this difference is because Cisheng's bestowal had been organized carefully because of the participation of eminent monk like Zhenke. For example, cf. Zhenke, *Zibo zunze bieji* 3, p.424.

active mainly in Beijing and on Mount Wutai, but he sent one copy to Guoqing si 國清寺 at Mount Tiantai 天台 in Zhejiang and another to Huanglong si 黃龍寺 at Mount Lu 廬山 in Jiangxi. And on the way to and back from Guoqing si, he was recorded to have had interaction with monks in Huangzhou.<sup>95</sup> In another instance, when Ben'an 本安 delivered a copy to Mount Jizu in Yunnan in Wanli 17 (1589), he accepted an invitation to stay at Huayan si there and finally contributed to the promotion of this mountain as a Buddhist sacred site.<sup>96</sup> When a canon arrived in a temple, as a symbol of the imperial family it also served as kind of channel between Cisheng and local society, particularly the local elite there, and drew them closer.

### 3.4 Concluding Remarks

As the mother of a reigning emperor, Cisheng had extraordinary influence but at the same time faced a challenge from the strongest power in the country. In addition, as a woman confined to the inner court and restricted by the Ancestral Instruction, generally she was not able to exert influence directly but through her relationship with the emperors, inner court elite, and court officials. In the first decade of the Wanli era, through cooperation with powerful court officials and eunuchs, she kept Wanli under her control. As the political climate changed as a result of Zhang Juzheng's death and the entry of other women into Wanli's life, Cisheng's influence on her emperor-son weakened. Later, their conflict in the succession issue further deteriorated the mother-and-son relationship. Gradually, as Wanli was pushed into a corner, Cisheng stood in opposition to him. Cisheng barely won but lost the heart of her son, and the lowest point in their relationship appeared during the period roughly from Wanli 23 to 30. After that, with the declaration of the crown prince, they became closer again, but far less close than in the early years.

Largely a result influenced by the surroundings in which she lived, Cisheng was a devout Buddhist follower and, like in Jiajing's case, religious faith played significant roles in her private life. However, her position at the top end of the power structure made her religious belief was inextricably interwoven with court strife. On the other hand, Cisheng's lack of independent influence made her relationship with Buddhism vary greatly with her power, which was in turn decided by her relationship with Wanli. As a result, generally speaking, her

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<sup>95</sup> *KXT* 47, p. 4 (667b), 6 (668b), and 12 (671a).

<sup>96</sup> *Jizu shanzhi* 4, p. 5b (262); 6, pp. 11a-b (401-402).

privileged position enabled her to patronize Buddhism in an intensive and extensive way, making her probably the most generous and powerful patron of Buddhism throughout the Ming. To be specific, in the first twenty years or so, North China, especially Beijing, was the center of her activities related to Buddhism. A deep decline in patronage followed this period, which was in turn succeeded by a moderate revival of her patronage in the Jiangnan region after Wanli 35 (1607). It seems safe to say that variations in Cisheng's patronage of Buddhism match the fluctuations in her relationship with her son very well and that the former was profoundly influenced by the latter.<sup>97</sup>

Such a complicated interplay between religion and politics profoundly impacted the development of Buddhism of the age. After Jiajing's discrimination against Buddhism for forty years, Cisheng's appearance was very welcome to Buddhism. It helped to attract more monks to North China and Beijing from all over the country. At the same time she was expanding her influence on the Buddhist community in other areas. This flow of people and resources in two directions facilitated communication between different areas. On Wanli's part, he did not get involved much with Buddhism, and his major interest was in Putuo Island and Mount Wutai. But the conflict with his mother caused tragedies in the lives of some eminent monks closely related to Cisheng. And these tragedies, as I will show in Chapter Five, had a tremendous effect on the evolution of the late Ming Buddhism.

It is worthwhile to notice that Jiajing, Wanli, and Cisheng did not exert influence on the religious world of the age only as political leaders. In fact, in the particular surroundings of imperial China, the deification of these figures at the top of the hierarchy made them seen as moral leaders and thus modeled by their subjects. Therefore, in addition to their roles as political leaders, they were kind of "opinion leaders" who were able to change other people's behaviours through their attitudes and choices. This remains particular true with Cisheng, who lacked formal support from bureaucracy to enforce her orders, which was a privilege exclusively to an emperor, but had moral superiority to Wanli because of her role in the succession issue. In the next chapter, I will thus proceed to study how different social groups kept adjusting their relationships with Buddhism in response to the influence of these political leaders and the whole political climate, thereby shaping the state of late Ming Buddhism.

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<sup>97</sup> But it is worth noting that the latter alone was not able to decide the former. Instead, the general financial situation of the government was another key factor: when Cisheng gave her support to Buddhism in the first two decades, it happened to be the best days of the Wanli era. When her patronage decreased drastically after Wanli 22, the Ming treasury was exhausted because of three military campaigns which cost more than twenty million taels of silver.

## Chapter 4

### Eunuchs and Scholar-officials: Shaping Buddhism

I have discussed how people at the top end of the hierarchy adjusted their policy and acts related to Buddhism under political pressure during the Jiajing-Wanli era, but the direct effect of this handful of people on Buddhism was limited, even if they turned to administrative means sometimes. On the other hand, their status as political and moral leaders enabled them to play the role of opinion leaders who had impact on the stance of other social groups through creating certain kinds of atmosphere. This point is applicable to their relationship with Buddhism, thereby affecting the development of the latter. In this chapter I will move from the central governmental level to the local level, examining eunuchs and scholar-officials as the main forces influencing Buddhism in Beijing and Jiangnan respectively. Although these two social groups lived in the same political surroundings, their different positions in the hierarchy of power and their distinct social, economic, and cultural backgrounds made them act in different ways. I will first trace how these people adjusted their relationship with Buddhism not only under contemporary political pressure but also in response to changes in personal attitudes towards Buddhism of imperial family members, and then reveal its corresponding effects on the development of Buddhism.

#### 4.1 Social Analysis of Patrons of Buddhism

Buddhist temple construction projects were a reliable test about people's involvement with and contribution to the *samgha* because they were usually money- and time- consuming. As we have seen in the last chapter, North China and the Jiangnan region were the main Buddhist centers in mid- and Late Ming China. In this section, taking Beijing and Suzhou prefecture, two areas core to these two regions, as examples, I will have a closer look at the major force affecting the development of the *samgha*.

In Beijing, two hundred and ninety-six Buddhist temples and chapels were recorded to be built, rebuilt or renovated during the Jiajing-Wanli period, among which the major patrons of



one hundred and sixty-six projects are known to us.<sup>98</sup> Table 4 shows the contribution of different social groups to these projects.

Table 4: Social and Temporal Analysis of Patrons in Beijing Area

Groups Time		Eunuchs	Imperial member	Local people	Monks	scholar-officials	Total
Jiajing	1-22	12	2	4	2		
	23-45	26	1	3	3		
	Unclear	7		3	3		
Subtotal (pct).		45 (68)	3(5)	10 (15)	8 (12)		66 (100)
Longqing (pct).		3(25)	3(25)	2 (17)	4 (33)		12 (100)
Wanli	1-22	25	17	7	4	2	
	23-48	10	6	1	11	2	
	Unclear	5					
Subtotal (pct).		40 (44)	23 (26)	8 (9)	15 (17)	4 (4)	90 (100)
Total (pct).		88 (52)	29 (17)	20 (12)	27 (16)	4 (2)	168 (100)

Local people in this Table consists of local residents, villagers (*cunmin* 村民), Imperial Bodyguards (錦衣衛) and other military officials. As for eunuchs, although some scholars have suggested that they were half local elites,<sup>99</sup> I treat them as a separate category in this Table because I deem them more as court elites than local elites. Scholar-officials roughly referred to people who had literary reputation and got a degree in the civil service examination. According to Table 4, eunuchs were the largest group backing temple building both in the Jiajing and Wanli eras. Together with the imperial family, they supported nearly three quarters of the building projects. In contrast, local people, monks and scholar-officials together contributed about one fourth of all the projects.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> The data source of Table 4 comes from Appendix one of He, *Mingdai Beijing fojiao siyuan xiujian yanjiu*, pp. 757-68, in which the Beijing area consisted of Wanping and Daxing counties. According to the appendix, one hundred and forty-four temples and chapels were built, rebuilt, or renovated in Beijing in the Jiajing era, eighteen in the Longqing era, and one hundred and thirty-three in the Wanli era. However, when the author discussed those temples in Chapter 5, pp. 564-93, the figures became one hundred and four, fourteen, and eighty five, respectively, and the reason for this discrepancy is unclear.

<sup>99</sup> David Robinson, "Notes on Eunuchs in Hebei during the Mid-Ming Period," *Ming Studies* 34. 1 (1995), pp. 1-16.

<sup>100</sup> See Chen Yunü, "Kinsei kahoku chiiki ni okeru bukyō no shakaiteki shintō no patan—Mindai hokuchokurei o sokuteino waku to shite" 近世華北地域における仏教の社會的浸透のパターン—明代北直隸を測定の枠として, in *Higashi ajia ni okeru seisan to ryūtsū no rekishi shakaigakuteki kenkyū* 東アジアにおける生産と流通の歴史社會學的研究, ed. Kawakatsu Mamoru 川勝守 (Fukuoka: Chūgoku Shoten, 1993), pp. 323-405.

As a comparison, let's look at the social composition of patrons of Buddhism in Suzhou Prefecture. Among one hundred twenty-nine construction projects in the Jiajing-Wanli period, major patrons of eight-one of them were recorded.<sup>101</sup>

Table 5: Social and Temporal Analysis of Patrons in Suzhou Prefecture

Time	Group	Imperial member	Local people	Monks	Local official	Total
Jiajing	1-22			4		
	23-45			5		
	Unclear		3	5		
Subtotal (pct).			3 (18)	14 (82)		17(100)
Longqing (pct).			1 (25)	3 (75)		4(100)
Wanli	1-22	1	8	15		
	23-48		10	22	2	
	Unclear		4	8		
Subtotal (pct).		1 (2)	22 (37)	35 (58)	2 (3)	60(100)
Total (pct).		1 (1)	26 (32)	52(64)	2 (3)	81(100)

In Table 5, eunuchs disappear and imperial members' contribution is negligible. Scholar-officials are counted in the category of local people because usually they were not distinguished from other local elites as in Beijing, but current scholarship has showed that they formed a significant part of the latter. Local people contributed towards one in three of the projects. Monks in this area were much more active than in Beijing. They led nearly two third of the projects, although they depended mainly on local people to obtain resources.

Comparing Table 4 with 5, it is easy to understand why eunuchs and imperial family had little contribution to the *samgha* in Jiangnan, but hard to understand why scholar-officials had the lowest participation in these projects in Beijing. A large number of scholar-officials inhabited Beijing, and many of them were famous for patronizing Buddhism in their hometowns. However, although they wrote pieces for temples sometimes,<sup>102</sup> they were found

<sup>101</sup> The data of the Table is based on *Suzhou fuzhi* (1693).

<sup>102</sup> As far as the authors writing for Buddhist temples were concerned, there was a clear shift from monastic officials to court officials in the Beijing area around the sixteenth century, but the reason for and consequence of this important phenomenon have not been given sufficient attention.

involved in only four projects in Beijing.<sup>103</sup> This unusual phenomenon invites an explanation.

Scholar-officials' lack of involvement in the *samgha* in the capital had much to do with Beijing's double identities as the imperial capital and a locality.<sup>104</sup> Beijing was a big city with at least a million inhabitants by the 1550s, with many non-native people who were successful merchants and/or scholar-officials. But the involvement of the court in local affairs, together with the frequent activities of the imperial family in this area, discouraged these immigrants from partaking in local matters. As an example Naquin has pointed out that the government there was even reluctant to share with local elites the responsibilities of the distribution of charity. Such a low degree of participation prevented these elites from frequently acting as a group and forming a clear and solid consciousness of community,<sup>105</sup> as their counterparts did in the Jiangnan region. Secondly, keeping active in the neighbouring affairs was a significant and efficient way for the elite to amass cultural capital, but in Beijing "the state guarded its organizational authority, earned cultural capital itself, and strengthened political rather than social bonds of obligation and gratitude."<sup>106</sup> Thirdly, scholar-officials had to be careful to disclose their religious preference when they were still officials in the imperial capital to avoid attacks by their rivals. As a result, non-native people had not much interest in investing in the Buddhist institution.<sup>107</sup>

In contrast, there were two reasons pushing scholar-officials closer to Buddhism in the Jiangnan region. Negatively, during the one hundred years under discussion, only in half of that period were emperors taking their responsibilities seriously but the other half not. Fifty years was enough to quench the political enthusiasm of several generations of scholar-officials and forced them out of the conventional track of life. Positively, Wang Yangming's school of Confucianism, which emerged and prevailed in this period, in a large part, helped to justify

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<sup>103</sup> Lu Guangzu 陸光祖 alone contributed to two projects, one in the late Jiajing era and the other in the early Wanli era, see *Tanzhe Shan Xiuyun Si Zhi* 潭柘山岫雲寺志 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2006), pp. 12-13, and *Xin xu gaoseng zhuan* 7, p. 328; 20, p. 679, 691.

<sup>104</sup> Naquin, *Peking: Temple and City Life*, pp. 171-79, has a good discussion about Beijing's double identity and its significance for the development of this city.

<sup>105</sup> Naquin has proved this point from several perspectives, such as the edition of local gazetteer and the establishment of the Chenghuang temple (city god) which represented the collective image of a city.

<sup>106</sup> Naquin, *Peking: Temple and City Life*, p. 175. In the same page she also said that "government provided little mental or administrative scaffolding for a sharply defined urban identity. Indeed, it worked (seeming intentionally) to diffuse and undermine such an identity. Evidence of government-level citywide activities is limited."

<sup>107</sup> For the relationship between Beijing temples and non-residents, see *ibid.* p. 177, 193.

their turning to Buddhism.<sup>108</sup> In fact, unlike what we might think, the responsibility of scholar-officials for the state was their choice rather than their destiny. In the case when they were more economically independent of the court, when they were free from Confucian doctrines which emphasized their responsibilities to the country and the ruler, when they were able to collect sufficient cultural and social capital in local society, and when they felt that the cost was too high to be an official in court, they were likely turn back on politics and turned to other activities, including Buddhism.<sup>109</sup> And that was exactly what happened in the Jiangnan region in mid- and late Ming China.

#### 4.2 Eunuchs in Beijing: from Buddhism to Daoism

Prior to the Jiajing period Ming eunuchs had formed close relationships with the *samgha* in the imperial capital.<sup>110</sup> They requested name tablets for temples from an emperor, recommended monastic officials, and requested the exemption of land tax and corvee for temples that they favoured.<sup>111</sup> They frequently appeared in a large number to support the Buddhist projects. As a result, “From the Liao and Jin dynasties to the Great Yuan [dynasty], the capital (i.e. Beijing) did not pass a year without building Buddhist monasteries. By the Ming dynasty, there was no chief eunuch who did not build Buddhist temples. [As a result,] Buddhist temples [in this area] are twice as prosperous as those of the Jianzhang [palace] which had tens of thousands of doors.”<sup>112</sup> By the middle of Chenghua era, inside and outside the capital there were six hundred and thirty-nine Buddhist and Daoist temples which had imperially bestowed name tablets.” (都城自遼金以後，至於大元，靡歲不建招提。明則大璫

<sup>108</sup> In reality, this victory did not happen occasionally but was a timely reaction to changes in society, economics, and politics of the time. See, for example, Araki, *Yōmeigaku no kaiten to bukyō*.

<sup>109</sup> See Brook, *The Chinese State in Ming Society* (London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005); F. Wakeman Jr, “Boundaries of the Public Sphere in Ming and Qing China,” *Daedalus* 127. 3 (1998), pp. 167-89. In addition to Buddhism, other alternatives of politics for scholar-officials of the age included travel, dissipated life, and interest in pure knowledge such as mathematics, medicine and geography. See Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Luo, *Mingdai houqi shiren xintai yanjiu*.

<sup>110</sup> Naquin, *Peking: Temple and City Life*, p.180, says that “eunuch initiative was especially important during the first half of the dynasty, but even as the number of new temples gradually decreased, eunuchs continued to play a vital role as patrons.” See, for example, Chen, *Mingdai ershi si yamen huanguan yu Beijing fojiao*; He, “Mingdai huanguan yu fojiao.”

<sup>111</sup> Scholars have tried to understand such a close relationship from psychological, social, religious, and cultural perspectives, among which Chen Yunü’s efforts from economic and social perspectives deserve particular attention. See Chen, *Mingdai ershi si yamen huanguan*; Idem., “Ming dai zhong ye yiqian huanguang, sengguaan yu ting chen de lianjie guanxi.”

<sup>112</sup> The Jianzhang palace was built by Emperor Wu of the Western Han (r. B.C.E. 156-B.C.87) in B.C.E 104.

無人不建佛寺，梵宮之盛，倍於建章萬戶千門。成化中，京城內外勅賜寺觀至六百三十九所。<sup>113</sup>

#### 4.2.1 Eunuchs and Buddhism in the Jiajing Era

Eunuchs' relationship with the *samgha* became weakened in the first half of the Jiajing period, for Emperor Jiajing cut off, consciously or unconsciously, the traditional relationship between eunuchs and the Buddhist society when he succeeded to the throne. Jiajing brought some eunuchs from Hubei and then assigned them to all important positions in twelve Directorates (*shier si* 十二司).<sup>114</sup> Such a substitution helped the young ruler control the situation in a completely strange place, but it took time for Buddhism to establish connections with new eunuch leaders who came from a very different religious environment thousands miles away. Meanwhile, with the increase in Jiajing's hostility toward Buddhism, eunuchs were expected to act in accordance with him, regardless of their personal religious preferences. So, shown as Table 4, the frequency of their participation in Buddhist temple projects decreased in the first twenty years. Further, it is worth noticing that among all of these twelve cases, seven were carried out before Jiajing 6 (1627) and only five were left for the period from Jiajing 7 to 22. This decrease reflects the increasing pressure on Buddhism at court.

However, since those political, psychological, social, or economic causes which pushed eunuchs of former reigns to Buddhism remained unchanged in this period, it is only a matter of time that eunuchs formed a new alliance with Buddhism. Jiajing kept the ban on Buddhism in the second half of his reign, but to a less intense degree. At the same time, eunuchs got some relief from the heavy hand of the emperor. First of all, that Jiajing retreated to the western garden from the inner court from Jiajing 20 (1541) until his death gave eunuchs more chances to seek their own interest. Secondly, eunuchs were sought for collaboration by Yan Song who was trying to maintain his position as senior Grand Secretary and thus obtained more influence in court politics and more freedom in their own activities. As a result, a gradual revival of eunuchs' patronage of Buddhism was seen roughly in the second half of the Jiajing era and, as I will discuss in Chapter Six, the closer the emperor's death was approaching, the more frequent that eunuchs patronized the Buddhist community. A noticeable point is that these activities

<sup>113</sup> *Tanzhe shan xiuyun si zhi*, pp. 13-14. This paragraph is also cited in *RXJW* 60, pp. 986-87.

<sup>114</sup> The rapid promotion of Zhang Binshi, for example, is a case in point. These eunuchs from Hubei would clench almost all key positions in the eunuch bureau throughout the Jiajing era, but such kind of replacement was not without precedents. See Liang, *Mingdai huanguan*, p. 154, 156.

started to be led by those eunuchs who came from Hubei with the emperor and were in most powerful positions. Eventually, eunuchs' patronage of the Buddhist community doubled in the latter half of the Jiajing era.

Although eunuchs' patronage increased in this phase, they had to act with caution and constraint because the emperor, although not present physically at court, kept relentless control of them.<sup>115</sup> As a result, for example, they seldom left records about their contributions as before. Consider the case of Jietan si 戒壇寺 west of the capital. Originally founded in the Tang dynasty with a name Huiju 慧聚, this temple had attracted some eminent monks as its abbots and then built an ordination platform sometime in the Liao dynasty (907-1125). In time, it became a temple significant to Buddhism of the region by the end of the Yuan dynasty. Throughout the Ming dynasty, eunuchs sponsored its renovations at least three times. The first one was carried out from Xuande 9 (1434) to Zhengtong 5 (1440) by Wang Zhen, the most powerful eunuch of the age. This renovation project also brought this temple a new name Wanshou 萬壽 to wish the ruler a long life.<sup>116</sup> Nearly forty years later, the hall housing the ordination platform was repaired and, due to eunuchs' efforts, an edict was issued in 1480 promoting its abbot to right Buddhist Rectifier (*jueyi* 覺義) of the Central Buddhist Registry. After a blank of seventy years, eunuch Ma Yu 馬玉 and his fellows began to rebuild this temple again in Jiajing 29 (1550). Ma Yu, a native of Shuntian prefecture, served in Directorate of Imperial Stud (*yumajian* 御馬監) and was then about seventy years old. They rebuilt almost all important buildings in it, including the main hall, five smaller halls, and three pavilions. Noticeably, for the first time a Daoist god Zhenwu 真武 was also erected and worshipped in a hall.<sup>117</sup> Zhenwu was the most important Daoist god in the Ming dynasty because he was said to

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<sup>115</sup> For the danger facing patrons, for example, see a case that occurred at Tianning si 天寧寺 in Beijing in Jiajing 25 (1546): a censor suggested to the emperor that not only its leading monks but also its major outer protectors (*waihu* 外護; patrons) be arrested. See *JJSL* 313, pp. 4a-b (5859-60). I will discuss this event in Chapter Seven.

<sup>116</sup> It seems that Wang Zhen 王振 (?-1449), the notorious eunuch who was later blamed for the Tumubao debacle in 1449, composed the inscription to commemorate the completion of this project. Interestingly, however, his first name was gouged out and replaced with 鎮, a character with similar pronunciation.

<sup>117</sup> The Zhenwu god is said to have given tremendous assistance to both Hongwu and Yongle in their efforts to establish their own reigns. As a result, Zhenwu as a imperial guardian god was worshipped at the Qin'an 欽安 hall in the forbidden city throughout the Ming. Moreover, a cult of Zhengwu that took Mount Wudang in Hubei as the base took shape in the Ming dynasty. See Ishida Kenji, "Dōkyō no seizan butōsan—Shinbushin o matsuru dōkyō no reizan" 道教の聖山武當山——真武神を祀る道教の靈山, *Gekkan Shi'nika* 月刊しにか 11. 8 (2000), pp. 48-51; Pierre-Henry de Bruyn, "Wudang Shan: The

have helped Emperor Yongle defeat Emperor Jianwen. The presence of such a Daoist god in such an important Buddhist temple reveals the secret desire of its patrons to increase the survival chance of this Buddhist temple in the unfavourable surroundings.<sup>118</sup> A stele was erected seven years later when this project had been finished, but the patron names of twenty six eunuchs were not revealed until Jiajing 44 (1565) when another stele was put up.<sup>119</sup> An interval of nine years between these two steles and the difference between their contents are revealing. It demonstrates that eunuchs started to support Buddhism again in the latter half of the Jiajing era as long as they could avoid the emperor's attention, and that they became much bolder as the emperor's last day was approaching. Twenty six is not a big number, but eunuchs present in the list were all powerful figures. A small number shows a relatively low level of eunuchs' participation in the Buddhist program, but the significance of these figures suggests the bright future of this temple: this reflects the characteristic of a transition period.

#### 4.2.2 Eunuchs, Cisheng and Buddhism in the Early Wanli Era

Eunuchs' enthusiasm for temple-building projects continued in the Longqing era. Longqing was a mediocre emperor who had no special interest in religion. Xu Jie, the senior Grand Secretary during Jiajing-Longqing transition period, drove Daoism away from the court by taking advantage of Jiajing's death. As a follower of the Wang Yangming School, Xu Jie lent no special support to Buddhism but no longer put it under harsh restrictions either.<sup>120</sup> As for other Grand Secretaries, Zhao Zhenjie and Chen Yiqing 陳以勤 (1511-1586) clearly showed endorsement to Buddhism,<sup>121</sup> and Gao Gong even composed a piece for Jietian si in 1556 in praise of eunuch Ma Yu's merit to rebuild it. Under this context, the relationship between eunuchs and Buddhism kept warming up.

Eunuchs gained new momentum in supporting Buddhism in the first half of the Wanli era, especially in the first decade, but in many cases they did not act independently but as

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Origins of a Major Center of Modern Taoism," in *Religion and Chinese Society: Taoism and Local Religion in Modern China*, ed. John Lagerwey (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press; Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2004).

<sup>118</sup> This is not the only instance that a Buddhist temple tried to protect itself by building a Daoist building, at least in the name of Daoism, within its wall. Another instance could be seen at Dahui si 大慧寺 in *Shuntian Fuzhi* 順天府志 (Gazetteer of Shuntian Prefecture) (1886) (Rpt. Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1987), j. 17.

<sup>119</sup> For the two steles, see *SKHB*, vol. 56, p. 12, 114.

<sup>120</sup> See Chen, "Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū," pp. 103-107.

<sup>121</sup> Through a case study of an eminent monk, Chen Yunü has revealed general attitudes of officials at the Longqing court towards Buddhism. See Chen, "Ming Huayan zongpai Bianrong hesang ruyu kao."

supplement to Empress Dowager Cisheng. Cisheng was in a more influential position after her becoming Empress dowager. She launched many construction projects of Buddhist temples, most of which were in the capital region and rather challenging. Eunuchs were always asked to organize and supervise these projects. In some cases, they had to stay in the temple for several years.<sup>122</sup> Such engagement in these money-consuming ventures might bring eunuchs trouble because people always suspected that they embezzled the construction funds. For instance, Feng Bao was found to have more than one million taels of silver when his estate was confiscation in late Wanli 10. Although nobody knows how he amassed his wealth, since he had been in charge of a few temple construction projects,<sup>123</sup> it became a target readily attacked by his political rivals. Zhang Ben 張本 (?-ca.1595) was another eunuch who helped Cisheng with many projects, but he was thrown into prison in Wanli 23 (1595) when the tension between the mother and son reached the highest point.<sup>124</sup>

Eunuchs also flocked to support construction initiated by Cisheng, and the scale of their donations was shocking. Some well-preserved inscriptions show that the number of eunuchs in cooperation with the empress dowager and other imperial members in such situations increased substantially. For example, names of one thousand four hundred eunuchs appeared on a 1581 stele, with almost all important directors of eunuchs included.<sup>125</sup> This reminds us of the 1565 inscription erected in Jietan si. It has twenty-six names, most of which were important eunuch directors. Despite this similarity, however, unlike the 1581 inscription, no common eunuchs appeared together with those powerful directors in the 1565 case. Where did such a large number of eunuch believers come from? A possible answer is that their number was purposely cut down to circumvent possible political dangers.

Eunuchs also helped Cisheng to extend her favour to the Buddhist society outside the capital. At Cisheng's order, they traveled all over the country and held vegetarian feasts for monks in areas like Mount Pan near Beijing, Mount Wutai, the Putuo island, and the Jizu mountain in Yunnan province. They carried hundreds or even thousands of cassocks that Cisheng had made and granted them to eminent monks in her name. Also they could give monks the purple robe (ziyi 紫衣), a traditional way to acknowledge a monk's achievement

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<sup>122</sup> For example, see *Songshan shaolinsi ji zhi* 嵩山少林寺輯志 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980), j. 3; Zhang Sui 張隨 in *Putuo luojia shan xin zhi* 普陀洛迦山新志 (Yangzhou: Guangling guji keyin she, 1996) 4, pp. 3b-4b (212-14).

<sup>123</sup> See Chen, "Ming Wanli shiqi Cisheng taihou de congfo," p. 207, 220-27.

<sup>124</sup> I will discuss this case in detail in Chapter Five.

<sup>125</sup> Chen, "Ming Wanli shiqi Cisheng taihou de congfo," pp. 220-27.



and was thus valued by both monks and the state.<sup>126</sup> For example, when Su'an zhenjie 素庵真節 was lecturing on the article of Precious Pagoda (*paota pin* 寶塔品) of the Lotus Sutra at Qixia si 棲霞寺 in Nanjing in the early Wanli era, it was reported that a real precious pagoda appeared in the air before his seat. Eunuchs happened to witness this supernatural event and thus granted him a cassock in the name of Cisheng.<sup>127</sup> This freedom is understandable given how difficult the long-distance communication was at that age, but sometimes it brought them under criticism and even claimed their lives.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, eunuchs also extended Cisheng's influence in other ways. An instance was Sun Long 孫隆 (fl.1601) who stationed in the Jiangnan region, especially in Hangzhou and Suzhou, for a long time. As early as Wanli 17 (1589), Sun brought to Lingyin si 靈隱寺 a scroll of Bodhisattva Guanyin conferred by Cisheng.<sup>129</sup> In 1600, he further requested the bestowal of three copies of Buddhist canons to three monasteries in Hangzhou and Suzhou.<sup>130</sup>

Eunuchs did not help Cisheng merely because of duty or pressure; instead, many of them were Buddhist believers so that they frequently helped each other. Cisheng created a pro-Buddhism circle around her, which further attracted more eunuchs to this religion. A good example is Zhang Wen 張穩, a eunuch in the Cining palace where Cisheng resided. He believed in the Pure Land and headed an association which emphasized reciting the name of Buddha.<sup>131</sup> Jiang Tianyin 姜天隱, another attending eunuch in the Cining palace, was given a painting scroll inscribed by Cisheng in praise of his outstanding service related to Buddhism.<sup>132</sup> Cisheng also exchanged support to eunuchs she favoured in other ways. When eunuch Wang

<sup>126</sup> "Ziyi" was also called "zifu" 紫服 and "zi jiasa" 紫袈裟. The bestowal of the purple robe was relatively popular in Tang China and Japan. For discussion about the history and function of the purple robe, see Nakamura Hajime 中村元, *Bukkyōgo daijiten* 佛教語大辭典 (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Shoseki, 1975), p. 546a.

<sup>127</sup> For this story, see Minghe 明河, *Bu xu gaoseng zhuan* 補續高僧傳 (in *T.77.1524*) 5, p. 106a. The eunuch involved was Zhang Ben, see *FCZ* 4, p. 20a (521).

<sup>128</sup> The most serious charge against Zhang Ben was his "arbitrariness" in giving Hanshan Deqing the first Buddhist canon. For more details, see Chapter Five.

<sup>129</sup> *Wulin Lingyin Si Zhi* 武林靈隱寺志 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980) 5, p. 4b (246).

<sup>130</sup> *KXT* 42, p. 16-7; 58, p. 28b.

<sup>131</sup> *SKHB*, vol.58, p. 104.

<sup>132</sup> See *HSMY* 31, p. 1635. Hanshan Deqing mentioned that Cisheng once ordered a eunuch surnamed as Jiang to establish a monastery at the Funiu Mountain, a critical site for the development of Chan Buddhism in the Ming, especially the middle Ming. Very likely this eunuch was Jiang Tianyin. See *HSMY* 22, p. 529a.

and his fellows built Cihui si 慈慧寺, Cisheng handwrote the name tablet for it.<sup>133</sup> And she did the same thing again when another eunuch finished building Baoen si 報恩寺 in Beijing.<sup>134</sup>

Eunuchs' appearance in local society connected the inner court and the outer world and was thus significant to Buddhism of the age. For example, eunuch Xu Zhengguang was familiar with eminent monks like Zibo Zhenke, Hanshan Deqing, and Mizang Daokai. He was very likely to be the first and most important person bringing them to Cisheng's attention and, as to be argued in Chapter Five, played a significant role in their lives. In contrast, what Sun Long cemented was not monks but elites in the Jiangnan region.<sup>135</sup> After forty years of Jiajing's harsh treatment of Buddhism, Buddhist society was desperate for help. Eunuchs connected the inner court and the local Buddhist institution which otherwise would never meet. Since eunuchs were a key factor to decide the distribution of resources from the imperial family, as we shall see, there were many occasions in which eunuchs changed the fate of a temple or a monk.

#### 4.2.3 Eunuchs, Wanli, Buddhism and Daoism in the Late Wanli Era

According to Table 4, eunuchs' patronage of Buddhism decreased by sixty percent in the latter half of the Wanli era when compared with the first half. In some sense, Zhang Ben's being sentenced to death marked a turning point in the relationship of eunuchs and Buddhism. Zhang Ben was a eunuch on whom Cisheng heavily depended to fulfill her Buddhism commission. As early as Wanli 9 (1581), he appeared at Mount Wutai by Cisheng's order to pray for the birth of the crown prince. There he initiated his connection with Hanshan Deqing.<sup>136</sup> Shortly later, he received Cisheng's order and brought Buddhist statues and a Buddhist canon to Miaofeng Fudeng, another important monk, at Yongning si 永寧寺 on Mount Luya 蘆芽, Shanxi.<sup>137</sup> In Wanli 14 (1586) when Cisheng decided to distribute fifteen copies of the Buddhist canon, Zhang Ben delivered the first one to Deqing who was then in Haiyin si 海印寺 of Shandong province.<sup>138</sup> Later he continued serving Cisheng, leaving footprints all over the country, like

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<sup>133</sup> *HSMY* 29, p. 627b.

<sup>134</sup> *SKHB*, vol.59, p.125.

<sup>135</sup> Literati in Hangzhou even built a temple in memory of Sun Long, which was unusual in the pervading hatred to eunuchs in the latter half of the Wanli era.

<sup>136</sup> Yinguang, *Qingliang shanzhi* 7, p. 8b (220), says that this event happened in the first month of Wanli 10. For more discussion, see Appendix E.

<sup>137</sup> Huang, *Ming wen hai* 73, p. 685.

<sup>138</sup> *WLYH* 27, p. 692.

Qixia si in Nanjing, Huguo caoan si 護國草庵寺 at Mount E'mei, Ayuwang si 阿育王寺 and Baotuo si 寶陀寺 in Zhejiang.<sup>139</sup> When the mother-son relationship touched the lowest point around Wanli 23 (1595), however, Zhang Ben was suddenly arrested with a charge that he privately gave Deqing the canon but pretended that it was Cisheng's order and was then sentenced to death.<sup>140</sup> Zhang Ben was clearly a victim of court strife,<sup>141</sup> and this event must have been a heavy strike to eunuchs who walked close to Cisheng and Buddhism. It reminded them that it could be a life-and-death matter if they did not side with the emperor. Under such a critical situation, as shown in Table 4, it came as no surprise that the number of eunuchs willing to express fondness for Buddhism decreased dramatically.

At the same time, there was a noticeable increase in eunuchs' support of Daoism which had been purged from the inner court with Jiajing's death.<sup>142</sup> Wanli had interest in Daoism, although not as ardently as his grandfather Jiajing. For example, he is said to have taken a vow promising Concubine Zheng to establish Zhu Changxun as his successor in Dongyue temple, a Daoist temple.<sup>143</sup> He ordered Zhang Guoxiang 張國祥 (?-1611) to compile and carve the continuation of the Daoist canon (*xu daoze* 續道藏) in Wanli 35 (1607). When Hanshan Deqing commented on Wanli's preference for Daoism many years later, he said that it originated from the emperor's dissatisfaction with the predominance of Buddhism at court.<sup>144</sup> It is hard to estimate to what degree this judgment is right, but Wanli's inclination for Daoism clearly influenced eunuch's choice in religious belief.

Consider the case of a Dongyue temple 東嶽廟 in the Chaoyang 朝陽 district, Beijing, which was built in 1319 and remains the biggest Daoist temple owned by the Zhengyi School in North China. Dongyue refers to Mount Tai in Shandong province, and its major god, *dongyue dadi* 東嶽大帝 (Great Emperor of the Eastern Mountain), has long been believed by Chinese people to be the god in charge of human's life and death. This cult had experienced fluctuations

<sup>139</sup> See FCZ 4, p. 20a (521); *E'mei shanzhi* 峨嵋山志 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980) 6, p. 19a (233); *Mingzhou Ayuwang shanzhi* 明州阿育王山志 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980) 8a, p. 7b (374), and *Putuo luojia xin zhi* 4, p. 2a (209).

<sup>140</sup> WLYH 27, p. 692.

<sup>141</sup> It is still unclear if and when Zhang Ben was executed. As late as Wanli 30, Zhenke said that he was trying to save this eunuch. See Zhenke, *Zibo zunze bieji* 4, p. 150b.

<sup>142</sup> As for eunuchs' belief in Daoism in the Ming dynasty, cf. Chen, "Ming Wanli shiqi Cisheng taihou de congfo," p. 223 n. 67.

<sup>143</sup> RXJW 41, p. 639.

<sup>144</sup> Chen Yunü discussed Wanli's belief in Daoism in her "Ming Wanli shiqi Cisheng taihou de congfo," pp. 221-34, and "Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū," pp. 130-39. However her reliance on Fuzheng's annotation of Deqing's autobiography has left her discussion open to question.

over time, but it seems not to have gained much popularity prior to the Wanli era, neither did it get much support from eunuchs. For example, on a stele erected in 1570 commemorating a renovation of the statue of the god, about twenty eunuchs appeared on it, together with two hundred other people.<sup>145</sup> Six years later when Zhang Juzheng wrote an essay for a renovation of the temple which was carried out with support of Cisheng and Wanli, the names of eunuchs carved on it were as few as five,<sup>146</sup> forming a sharp contrast with those names carved in thousands on steles for the Buddhist project. Starting from Wanli 10 (1582), there was a patent increase in both the frequency of new projects and the number of patrons related to this temple. In a 1585 stele, the list of patrons includes more than four hundred names, with some eunuchs as the leaders.<sup>147</sup> Five years later, two more steles were erected at this temple, one bearing the names of fifty eunuchs and about three hundred common believers and the other bearing more than one thousand.<sup>148</sup> This escalated number in so short a period is really unusual. Given that the number of eunuchs appearing in the Buddhist projects, including those sponsored by Cisheng, was continuously decreasing,<sup>149</sup> and that court strife became more fierce around Wanli 20 (1592), it might be safe to say that at least partly this result was an expansion of the duel in the secular world to the supernatural world. As time passed, many “community heads” (*huishou* 會首) began to appear in the lists, suggesting that these people gradually organized themselves in the way of patronizing Buddhism. Partly because of that, even by the final year of the Wanli era, there were still around eight hundred names carved on a stele at this temple.<sup>150</sup>

#### 4.3 Scholar-officials in Jiangnan: From Confucianism to Buddhism

Hongwu set regulations to keep scholar-officials away from Buddhism, with an intention to limit the effect of the Buddhist institution on society.<sup>151</sup> His orders were enforced relatively well during the first half of the Ming dynasty, making the *sangha* and scholar-officials largely

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<sup>145</sup> *SKHB*, vol.56, pp. 168-69.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 57, pp. 40-41.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.* vol.57, pp. 134-35.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.57, pp. 177-78, 188-89. In fact, a stele was also established in another Dongyue temple in Beijing at the same year. See, *ibid.* vol.57, p. 187.

<sup>149</sup> In an extreme instance, for example, the patrons were all court ladies without a single eunuch and they did so at Cisheng's order. See, *ibid.* vol.57, pp.141-42.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, vol.59, p. 155.

<sup>151</sup> Brook, “At the Margin of Public Authority: The Ming State and Buddhism.”

independent of each other. As for the effect of this policy on the *samgha* in the Jiangnan region, Wu Kuan 吳寬 (1435-1504; *jinshi*, 1472) pointed out that Buddhist temples were mostly built in former dynasties because at that time Buddhist monks liked to build temples and people were willing to help them. “By our [Ming] dynasty, it became a law for the first time that [people] are not allowed to build [Buddhist temples] without permission. Moreover, Hongwu even issued an order of amalgamation because he disliked the confusion of [current] temples. How dared [people] to construct? Buddhist temples fell into decay again in the past more than one hundred years, but few of them have the ability to repair [themselves]. This is because in previous dynasties Buddhist temples had many fertile lands without limitation, but now they were all confiscated. [Moreover, these lands] do not enjoy exemption from the land tax, and [their quotas] are roughly the same as the [land] of common people. [As a result], monks even have not enough money for their clothes and food, how could they have the spare time to repair [temples]?” (至國朝始著於律，不得擅有興建，況洪武初厭其煩襍，且有歸併之令，尚何敢於興建乎？百餘年來，寺復就弊，而能修葺者少。蓋前代寺多腴田，略無限制，今則悉入於官。凡賦稅之徵，無可蠲免，大率與農民相等。則人人謀衣食之不贍，何暇於脩葺乎?)<sup>152</sup>

#### 4.3.1 Scholar-officials and Buddhism in Jiangnan

During the Jiajing-Wanli era, the relationship between scholar-officials and the *samgha* became much more complicated. In the first half of Jiajing era when the emperor treated Buddhism more and more harshly, like eunuchs in Beijing, scholar-officials in the Jiangnan region minimized or stopped support of Buddhism. For instance, in a Gazetteer of Suzhou Prefecture (prefaced in 1693), only three cases are recorded in which local people in this prefecture got involved in Buddhist construction projects. Unlike eunuchs who at most were indifferent to Buddhism, however, many scholar-officials instead began to appropriate the property of the Buddhist community. The Buddhist institution had a hard time in the Jiangnan region in this period. First, local officials put strict restrictions on Buddhism at the emperors' order. In Nanjing, for example, several hundred Buddhist temples and chapels were destroyed in the early Jiajing era.<sup>153</sup> Some temples were changed into schools and others into government

<sup>152</sup> Qian Gu 錢穀, *Wu du wen cui xu ji* 吳都文粹續集 (Xianggang: Dizhi wenhua chubanshe youxian gongsi, 2002) 30, pp. 4b-5a.

<sup>153</sup> *Mingshi* 197, p. 5214.

offices.<sup>154</sup>

A much bigger danger facing the *samgha* was the local lineage. As we shall see in Chapter seven, during that period some powerful lineages were preying on the *samgha*, especially its landholdings. Since the early Ming, monks were exempt from corvee. Monastic lands had two different categories. Those imperially bestowed were exempt from the land tax, while the rest was required to pay the land tax like other civilian lands (*mingtian* 民田), which was much lower than that paid by public lands (*gongtian* 公田). The system was designed to support the Buddhist institution because the land tax took up only a small portion of the rent it was supposed to obtain.<sup>155</sup> When Buddhism lost its political protection in the Jiajing era, however, this privilege became a temptation to the powerful.<sup>156</sup> In Jiajing 6 (1527), for example, it was reported that many monastic lands, or even the Buddhist temples and chapels, were occupied by powerful families.<sup>157</sup> It was also said that some monks presented monastic assets to powerful lineages in exchange for their personal interest.<sup>158</sup> More importantly, with the legalization of commoner people to establish their own ancestral temples in Jiajing 15 (1536), incumbent and retired officials, many of them coming from the Jiangnan region, quickly became the major force to the formation of local lineages. Accordingly, local lineages were becoming increasingly powerful and aggressive in the Jiangnan region since the early sixteenth century.<sup>159</sup> On the other hand, Ming officials enjoyed exemption in the land and corvee. The higher the rank was, the higher was the exemption that the official enjoyed. In addition, it had already become a

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<sup>154</sup> See, for example, *Suzhou fuzhi* (1693), j. 38, and Fuyuan puhui chan temple 福源普慧禪寺 in *Pinghu xian zhi* 平湖縣志 (1627) (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1990) 3, p. 163.

<sup>155</sup> For the rule regarding the corvee, land tax, and land rent of the Buddhist institution, see FCZ 2, p. 217, 220; 16, pp. 768-82. For the different land taxes paid by civilian lands and public lands, see *Mingshi* 78, p. 1896.

<sup>156</sup> Susanna Thornton also observed that by the turn of the sixteenth century, Buddhist lands and buildings in and around Hangzhou were vulnerable to the acquisitive inclination of the newly active clan groups. See his “Buddhist Monasteries in Hangzhou in the Ming and Early Qing” (Dissertation/Thesis, London University, 1996), p. 84.

<sup>157</sup> *JJSL*82, p.9a (1845). Cf. Tian Shu 田澍, *Jiajing Ge Xin Yan Jiu* 嘉靖革新研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2002), p.199.

<sup>158</sup> This kind of practice had appeared before the Jiajing period. For instance, an order was issued in Chenghua 18 (1482) prohibiting the monistic asset from being presented to the local principedom, see Tai Chin 戴金, *Kōmin jōhō jiruisan* 皇明條法事類纂 (Tōkyō: Koten Kenkyūkai, 1966) 1, pp. 316-17.

<sup>159</sup> The local lineage began to form and develop rapidly in south China after the sixteenth century. For the reason and consequence of this telling phenomenon, see Michael Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship: Clan and Descent in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002); Brook, “Funerary Ritual and the Building of Clans in Late Imperial China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 49. 2 (1989), pp. 465-99; Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000 – 1940* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1986).

rather common practice among them to avoid paying all or part of the land tax for the taxable portion of their lands.<sup>160</sup> Working together, these factors thus became a catalyst for the encroachment of the powerful on monastic assets.

Beginning with the second half of the Jiajing era, things evolved in two directions. On the one hand, incursions on monastic assets continued. It is worthwhile to notice that such encroachment was partly exacerbated by the economic pressure facing the state at that time. The military expense soared since the mid-Jiajing era as a result of the Mongolian intrusions in North China and Japanese pirates in southeast coastal region. In addition, Jiajing spent much money on Daoist building and rituals.<sup>161</sup> In time, the exhausted treasury forced officials to collect money in any possible way, including “selling the monastic land.”<sup>162</sup> Gushan si 鼓山寺 was an important temple in Fuzhou. For the experience that this temple had since the Jiajing era, its abbot Yongjue Yuanxian 永覺元賢 (1587-1657) once lamented that “not only did people donate nothing [to the temple], but they further checked and grabbed from it. The temple hence lost five out of ten of its estates. When the defense war against Japanese pirates took place in the Jiajing era, people in power drew sixty percent [of its incomes] to pay the army rations and Grand Coordinator Jin even drew eighty percent. Now the army has disbanded, but instead of reducing the payment [official] even increased it.” (非獨無以施之，且扼而奪之，產已失十之五矣。至嘉靖間防倭事起，當道抽其六餉軍，巡撫金公且征其八。至於今日，軍已撤而餉不減，又有加焉)。“How can monks not become poor and escape [from the temple]?” (如之何僧不窮且竄也?), he asked.<sup>163</sup>

At the same time, scholar-officials seemed more aggressive and did serious harm to the *sangha* of the age. Jiangnan was the place where local lineages grew rapidly and where scholar-officials formed complex networks. Accordingly, their encroachment upon Buddhism was most serious during the Jiajing era. Zhanran Yuancheng 湛然圓澄 (1581-1626), a key Chan master of the age, recalled Hongwu’s protection of monks and monastic fields,

<sup>160</sup> See Zhang Xianqing, *Zhang Xianqing wenji*, pp. 30-49, 83-104.

<sup>161</sup> For Jiajing’s expense on Daoism, see *Mingshi* 78, p. 1907.

<sup>162</sup> As for the selling of monastic land in the Jiajing era, see *Mingshi* 78, p. 1901, and *Mingyin si zhi* 明因寺志 (in *Congshu jicheng xubian* 叢書集成續編 [Taipei: Xin wen feng chuban gongsi, 1989]) 23, p. 1b.

<sup>163</sup> *Quanzhou Kaiyuan si zhi* 泉州開元寺志 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980), pp. 37b-38a (180-81). For a more detailed discussion on the monastic economy of Fujian in this period, see Ju-K'ang T'ien, “The Decadence of Buddhist Temples in Fu-Chien in Late Ming and Early Ch'ing,” in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. E.B. Vermeer (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1990), pp. 83-100.

complaining that “nowadays, when monastic land is occupied by a powerful family, the authority declines to correct the wrongdoing; when monks are insulted by laymen, the authority refuses to protect them.” (今也不然, 田產爲勢豪所佔, 而官府不之究. 僧爲俗人所辱, 而官府不之護).<sup>164</sup> As a result, the *samgha* suffered big losses in this phase. Sheng'en si 聖恩寺 was a famous temple in Suzhou, but half of its ground was lost to common people and the place became a villa of a provincial student in the Jiajing-Longqing transition period, and it was occupied by a powerful clan from which it was not able to recover until Wanli 20 when Cisheng intervened.<sup>165</sup> Also, in this period it was frequently reported that even some important Buddhist temples were not able to provide enough food for their monks.<sup>166</sup>

An extreme story shows how weak the *samgha* was when facing such an encroachment. Chen Huan 陳寰 (1477-1539; *jinshi*, 1511), a native of Changshu 常熟, South Zhili who was well-known for his painting, was the Chancellor of the National University (*guozijian jiji* 國子監祭酒).<sup>167</sup> Chen Huan believed in geomancy (*kanyu* 堪輿), so he wanted a Weimo si 維摩寺 at Mount Yu 虞山 which was close to the Changshu city as the tomb site for his mother.<sup>168</sup> At first he tried to buy it at a high price but was declined. Then, one day he ordered several hundred of servants to move the entire temple to the foot of the hill. This exasperated an old monk in the temple, who then led his disciple Fang Xian 方顯 and others to Beijing to file a suit against Chen Huan. The official investigating this case happened to be a native of Changshu who had a close relationship with Chen Huan. Thus he connived with a Ward-inspecting Censor, beating the old monk to death and forcing his disciples to sign a contract selling the temple to Chen Huan. On their way back home, one of the disciples died mysteriously. Since it was believed that the disciple was poisoned, Fang Xian and a nephew of the old monk went to Beijing accusing Chen once again. This case was assigned to a Touring Censorial Inspector (巡按禦史), who in turn asked the prefect to deal with it. The prefect flogged the two persons each forty sticks and sentenced them to be exiled. When a Surveillance Commissioner summoned the two persons, he found that they were not able to even move.

<sup>164</sup> Zhanran Yuancheng 湛然圓澄, *Kai gu lu* 慨古錄 (in *XZJ*, vol. 65, no. 1285) 1, p. 742b.

<sup>165</sup> *Dengwei Sheng'en si zhi* 鄧尉聖恩寺志 7, p. 7a (217), and Qian, *Wudu wencui xuji*, j.30.

<sup>166</sup> For instance, see Yu, *Xingxu gaoseng*, p. 927, 1569, 1571; *KXT* 35, p. 10.

<sup>167</sup> This position was a 4b rank in the Ming dynasty.

<sup>168</sup> For the dilapidation of this temple during the Jiajing and early Wanli periods, see *Weimo si zhi* 維摩寺志 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2006) 1, p. 2(13).



Finally, the truth was found. The penalties of Fang Xian and his fellows were reduced, Chen Huan's servants were flogged forty sticks, and the temple was returned to the monks. Monks took back the temple at a painful price, but Chen Huan, the culprit who caused the death of two persons, did not get any punishment. Eventually, the author of this story had to turn to the supernatural world, saying that Chen Huan suddenly got a terrible illness next year, and in trance he said that a monk was beating him. He cried for forgiveness all day and night but died shortly later, and so did his wife.<sup>169</sup> Money, violence, and the abuse of public power through a network between officials, all of these repeatedly appeared in this case, but it was not unusual at that time when Buddhist estates were encroached.

By the final years of the Jiajing period some scholar-officials began to walk closer to Buddhism and became its protectors. At the start the number of these protectors was not large, but as more and more joined in them, an upward trend finally formed and would continue throughout the Wanli era. Their contribution to Buddhism was significant economically and intellectually. Economically, their efforts included preventing monastic assets from being further robbed by the powerful and recovering what had been occupied. For example, the foundation Yuanfeng si 元封寺 in Fengyang was occupied by a powerful family. Although an official had adjudicated that it should be returned to the temple, another official refused to make any decision when the powerful family filed another charge. When learning of it, Lu Guangzu 陸光祖 (1521-1597) asked Feng Mengzhen to assist the temple with it, and the latter turned to another official for help.<sup>170</sup> Scholar-officials also made attempts to exempt part or entire land tax for monastic fields. For example, in Wanli 18, Lu Guangzu wrote a letter to a Grand Coordinator and made part of the land tax of Longyou si 龍遊寺 exempted.<sup>171</sup>

Significant as it was, their support was not always reliable. A petition essay for a Buddhist project often begins with a warning or complaint about people's parsimony in donation. It is worthwhile to notice that this warning applied not only to common people but also to well-known patrons of Buddhism. For example, Chan Master Tianji 天際 once burned a finger for Buddha and had the chance to learn from eminent Bianrong Zhenyuan. He was invited in Wanli 17 (1589) to Huqiu si 虎丘寺 by Xu Wenqing 徐文卿, who once served in the Court of Imperial Squad (太僕寺). Xu advocated donating the temple two taels of silver and five *shi* 石

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<sup>169</sup> *KXT* 46, p. 13a-b. *Weimo si zhi*, 1, pp. 2b-3a (14-15), also records this event briefly.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 41, p. 26 (595b).

<sup>171</sup> *Jingshan Longyou si zhilue* 金山龍遊禪寺志略 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980), p. 251, 252-54.

of rice each month among his friends, and Yu Yuli was among those who promised to help. At the start the incomes of the temple were sufficient for dozens of people living with Tianji. By Wanli 23 (1595), however, it was reported that Tianji had fled to Nanjing and the Chan hall was under the charge of his disciple. This was because the Yu family in Jintan 金壇 and He family 賀 in Danyang 丹陽 had not given the contracted donation (*quanshi* 券施) for two years. Feng Mengzhen thus wrote a letter to these two families asking them to fulfill their promise. Four years later when Feng revisited this temple, he found that Tianji had fallen sick for seventy days and stopped eating food. Despite his poor health, however, Tianji was still worried about the donations. Once again, Feng Mengzhen wrote a letter to ask for rice. Twenty days later, rice from the Yu family finally arrived, and the relieved Tianji died four days later.<sup>172</sup> The Yu and He families, Xu Wenqing, and Feng Mengzhen were all active in the carving of the Jiaxing version of the Buddhist canon and heavily relied by Zibo Zhenke and Mizang Daokai.<sup>173</sup> Such a close relationship between them partly explains why Feng Mengzhen was willing to write those letters and got positive responses. However, monks in other cases might not be so lucky, and the impact of such unreliability on the Buddhist community should not be neglected.

During the Wanli period, the relationship between scholar-officials and Buddhism advanced greatly, and Scholars have paid much attention to such a good relationship between the two and said they looked like “a lid to a box.”<sup>174</sup> Nevertheless, it is worth noticing that the other side of the story continued in this period. For example, as late as Wanli 35 (1607), Ye Xianggao, then the grand secretary, still said that “in recent years...local officials despise Buddhist monks and do not treat them as equally as commoner people. The powerful in local society thus take advantage of [the Buddhist community] like it is their former assets. [They] increase the land tax [imposed on the Buddhist community] but decrease the land rent [given to the latter]. These encroachments and embezzlement take place daily and monthly without cease, [and as a result these temples] will no longer have lands.” (近世...守土之吏，復賤棄緇流不得與齊民齒。閭右之豪，因以爲利，若故業然。加賦減租，日侵月削，浸淫不止，且至無田). This essay was written to record the efforts that the Ministry of Rites had made to recover the

<sup>172</sup> *KXT* 49, p. 28; 53, p. 21; 57, p. 14, 21, 24.

<sup>173</sup> For Daokai's direction of Xu Wenqing in terms of Buddhism, see, for example, *Mizang chan shi yigao* 1, p.17a-c. For the participation of scholar-officials in the Jiangnan region in the Jiaxing version of Buddhist canon, see Kawakatsu Kenryō, “Mindai kōnan shitaifu bukkyōgaku ryūkō to daizōkyō kaihan” 明代江南士大夫仏教學流行と大藏經開版, *Odai sigaku* 鴨台史學, no. 5 (2005), pp. 1-25.

<sup>174</sup> See Brook, *Praying for power*, particularly Chapter two.

lands bestowed by the Hongwu emperor to the eight stately-sponsored monasteries in Nanjing but then lost to the hands of the powerful family. With strong and repeated intervention of the government, people who occupied those lands finally yielded. Although the land rent they promised to pay was only sixty to seventy percent of the original quota, Ye and the Ministry of Rites both viewed this new arrangement as an acceptable result.<sup>175</sup> This case is noticeable because it relates to state-sponsored monasteries, but it is not unusual. In fact, evidence shows that some other temples had similar experiences during that period, but only a few were able to retrieve their loss.

#### 4.3.2 A Case Study of Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎 (1548-1608)

Mainly from the social and intellectual perspectives, scholars have researched the accommodation of scholar-officials to Buddhism and their various kinds of patronage of Buddhism in the Wanli era.<sup>176</sup> Unlike them, this section examines how contemporary politics helped shape their relationship, which is like “a lid to a box,” through a case study of Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎 (1548-1608). Feng Mengzhen, together with Lu Guangzu, was praised by Zhenke as two most important outer protectors of Buddhism of the age. He was also thought by Hanshan Deqing as one of the two greatest authors writing on Buddhism throughout the Ming dynasty.<sup>177</sup> More importantly for my purpose, Feng was really representative of late Ming scholar-officials both in his thoughts and life style and at the same time had great influence on Jiangnan literati. Feng left us ample diaries, letters, and other writings, but so far no serious attention has been paid to him. Hence I will trace changes in his life and thoughts in a hope to

<sup>175</sup> FCZ 16, p.763. Cf. p.769-70.

<sup>176</sup> Important studies of scholar-officials in the Wanli era include Brook, *Praying for Power*; Luo, *Mingdai Houqi Shiren Xintai Yanjiu*; Araki, *Minmatsu shūkyō shisō kenkyū: Kan Tōmyō no shōgai to sono shisō* 明末宗教思想研究:管東溟の生涯とその思想 (Tōkyō: Sobunsha, 1979); idem, “Shū Kaimon no shisōshisō” 周海門の思想, *Tetsugaku nenpō* 哲學年報 26 (1967), pp.149-87; idem, *Yōmeigaku no kaiten to bukkyō*. For studies on scholar-officials in the Ming-Qing transition period, see Willard J. Peterson, *Bitter Gourd: Fang I-Chih and the Impetus for Intellectual Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Zhao Yuan 趙園, *Ming Qing zhiji shidafu yanjiu* 明清之際士大夫研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999); Idem., *Yitang xunzong: Guanyu Ming Qing zhi ji yige shiren qunti de xushu* 易堂尋蹤: 關於明清之際一個士人群體的敘述 (Nanchang: Jiangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001); Willard J. Peterson, *Bitter Gourd: Fang I-Chih and the Impetus for Intellectual Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

<sup>177</sup> For Song Lian who was both a famous politician and literati in the early Ming, cf. Miura Shūichi 三浦秀一, “Genmatu no Sō Ren to judōbutsu sankyō shisōshisō” 元末の宋濂と儒道仏三教思想, *Tōyō kotengaku kenkyū* 東洋古典學研究, no. 6 (1998), pp. 49-81.

observe how Buddhism gradually intertwined with the scholar-officials' life in the particular context of late Ming China.<sup>178</sup>

Feng Mengzhen had a promising political future and appeared to have no serious interest in Buddhism in his early life. He was born in a poor merchant family which had enjoyed a good time before. He came first in the metropolitan examination in Wanli 5 (1577), and then was assigned as a Hanlin Bachelor (*Shujishi* 庶吉士). This post was reserved for new *jinshi* with special literary talent. More importantly, the post of Hanlin Bachelors had been viewed as a “future chief minister” (*chuxiang* 儲相) since the middle fifteenth century because many of them finally entered the Grand Secretariat.<sup>179</sup> This was the most promising period in Feng's political career, during which he enjoyed cultivating himself in competition with friends. He was recorded to touch Buddhism in passing only on two occasions. In one case, he began to practice meditation in a Beijing temple after a failed attempt to pass the metropolitan exam. In a 1583 case, he met Bianrong Zhenyuan 遍融真圓 (1506-1584), the most important Huayan and Chan master of the age, and Hanshan Deqing, a new star we will feature in Chapter Five, on the same day.<sup>180</sup> It seems that in this life phase he had interest in but lacked enthusiasm for Buddhism.

A heavy blow struck him shortly after and made substantial changes to his life. He was accused of being fickle (*fuzao* 浮躁) and demoted, but the real reason might be because of his refusal in a civil service exam to give a top rank to a person favoured by the Grand Secretary. He then retreated to Hangzhou for as long as ten years and impressed people that he was leading a life as free as an immortal.<sup>181</sup> His diary and letters to friends, however, reveal that Feng was then experiencing a most difficult time. He frequently contracted illness which nearly claimed his life on one occasion.<sup>182</sup> His hair turned white in his forties, for which he often complained to his friends. His economic situation was so shaky that he complained to friends in

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<sup>178</sup> For his diary, Feng Mengzhen said that after Wanli 15 (1587), “日所曆, 夜必記之。甚龐雜不次, 今芟其什三, 爲日記, 每一披覽, 陳跡如新, 省心寡過, 亦一助也。” (KXT 47, p. 1[666]) It is worth noticing that he seems to have deleted some of the politically sensitive diaries, as we shall see in Chapter Five.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. WLYH 10, pp. 251-52, 259-60.

<sup>180</sup> KXT 40, p. 23 (580a).

<sup>181</sup> See Guo Tingxun 過庭訓, *Ming fensheng renwu kao* 明分省人物考 (in *Mingdai zhuanji congkan* 明代傳記叢刊 [Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1981], vols. 129-140), vol.133, pp. 457-58.

<sup>182</sup> Feng Mengzhen was often afflicted by illness throughout his life. For example, see *ibid.* 44, p.26 (640); 53, p.1 (731b). He once reported that he was sick for nearly three months, see *ibid.* 55, p. 4(759a).

many letters how difficult he was to sustain his family. To complicate things further, Hangzhou region was then repeatedly suffering natural disasters, flooding and drought alike, and many people died accordingly. It might be true that he was well off when compared with commoners, but he never freed himself from such burdens of life. Accordingly, he was found to tutor students preparing for the civil service exam. Also he expressed gratitude several times to friends for their gifts of small amounts of silver.<sup>183</sup>

It was during this period that Buddhism penetrated into Feng's everyday life deeply. He was very active in the region and served as one of the few most important leaders among scholar-officials there. At the same time, Buddhism became a component of his life. Almost every day he visited monks and temples, read Buddhist sutras, helped recover lost monastic assets, discussed the Buddhist teaching with friends, and the like. He found comfort in Buddhism, especially Chan, for the harm caused by this demotion. His poor health and the white hair were also driving him closer to Buddhism because, as he often claimed, they repeatedly reminded him how impermanent reputation and life were. In Wanli 15 (1587) when he was only forty, for example, he said that he was already old because his hair was white and teeth were missing. He asked his friend, "How could I long attach to the burning house (*huozhai* 火宅; i.e. the secular world) at the price of the big matter of thousands lives and ten thousands *kalpas*?"<sup>184</sup> "The big matter" here refers to the problem of life and death, and his solution to it was nothing but Buddhism. His concern about the evanescence of life was further reinforced by tragic experiences of his friends. When learning of the death of a friend who entered the Hanlin Academy with him at the same time, Feng lamented for days and wrote to a friend concluding: "People really should enjoy life while they can. We are now recalling the cheerful time shared in the Hanlin Academy fifteen or sixteen years ago. How could we regain it? Later, it is unavoidable that (we) will miss today's life." (人生真宜行樂。即今追想十五六年前，同館歡聚時光景，那可復得。他時後日，又未免再想今日光景耳)。<sup>185</sup> "Enjoying life" was the goal, but the ways he used varied over time. During this period of time, he had recourse to Buddhism.

It is no accident that Feng devoted himself to Buddhism at that time because he was under the strong influence of Mizang Daokai 密藏道開 (?-1603?). As Zhenke's most capable

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<sup>183</sup> See, for example, *ibid.* 42, p. 29(610a); 43, p. 1 (613a), 6(615b), 15-16(620), 26(625b); 44, p. 16 (640b).

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 42, p. 22 (607b).

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 40, p. 14 (575b). Another example could be found in *ibid.* 43, p. 11(618a).

disciple, Daokai traveled to many places and attracted quite a few people around him. It is not clear how and when Feng met Daokai, but abundant evidence shows how respectful he was to him. A typical correspondence between them was that Feng first confessed to Daokai his mistakes and Daokai then directed him how to fix it.<sup>186</sup> Daokai was very strict with Feng, which was fully accepted and appreciated. It is worthwhile noticing that not only was Daokai the master in Feng's religious life, but he also functioned as a nexus linking Feng with a larger circle consisting of eminent monks and scholar-officials.<sup>187</sup> The significance of this circle to Feng is hard to overestimate in that it helped him resist desperation in the course of his career.

After having spent ten years of hermit-like life in Hangzhou, Feng received an order appointing him to be the assistant sub-prefect (*pan* 判) of Guangde 廣德. This plan was made by Lu Guangzu, then the minister of Personnel, as well as Feng's friends in the Hanlin Academy.<sup>188</sup> Lu Guangzu was well known for promoting capable officials to suitable positions. Also he was one of the few most important patrons of Buddhism of his time who maintained close connections with both Daokai and Zhenke.<sup>189</sup> Guangde was in the vicinity of the Jiangnan region, about two hundred miles northwest of Hangzhou. When learning that Feng was hesitant, Daokai wrote a letter urging him to take the chance. He told Feng that this action was urged by Lu Guangzu and that he would not stay long outside the capital. He insisted that this be a right time for him to come out again, no matter how bad the entire environment was.<sup>190</sup> Feng finally set off to Guangde, and was soon promoted as the Chancellor of the National University (*jiju* 祭酒) in Nanjing several months later. Personnel matters were among the most secret things in the government. Daokai's unusual "insight" in this case demonstrated how deeply a monk could intervene with political operations in the late Ming.

This time Feng stayed in office for several years and did rather well, but it was far from a happy experience. At the start he confessed to friends that he accepted this chance mainly for easing his economic crisis rather than for fulfilling political ambitions. Feng had no desire to

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<sup>186</sup> For the practice of self-examination in China, see Pei-Yi Wu, "Self-Examination and Confession of Sins in Traditional China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 39, no. 1 (1979), pp. 5-38.

<sup>187</sup> Their correspondence is preserved in Daokai, *Mizang chanshi yigao* 1, pp. 13, 15, 18c-20a and *KXT* 38, 26(549b); 40, p.23(580); 47, p.4(667a). Cf. Dai Jicheng 戴繼誠, "Zibo dashi yu Feng Mengzhen" 紫柏大師與馮夢禪, *Tangdu xuekan* 唐都學刊 22.4 (2006), pp. 103-107.

<sup>188</sup> See, *KXT* 37, p. 1 (522a), 3(523a), and 16-24(530-33).

<sup>189</sup> See *Mingshi* 224, p. 5891; Daokai, *Mizang chanshi yigao* 1, pp. 8c-9a, 9c-10a. Cf. Araki, "Bukkyō koji tositeno Riku Kōso" 仏教居士としての陸光祖, *Nagoya daigaku chūgoku tetsugaku ronshū* 名古屋大學中國哲學論集, no. 3 (2004), pp. 1-26.

<sup>190</sup> Daokai, *Mizang chanshi yigao* 1, p. 20a.

solve social problems, but he completely understood how serious the troubles facing the country were. He frequently discussed contemporary politics with friends in letters. He was concerned that Japanese pirates who had recently defeated the Korean army would make big trouble in China's coastal region. He feared that rebellions would arise because natural disasters and other reasons had given common people no way to live. He deplored that the emperor was reluctant to appoint officials to maintain the operation of the state.<sup>191</sup> But he felt that he was not able to make a big difference to those problems, and hence became distressed and disappointed.

Feng finally left office in disappointment. Although the importance of Nanjing in the Buddhist world decreased with the move of the imperial capital to Beijing, this city remained attractive for a Buddhist follower like Feng. The problem was that although in a sinecure, due to his good background Feng was still seen as an obstacle by people eager to obtain promotion. To avoid troubles, he had to be very careful.<sup>192</sup> For example, Mounts Niushou and Qixia were two famous Buddhist sites which he could see from his office, but he was not able to visit them as long as half a year after his taking office.<sup>193</sup> Feng constantly told his friends that he would leave office some time.<sup>194</sup> So, when he was impeached by a censor, almost immediately he submitted a memorial asking for retirement. This charge was obviously unjust and he had the chance to clear his name if he liked, but he chose to leave without arguments.<sup>195</sup> When writing to friends about this choice, he claimed straightforwardly that "neither am I good at being an official, nor am I fond of holding office." (故不善仕, 亦不樂仕也).<sup>196</sup>

Feng's dislike of being an official had strong political implications, and what followed was his complete devotion to Buddhism. In addition to his own adversity, Feng sensed the unfairness and danger of the world from others' experience. When Ding Changru 丁長孺 was

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<sup>191</sup> For his lack of political ambition, see *KXT* 42, p. 23 (607a); 43, p. 1 (613a); for his reluctance to solve problems by himself, see *ibid.* 43, p. 1 (613a); 44, p. 15 (635a); see *ibid.* 42, p. 1 (596a); for his discussion with friends about contemporary political and social situation, see *ibid.* 42, p. 1 (596a); for his concern about the impending rebellion, see *ibid.* 32, pp. 16-17 (456); 39, p. 14 (561a); 43, p. 6 (615b), 15-16 (620); for his lamentation about the emperor's activities, see *ibid.* 35, p. 29 (506a); 42, p. 19 (605a); 43, p. 6 (615b).

<sup>192</sup> See *ibid.* 40, p. 25 (581a), p. 26 (581b), p. 11 (574a); 37, pp. 23-4 (533a-b).

<sup>193</sup> *KXT* 37, pp. 29-30 (536).

<sup>194</sup> See, for example, *ibid.* 36, pp. 23-24 (533), 29-30 (536); 40, p. 11 (574a).

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.* 25, pp. 3-4 (372); 42, p. 23 (607a), pp. 27-8 (609). This memorial is intriguing. It begins with a short summary of his contributions to the state, implying that he was a qualified official. Then, Mengzhen asked for retirement in an awkward logic: since the censor impeaching him had no grudge to him in the past, his being impeached proved that he must have made mistakes somewhere so that he should quit office.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.* 38, p. 25 (549a).

impeached, he felt that it was unfair for him. When Yu Yuli was arrested and almost died in prison, he lamented his experience showed how dangerous the court was. When Luo Yuren 雒于仁 (*jinshi*, 1583) submitted a memorial criticizing the emperor's enthrallment with wine, women, money, and arrogance, his sweat down his back when reading it. When Fan Kuai 懋檜 (1554-1624; *jinshi*, 1580) confronted the emperor and ministers, he felt relieved to know he was only demoted.<sup>197</sup> He told friends how disappointed he felt with contemporary political, social, and economic situation, but he was still hesitant to leave office.<sup>198</sup> It was that impeachment that encouraged him to quit. He told a friend, "I belong to blue mountains. Now my affinity with the world has come to an end. Junping forsook the world, and the world forsook Junping." (不佞弟青山之人, 分與世絕, 君平棄世, 世亦棄君平).<sup>199</sup> Junping refers to Yan Zun 嚴遵 (?-10), a hermit in the Han dynasty who enjoyed a peaceful life in Chengdu after refusing to be an official.<sup>200</sup> In the same vein, Feng likened an official position to a rotten mouse, claiming that he was more than happy to devote himself to and enjoy Buddhism after resigning office.<sup>201</sup>

In the eighth month of Wanli 25 (1597), Feng wrote four poems in celebration of his fiftieth birthday. The first two are about conventional topics, saying that how sad he was to see time elapsed so quickly that he would like to return home to enjoy books, nature, beautiful women, and friends. In the last two, however, he clearly said that politics was too dangerous. So, "the sage shakes the clothes [to leave office] before getting old." (所以賢達人, 未老先拂衣)<sup>202</sup> The fourth one tells how he resolved to leave and how he enjoyed the new life.

Shaking clothes [I] leave the secular world,  
and always gather with friends of practicing meditation.

<sup>197</sup> For Ding, see *ibid.* 42, p. 19(605a); for Yu, *ibid.* 43, p. 8(616b). For Luo, *ibid.* 50, pp. 2(708b). Cf. *Mingshi*, 234, pp. 6100-103; for Fan, *KXT* 47, p. 8(669b).

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 42, pp. 29-30(610).

<sup>199</sup> *KXT* 35, p. 26(504b).

<sup>200</sup> For this famous Daoist hermit, see Yusa Noboru 遊佐昇, "Gen Kunpei no densetsu to shinkō" 嚴君平の伝説と信仰, *Meikai daigaku gaikokugo gakubu ronshū* 明海大學外國語學部論集, no. 17 (2005), pp. 131-45; Kasahara shōjirō 笠原祥士郎, "Zenkan no dōkashichō to Gen Kunpei ni tsuite" 前漢の道家思潮と嚴君平について, *Hokuriku daigaku kiyō* 北陸大學紀要, no. 32 (2008), pp. 167-79.

<sup>201</sup> *KXT* 32, p. 15(455b); 38, p. 15(544a), 20 (546b).

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.* 63, pp. 8-10(104a-105a).



[I] take pains to compose poems for new scenery,  
and my questions are resolved by opening books.  
How could I not long for seals [of officials]?  
Moral greatness should not be weakened and contaminated.  
How could I not consider for my children and grandchildren?  
[My] purity is enough to leave to them.  
[After] I have exhausted all strategies to benefit the people,  
Why is it despised for me to follow the Way?  
[I] hold a brush pen and write down this piece,  
to express my personal desire.

(拂衣謝塵氛，靜侶時相追。披索詠新賞，開帙渙所疑。豈不戀圭組？天爵無磷淄。豈不念子孫，清白自可詒。觀民計已極，從道安足嗤？申毫著斯文，聊以適吾私)。<sup>203</sup>

From then on Feng completely retreated from the political world and “totally devoted himself to Buddhism”, as he told Daokai. He had not much money to financially support Buddhism, but he had enthusiasm, knowledge and social status to do so efficiently. Feng devoted himself to the editing and carving the Jiaxing edition of the Buddhist canon, a project first advocated by him and others. He wrote many essays to solicit support for Buddhist projects, such as building a hall or a temple, holding vegetarian feasts to monks, purchasing monastic lands, or to expound Buddhist doctrines and practice.

Feng was able to influence other scholar-officials through a large network and brought many of them to Buddhism. The Chancellor of National University was not a significant post in terms of politics, but it was of high reputation among scholar-officials and helped Feng to create and maintain a wide network. For friends who did not believe in Buddhism, Feng made efforts to convince them and, noticeably, based his argument on the inclemency of politics.<sup>204</sup> For those who had common interest in Buddhism, he exchanged correspondence with them discussing their experiences and encouraging each other. For instance, he wrote to praise Huang Hui 黃輝 (1559-1621) for his quitting office immediately after being impeached. He wrote to Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636), asking him to find and help potential Buddhist believers

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid. 63, pp. 10(105a).

<sup>204</sup> For example, *KXT* 38, p. 16(544b; 43, pp. 25-26 (625), 21(638a).

in the Hanlin Academy.<sup>205</sup> In addition, he negotiated with local officials for the sake of Buddhism. For example, when an official prohibited monks from wandering freely, Feng wrote him a letter asking him to revoke the order. In Wanli 25 (1597), he even wrote to an official asking him to assign a person believing in Buddhism as the magistrate of Yuhang County so as to protect Buddhism.<sup>206</sup> Sometimes, his influence even made problems solved without his direct intervention before they did harm to Buddhism.<sup>207</sup>

In the final years of his life, however, it seemed that Feng was no longer able to find sufficient satisfaction in Buddhism and began to live in a highly controversial way. Feng repeatedly vowed to Zhenke and Daokai that he would retreat to mountains to live a monastic-like life after finishing “secular things” like the marriage of his children. However, in an event to be discussed in Chapter Five, Zhenke died in prison in Wanli 31 (1603) as a victim of court factionalism and Daokai disappeared mysteriously.<sup>208</sup> Feng’s action in this event was criticized as underexpected, but his diary reveals that he was very concerned with Zhenke’s case.<sup>209</sup> After that, he lived in a very different or even dissipated way. Beautiful women, delicious food, good singers, and geomancy dominated his writings and life. He still participated in the “Association of releasing life”, but it seemed to be the only connection he had with Buddhism.<sup>210</sup> Nevertheless, it is said that he welcomed death in a typical Buddhist way. This demonstrated that, no matter how different he might look, deep in his heart he remained a Buddhist believer until his last breath.

Neither was Feng Mengzhen an inborn Buddhist nor was he influenced by his family tradition.<sup>211</sup> Instead, his embrace of Buddhism resulted from his disappointing experience in

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<sup>205</sup> For Huang, see *Ibid.* 43, p. 10 (617b); for Dong, see *ibid.* 32, p. 11-2(453b-54a).

<sup>206</sup> For the first case, see 42, p. 25(608a), 30(610b); for the second, see *ibid.* 35, p. 29-30(506).

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.* 57, p. 35(18b).

<sup>208</sup> I will discuss Daokai’s disappearance in Chapter Five. Feng did not mention anything about this event in his diary and letters, which is simply impossible given that how long their close relationship had maintained. The only reasonable explanation for me is that Feng was covering some important things by deleting some paragraphs when printing the diaries.

<sup>209</sup> In his diary, Feng mentioned Zhenke’s tragedy at least eight times, including conversations with three monks who came back from Beijing for more details. See *ibid.* 60, p. 19(75a); 61, p. 2-3 (79), 13(84b); 62, p. 2 (87b); 64, p. 2 (113b).

<sup>210</sup> For the practice of liberating lives in late imperial China, cf. Joanna F. Handlin Smith, “Liberating Animals in Ming-Qing China: Buddhist Inspiration and Elite Imagination,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58.1 (1999), pp. 51-84.

<sup>211</sup> As we will see in the case of Lu Guangzu in Chapter Six, it is important for us to take into account the family tradition when studying Buddhist belief in Chinese literati, especially in the Jiangnan region. Another example was Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664), cf. Lian Ruizhi 連瑞枝, “Qian Qianyi De Fojiao Shengya Yu Linian” 錢謙益的佛教生涯與理念, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 中華佛學學報, no. 7 (1994), pp. 317-70.

officialdom, his poor health, and his close ties with Buddhist masters. When declaring that “Junping forsook the world and the world forsook Junping,” Feng revealed a rupture in the relationship between scholar-officials and the state, and it was a common dilemma experienced by most scholar-officials in late Ming China. Such a disjunction between the two facilitated the conclusion of this dynasty and profoundly influenced the life style of scholar-officials, making Buddhism much more attractive than it had been in the early and middle Ming. Nevertheless, as shown in Feng’s case, it is worthwhile noticing that scholar-officials only took Buddhism as one of the choices available to them in that situation and that they were relatively free in, if not in control of, their relationship with the *samgha*. This implies that the closer the two walked to each other, the more the *samgha* had to rely on these elites, and that the more they did so, the greater the danger should the latter abandon Buddhism. It proved that this was exactly what would happen after the early Qing dynasty, which is beyond the scope of this study.

#### 4.4 Concluding Remarks

Some social groups preferred to have a close relationship with Buddhism but others not. For the same social group, their distance from Buddhism varied with time and space. Eunuchs were present in large number only in Beijing. Generally speaking, they were the largest patrons of the *samgha* in the capital region during the Jiajing and Wanli periods. More specifically, they had an n-shaped relationship with Buddhism over the one hundred years. They kept further and further away from the *samgha* in the first half of the Jiajing era and then walked closer and closer to it in the latter half. This rising tendency of their participation in the *samgha* remained in the Longqing era and first half of the Wanli era but decreased by about sixty percents in the last twenty or so years of the Wanli era. Many of them thus turned to Daoism at the cost of Buddhism.

Compared with eunuchs, scholar-officials’ relationship to Buddhism was more complicated. Regionally, they seldom got involved in the Buddhist community in Beijing but were the major patrons in the Jiangnan region. In Jiangnan, in the Jiajing era, although mostly they were indifferent to Buddhism partly as a result of Hongwu’s “policy of separation,” with the increase of their influence in local society, there were more and more cases in which they preyed on the *samgha* by taking advantage of the emperor’s policies of discrimination against Buddhism. They were hence one of the biggest dangers to Buddhism of the age. On the other hand, roughly starting with the final years of the Jiajing era, their involvement in Buddhist affairs became

increasingly deeper and wider. This upward tendency continued in the Longqing and the entire Wanli eras.

These different traces in their relationship with Buddhism reflect and result from eunuchs' and scholar-officials' different positions in the power structure, which in turn brought them different social, economic, cultural, and political resources. Eunuchs were most sensitive to political changes in court and quickly adjusted their acts accordingly. In contrast, scholar-officials had their bases in local society so that they were able to act more independently. As a result, although all under the strong influence of contemporary politics, they did not always act in agreement of the ruler. Buddhism was part of their reaction to the political world, and hence their relationship with Buddhism varied over space and time. Feng Mengzhen's case demonstrated how scholar-officials turned from Confucianism to Buddhism, step by step, both attracted by Buddhism and pushed by the increasingly deteriorating world.

So far from the emperor down to eunuchs and scholar-officials we have examined the major social forces influencing Buddhism. They chose their stances towards this religion and acted according to their own interests, but the effect of their activities might be strengthened or weakened by others or even by their own activities in different time and regions. To complicate things further, the *samgha* was not always passive; they took actions to respond to changes too. To have a closer look at these interactions and their significance to the *samgha*, I am turning to monks and monasteries in the following chapters.

## PART II   Echoes within the *saṃgha*

## Chapter 5

### Monks: Wandering between the *samgha* and Political World

In the preceding chapters I have examined how the world facing the *samgha* changed in response to the political changes in the Jiajing-Wanli period. Significant though it was, external influence cannot work on the *samgha* alone. In the following two chapters, through case studies of eminent monks and Buddhist temples, I will examine how the *samgha* not only responded to but also took advantage of changes in the outer world, and explore the complex influence of such interactions, which varied with time and region, on Buddhism. The subject of this chapter is a group of monks consisting of Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546-1623), Miaofeng Fudeng 妙峰福登 (1540-1612), Kongyin Zhencheng 空印鎮澄 (1547-1617), and Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543-1603). They were all among the most important and famous monks of the age: Deqing and Zhenke were two of the so-called four Buddhist masters of late Ming China. Fudeng and Zhencheng were long neglected leading Buddhist masters who, among their contemporaries, might be second only to those four masters in terms of their influence on society and contribution to the appearance of the late Ming Buddhist revival.<sup>1</sup> These four masters were close friends, but distinct in background, characters, and strategies for success. I will scrutinize their life experiences, especially their interactions with politics, to understand the advantages and disadvantages facing them. Additionally, I will examine the impact of their involvement with politics on their personal religious undertakings and the Buddhist contour of the age as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> The other two of the “Great Masters of late Ming China” were Yunqi Zhuhong and Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599-1655). Zhuhong consciously kept away from politics. Not only did he avoid a close relationship with Cisheng but he also deplored Deqing’s and Zhenke’s tragedies which, according to his understanding, were the result of their involvement in politics. As for Zhixu, as the youngest among the four masters, he is beyond the scope of this study because he was active in the Buddhist world mainly after the 1620s.

For a general discussion about leading Buddhist monks in the Wanli period, see Araki Kengo, *Chikusō zuihitsu* 竹窗隨筆 (Tōkyō: Meitoku shuppansha, 1985), pp. 16-19. For studies about Zhuhong, see Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*; Araki Kengo, *Unsei Shukō no kenkyū* 雲棲株宏の研究 (Tōkyō: Daizō Shuppan, 1985). For studies about Zhixu, see Sheng-yen, *Minmatsu chūgoku bukkyō no kinkyū*.

## 5.1 Hanshan Deqing's 憨山德清 (1546-1623) Exile

As one of the four leading Buddhist masters in late Ming China, Hanshan Deqing was active in both the Buddhist and secular worlds and contributed a lot to the Buddhist revival. He left abundant observations of and comments on the contemporary *saṃgha* in his voluminous work, among which was an autobiography later annotated by his disciple Fuzheng 福徵 (1590-1665).<sup>2</sup> Deemed by scholars as a rare reliable source, this autobiography, together with the annotation, has been used to understand not only his experience and thoughts but also the Buddhist world in general in the mid- and late Ming.<sup>3</sup> However, a close reading will disclose ambiguity in the autobiography and significant differences between it and its annotations, which in turn mislead us when we study the two worlds and their relations. To disclose his real relationship with politics, I will critically read accounts about two interrelated events crucial to his life: the Wutai assembly and his exile in Wanli 23 (1595).

### 5.1.1 The Wutai Dharma Assembly

The Wutai Dharma Assembly refers to an “Undiscriminating Great Assembly” (*wuzhe fahui* 無遮法會; Skt. *pañcavarṣika*) held at Mount Wutai around Wanli 10 (1582). With regard to this Dharma assembly, Deqing and Fuzheng offered a lot of misleading information, which I shall discuss in details in Appendix E. Simply put, it was something like this: in Wanli 5 (1577) Deqing was determined to make a copy of the *Huayan jing* with his blood in hope to improve

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<sup>2</sup> Hanshan Deqing's biography was recorded by his disciple Fushan 福善 (1587?-1623?) based on his own description, with an exception of the entry covering his last year which was added by his disciples after his death. It was first printed in 1658 with support from Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664), one of the most important literati of the age. The annotation was printed for the first time in 1651 by Fuzheng 福徵 (1590-1657?), who became Deqing's disciple in 1617 at the age of twenty seven, but was not collected in the Jiaying version of the Buddhist canon together with the biography. These two texts are now usually printed together under the title of *Hanshan dashi nianpu shuzhu* 憨山大師年譜疏註. The version cited here is that published in the *Beijing tushuguan cang zhenben nianpu congkan* 北京圖書館藏珍本年譜叢刊 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1990) vol. 52, pp. 589-732; vol. 53, pp.1-118, and will be cited as *HSNP*. This biography and its annotation have been translated into English. See Upasaka Lu K'uan Yu (Charles Luk), *Practical Buddhism* (London: Rider & Company, 1971), pp. 57-162. Given that some important parts are missing from Luk's version, all translations in this paper are mine.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the first part of Hsu Sung-Peng Hsu, *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ch'ing, 1546–1623* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979); the sixth chapter of Araki, *Yōmeigaku no tenkai to bukkō*; Jiang, *Wan Ming fojiao conglin gaige*; and Chen, “Ming Wanli shiqi Cisheng taihou de congfo,” pp. 220-34.

his Buddhist understanding and to invoke blessings for his parents. With Cisheng's support,<sup>4</sup> this plan was carried out next year and created many miracles in the course of copying.<sup>5</sup> Miaofeng Fudeng, Deqing's friend to be discussed later, vowed to make a copy in his own blood as well. Two years later in Wanli 8 (1580), they decided to hold an "Undiscriminating Great Assembly" in memory of the completion of the project. By the fall of the next year, everything was ready and the Dharma assembly was about to start, but it happened that inner court envoys came to Mount Wutai to pray for the birth of crown prince. That was part of a big effort to make Wanli, who had married three years earlier, obtain his first son soon.<sup>6</sup> All of a sudden, Deqing suggested incorporating their planned Dharma assembly in the praying service. Both Fudeng and the envoys objected to this, but the incorporation was still carried out because of Deqing's insistence. In the eighth month of Wanli 10 (1582), Wanli's first son Zhu Changluo was born.

This dharma assembly proved to be a key event in Deqing's life in that from then on he started to be intricately involved in court strife. A question thus arises why Deqing persisted in the combination of the two events in spite of strong objections? Deqing argued on the ground of the so-called responsibility of a monk to the state. He further argued that a monk's effort to seek fame should yield to his service to the state. However, these explanations are not sufficient for his involvement in such a politically sensitive and dangerous event. In fact, to fully understand his acts, we should place them in a wider historical context, including both political and religious aspects.

Deqing had such a confession in the entry of Wanli 11 (1583) of his autobiography, "Originally, I was determined to restore my monastery (*bensi* 本寺) which had been ruined by fire. I practiced cultivation while waiting for the right condition. After having lived at Mount Wutai for eight years, I found some opportunities (to do so). Out of fear that this chance would be missed if I lived too far away, I hence lived as recluse by the Eastern Sea. This was my genuine intention." (始予爲本寺回祿, 志在興復, 故修行以待緣。然居臺山八年, 頗有機會, 恐遠失時, 故隱居東海, 此本心也).<sup>7</sup> The "*bensi*" here refers to Great Baoen monastery 大報恩寺 in Nanjing, with which he had been affiliated since he was twelve. Originally built in the

<sup>4</sup> See the Wanli 5 entry in the *HSNP*, p. 674.

<sup>5</sup> See the Wanli 5 and 6 entries in the *HSNP*, pp. 674-680.

<sup>6</sup> Given that Wanli's grandfather Jiajing ascended the throne only because his cousin Emperor Wu died without a son and Wanli's father died young in his thirties, it is not surprising that this worry prevailed in the inner and outer court.

<sup>7</sup> See the Wanli 11 entry of the *HSNP* 1, p. 693.



Three Kingdoms period (220-280), this monastery had become one of the three biggest imperially-sponsored monasteries (*dasi* 大寺) since the early Ming.<sup>8</sup> However, its glory waned rapidly after the imperial capital was moved from Nanjing to Beijing in the 1420s, and the situation got even worse as a result of Jiajing's discrimination policy against Buddhism. When its abbot Xilin Yongning 西林永寧 (1483-1565) died in Jiajing 44 (1665), the monastery was not even able to afford his funeral which cost less than three hundred taels of silver. Two years later, a fire caused by thunder burned out three-fourths of this monastery, leading to the arrest of many monks under the charge of damaging an imperially-built monastery.<sup>9</sup>

Deqing entered the Great Baoen monastery in Jiajing 36 (1557) and witnessed its desperate struggle. Obviously selected and trained by Xilin Yongning as the heir, young Deqing became a key figure in the salvage of this sinking ship.<sup>10</sup> However, the decline of Baoen monastery was just part of the general decline of Buddhism in the Jiangnan region where it was located. Despite their hard efforts, it seems that Deqing and the other monks were not able to do anything more than earn some small amounts of money through lecturing in other temples and selling the monastery's fields,<sup>11</sup> which was actually prohibited by the law.<sup>12</sup> However, this was a mission which could not easily be put aside by a monk as proud as Deqing. Therefore, it came as no surprise that he vowed with Xuelang Hong'en 雪浪洪恩 (1545-1607), another eminent monk of his generation and future abbot of this monastery, to restore it. Fully aware of the difficulty of this task, Deqing told Xuelang, "This is for the sake of a great cause, and it is not easy to accomplish for people without great blessed virtue (*fude* 福德; Skt. *punya*) and wisdom. You and I should do everything to cultivate ourselves and wait for an opportunity." (此大事因緣, 非具大福德智慧者, 未易也。爾我當拌命修行, 養以待時可也).<sup>13</sup> Deqing and Xuelang both took this task very seriously and made great efforts to fulfill it.<sup>14</sup>

Deqing's solution was to go to the capital in search of assistance and, in doing so, as to be

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<sup>8</sup> The other two monasteries were Tianjie 天界 and Linggu 靈穀. See *FCZ* 1, pp. 11-12.

<sup>9</sup> See the Jiajing 45 entry of the *HSNP* 1, pp. 630-631.

<sup>10</sup> For details about Xilin's training of Deqing and Deqing's efforts to save the monastery, see the *HSNP*, pp. 630-32; 635-37, and Xilin's biography in *HSMY* 30, pp. 630-632.

<sup>11</sup> See the Longqing 2 and 3 entries in the *HSNP* 1, pp. 636-637.

<sup>12</sup> As discussed in Chapter One, it was prohibited to trade monastic land in the Ming dynasty after Hongwu15 (1382).

<sup>13</sup> See the Jiajing 45 entry in the *HSNP* 1, p. 631.

<sup>14</sup> For example, after Xuelang have rebuilt the pagoda thirty years later, Deqing mentioned it several times with pleasure and relief.

discussed in Chapter Seven, he was part of a trend of monks in south China who sought for religious instruction in North China. I have quoted Shen Defu's observation about the splendid imperially sponsored monasteries in Beijing in the early Wanli era. Cisheng was central to most of these Buddhist projects, just as she was to the Wutai prayer. Deqing had indirect contacts with Cisheng on two insignificant occasions before the assembly,<sup>15</sup> but these occasional events could not have left any lasting impression on Cisheng. Deqing seems to have quickly recognized that Cisheng was his best chance to restore the Baoen monastery which, according to his later estimate, would cost about one hundred thousand taels of silver.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, for Deqing's insistence on incorporating the two ceremonies, although we cannot completely deny his patriotism, it was very likely that he saw it as a way to establish a link with the inner court, especially Cisheng. Without this kind of pressure and ambition, Fudeng's refusal to such a proposal, even if only at the first stage, is understandable.

Deqing's activities in the year after the assembly have never received sufficient attention. After the assembly, he seems to have had no idea as to what to do and where to live. Sometime in Wanli 10 (1582), he left Mount Wutai for Zhangshi cliff 障石岩 in Zhending 真定 (present-day Zhending 正定 in Hebei province) to rest.<sup>17</sup> In the next spring he lived in the Western mountain in Beijing. A eunuch warmly greeted his arrival and donated thirty mu of land to help him build a temple. But obviously this was far from his goal so that he made another monk its abbot.<sup>18</sup> Also he had chances to contact scholar-officials like Feng Mengzhen.<sup>19</sup> Then he left for Mount Lao 嶗山 in Shandong province in the fourth month of Wanli 11 (1583).<sup>20</sup>

That Deqing changed his residence three times within one year after the dharma assembly, each closer to the capital than before, is revealing. He wrote in the Wanli 10 (1582) entry in his auto-biography as follows, "In the eighth month of this year, the crown prince was born. I went to the Zhongfeng temple in western Beijing once again." Although these two things seem to be put together casually, a relationship of cause and effect could be read into it. Obviously, his

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<sup>15</sup> During his stay in Beijing, Deqing participated in a Buddhist service praying the posthumous welfare for Emperor Longqing. See the Wanli 5 entry in the *HSNP*, p. 674.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, the Wanli 17 entry, p. 710.

<sup>17</sup> *HSMY* 29, p. 623.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 22, p. 527.

<sup>19</sup> See *KXT* 40, p. 580.

<sup>20</sup> The Wanli 11 entry in the *HSNP*, p. 693.

reported provocation of eunuchs did not frighten him away from the capital. Instead, he seems to have hoped in secret to obtain support from the inner court to restore the Great Baoen Monastery. A problem thus arises as to why he decided to retreat to Mount Lao which was several hundred miles away from Beijing.

The answer should be sought in the rapid change in the political climate. According to Deqing, it was the undeserved fame (*xusheng* 虛聲) deriving from the dharma assembly that made him retreat to Shandong. When annotating the term of *xusheng* and its dangers, Fuzheng said, “It is because the Undiscriminating Great Assembly was too successful and the fame of [his] success in praying for the crown prince was too much. [Moreover], his offence to the eunuchs was known within the inner court, which was even more severe and dangerous. “(以當日無遮道場太盛，爲宮闈祈嗣得嗣之名太著，忤內使之言，有聞於內，其事更大，其名更不可居).<sup>21</sup> This cannot be true because Deqing did not keep away from the inner court at the beginning. In fact, he seems to have been encouraged to move to Beijing by the birth of Zhu Changluo, Wanli’s first son, in the eighth month of Wanli 10 (1582). What Deqing had not recognized by then was that, with the unexpected death of Zhang Juzheng in the sixth month of the same year, the power triangle came to an end and a thorough reshuffle of power was taking place. The court was left in disorder, and many startling changes were under way. In such a deep crisis, there was little chance for Cisheng to notice Deqing or any other monks. By the end of this year, signalled by the sudden exile of Feng Bao to Nanjing, where he died shortly in prison, it became clear that Wanli was starting to vent his pent-up anger to the old political system. The situation got even worse by the fourth month of the next year when Zhang Juzheng’s house in Jiangling (present-day Jiangling, Hubei) was confiscated and seventeen of his family members starved to death.<sup>22</sup> Cisheng was in alliance with Feng and Zhang for ten years, and her silence in these events was surprisingly noticeable. No matter what the reason was, it is clear that Cisheng’s power was thus weakened enormously and that now she had to adapt herself to her “new-faced” son with great care, including restricting her patronage of Buddhism. This result, however, was a disaster to Deqing’s plan. Although living in a cave,<sup>23</sup> Deqing was close to the capital. More importantly, through eunuchs and court officials with

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, the Wanli 11 entry, p. 695.

<sup>22</sup> For Wanli’s liquidation of Zhang Juzheng and Feng Bao, see the *Mingshi* 20, pp. 268-269; 213, pp. 5651-52; 232, p. 6059.

<sup>23</sup> Deqing’s choice to reside in the western mountain was not accidental; this place had the densest concentration of temples build by eunuchs. See, Li Zongwan 勵宗萬, *Jing Cheng Guji Kao* 京城古跡攷 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1964), p. 4.

whom he was in contact, Deqing was well cognizant of what happened at court. The cruelty of Wanli's revenge during these several months exceeded everybody's expectations, and it was clearly not a good time to seek for Cisheng's patronage. Moreover, since he had offended some eunuchs who were on Wanli's side, it was much safer to leave the hotbed of trouble. In this sense, it is no coincidence that he left the capital at the same time that Zhang Juzheng's house was confiscated. His choice of destination was Mount Lao, a place bearing religious significance for him and within a moderate distance from the capital.<sup>24</sup>

As time passed, this leaving, or escaping if you like, appears to have become a chance for Deqing to advance his Buddhist achievements and to promote his reputation. At the start, he lived in a desolate temple, where almost nobody visited him in the first year. In Wanli 12 (1584), Cisheng summoned Miaofeng, Deqing, and Dafang (the abbot of Tayuan monastery where the assembly had been held) to Beijing for their efforts in the assembly. This was a signal that the tensions between Cisheng and her son had relaxed so that Cisheng had new chances to support Buddhism. All but Deqing positively answered her summons and went to Beijing. Cisheng then tried to build a temple for Deqing with three thousand taels of silver, but Deqing, together with the envoy, distributed the money in the name of Cisheng to people in need. Deqing did not explain his motivation, but if we recall that his expectations of the inner court were much more than that, it might be safe to say that he was waiting for a better chance.<sup>25</sup> What he really needed was not only gratitude but, more importantly, respect which would convince Cisheng and other members in the inner court to help him fulfill his task. Besides, Deqing's pride prohibited him from accessing the court too easily as well.<sup>26</sup>

Deqing's experience there in the first few years was not happy, although it seems that he wanted to hide it. In a letter to his disciple Deqing recalled as follows, "[I] hid myself in deep Mount Lao, which cannot be reached by people and is the realm of gods and ghosts...[We] cut down trees and thrones, lay on wild grass-field, confronted big waves, and crossed over dangerous places; it is impossible to recount all difficulties and hardness we underwent.... [I]

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<sup>24</sup> As for the religious significance of this place to Deqing, see the Wanli 11 entry in the *HSNP*, pp. 694-695.

<sup>25</sup> For example, the *Yijing* 易經 says "君子藏器於身，待時而動." Cf. *Zhouyi Zhengyi* 周易正義 (in *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980]) 8, p. 170. It means that a gentleman should get ready but wait to act until the time is right. A case in point is Daoist Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536). He had big influences on the court of the Liang dynasty (502-557) when he resided in mountains. Thus, he was called *shanzhong zaixiang* 山中宰相 (the chief minister living at mountains).

<sup>26</sup> Deqing was very proud that he was above the secular world. See, for example, *HSMY* 2, pp. 229b- 230a.

also thought I would die of old age as a recluse and not appear in the world.” (藏修於牢山深處，人跡所不能至，神鬼之鄉也...披荆榛，臥草莽，犯風濤，涉險阻，艱難辛苦，不可殫述...余亦將謂老死丘壑，無復人世矣).<sup>27</sup> Deqing confessed that he was never the recluse type,<sup>28</sup> and the sentence “I would die of old age as a recluse and not appear in the world again” reveals the loneliness he felt. This feeling seemed to have been worsened by the scarce appearance of monks in that region.<sup>29</sup> In a letter to Miaofeng, Deqing explicitly expressed his depression or even desperation:

I am aware that my body is filthy and confused [in substance]...thus I am contented to throw [myself] with all the risks to the remotest corner of mountains and seas. [In doing so], I placed myself in a totally isolated locality and did not expect to reappear in the outer world. Unpredictably, the Dharma-protecting Bodhisattva favoured me with a Buddhist canon, which immediately led light to shine in the east and mostly dispersed darkness away from there. This could be deemed as a virtue seldom appearing in ten thousand of generations. To trace the origin [of the virtue], both its donor and recipient were all out of your perfect, clean, and genuine heart. Last winter, a messenger came with your letter of teachings. I received and read it more than ten times, understood your heart deeply, and was moved unconsciously with tears covering my face...Alas, my life is over. There is no doubt that I will wither like grass and trees. 然某自知形器穢濁...故甘心拌命，擲此山海窮鄉，而置盡絕之地，且將無復人世矣。不意默承護法菩薩，運通寶藏，頓使一光東照，大破暗冥，可稱萬世稀有功德。原其所自，與者受者，又皆盡從吾師圓妙清淨真心流出也。客冬，某持法旨至，接讀十數通，深見師心，不覺涕泣交頤...嗟乎，某此生已矣，竟同草木，枯槁無疑...<sup>30</sup>

Retrospectively, these days constituted the most desperate period in Deqing's life. Given that Deqing was already forty-two years old when writing this letter but still confined to an isolated periphery,<sup>31</sup> it is not hard to understand why he said in desperation that “Alas, my life

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 2, p. 230b.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 2, p. 230a.

<sup>29</sup> See the Wanli 13 entry of the *HSNP*, p. 699.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 13, pp. 379- 80.

<sup>31</sup> Deqing said in the same letter that “(we) have separated for five years now” (別經五稔), see *HSMY* 13, p. 379b.

is over. It is no doubt that I will wither like grass and trees.”

This letter was written partly to express gratitude to Fudeng for his assistance in the bestowal of a Buddhist canon by Cisheng,<sup>32</sup> which proved a turning point in Deqing’s life. This was the first wave of Cisheng’s bestowal of canons,<sup>33</sup> in which four copies were first delivered to the four frontiers. Thus, the choice of four monasteries to accept them had profound significance.<sup>34</sup> Deqing might have still been confused about what this canon meant to his life, but finally he accepted it, allegedly due to the persuasion of his disciples.<sup>35</sup> Deqing recalled this event later, “When the canon arrived, no proper place could be found to store it in the deep and serene mountains. Thus, the Grand Coordinator favourably ordered local officials to store it appropriately. Noticing that it was accompanied with an edict, I then went to the capital to express my appreciation to the ruler. To preserve the canon in a suitable place, Cisheng kindly ordered all court women to donate to build a temple which she named as ‘Haiyin’.” (及至, 空山無可安頓, 蒙撫台行所在有司供奉之. 予見有敕命, 乃詣京謝恩. 比蒙慈命合宮眷各出佈施, 修寺安供, 請命名曰海印寺).<sup>36</sup> His ties with the inner court were thus established.

This was a critical step for Deqing in that it was the first time for him to be linked with Cisheng and the inner court directly. He thus felt somewhat relieved. When he recalled the year Wanli 14 (1586) later, he confessed, “After the *xingsi* year (Wanli 9; 1581), I worked hard in most time and seldom had a chance to take a break. Hence, I usually felt exhausted. Now, with my meditation hall roughly completed, I have a place to lead a leisurely life. My body and mind are at ease, the pleasure of which is ineffable.” (予自辛巳以來, 率多勞動, 未得寧止, 故多疲倦. 至今禪室初就, 始得安居. 身心放下, 其樂無喻).<sup>37</sup>

After that, Deqing was rocketing his way to success. He formally opened a lecture hall to expound the dharma in the next year. Two years later, because of him, Cisheng granted a Buddhist canon to the Great Baoen monastery, although it just got a canon three years earlier. Many miracles were reported when Deqing escorted this canon to the monastery. Upon

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<sup>32</sup> For Fudeng’s role in the distribution of this canon, see *ibid.* 13, p. 379b.

<sup>33</sup> The distribution of the Buddhist canon was a sweeping campaign launched by mainly in a period from Wanli 12 to Wanli 22, and then resumed after around Wanli 30 on a moderate scale.

<sup>34</sup> The other three were delivered to Great Huayan monastery 大華嚴寺 at Mount Luya 蘆芽 in Shanxi, Baotuo Chan monastery 寶陀禪寺 on the Putuo island, and one monastery at Mount E’mei.

<sup>35</sup> *HSMY* 2, pp. 230- 31.

<sup>36</sup> In the Wanli 14 entry in the *HSNP*, pp. 699-700.

<sup>37</sup> The Wanli 14 entry in the *HSNP*, p. 701.

returning to Beijing, Deqing reported these miracles to Cisheng. In addition, he requested her to restore this monastery through saving her expenditure on food.<sup>38</sup> His plan was that if Cisheng could save 100 taels of silver a day on food, there would be 100,000 taels of silver three years later to complete the building project. Cisheng allegedly accepted this suggestion gladly and ordered this plan to be carried out from the twelve month of Wanli 17 (1589).<sup>39</sup> From then on, Deqing spent much more time in Beijing than before. In Wanli 20 (1592), he received a purple robe.<sup>40</sup> In the same year, he also composed an essay for the discovery of a relic originally distributed by Emperor Wen of the Sui (r.581-604).<sup>41</sup>

### 5.1.2 An Exile to Leizhou

“A disaster comes after good fortune,” as Deqing commented many years later. His success reached its peak in the winter of Wanli 22 (1594) when Cisheng became his disciple. She hung his portrait on the wall and asked Wanli to pay homage to it.<sup>42</sup> However, a storm befell him immediately afterwards. In the second month of the next year when Deqing just returned to Mount Lao from Beijing, he was arrested and taken back to the capital. He made a mention of this event many years later, “I was caught in a disaster because of preaching the Dharma. I riled the emperor, and his rage was like a thunderclap in the daytime so that everybody had to cover their ears. During the two hundred and plus days from being arrested to be released [from prison], I experienced all inflictions which are hard to describe.” (余比以宏法罹難，上幹聖怒，如白日雷霆，聞者掩耳。自被逮以至出離二百餘日，備歷苦事，不可言).<sup>43</sup> By the tenth month of this year, he was sentenced to exile to Leizhou 雷州 in Guangdong province, a traditional place for exile. In this section I will examine the reason and the result of this event which have not been critically explored yet.

<sup>38</sup> See the Wanli 17 entry in the *HSNP*, pp. 706-707.

<sup>39</sup> Chen, “Mindai bukyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū,” pp. 110-21, has discussed the expense that the Cining palace, where Cisheng lived, spent on food and the possible result if Deqing’s plan was really carried out. Also see her article, “Ming Wanli shiqi Cisheng taihou de congfo,” pp. 227-30.

<sup>40</sup> Cisheng originally granted the robe to Zibo Zhenke, but the latter gave it to Deqing who he thought was more suitable for it.

<sup>41</sup> For the relic, see *HSMY* 22, pp. 521b- 525b. For the political and religious significance of this relic-distribution project, cf. Jinhua Chen, *Monks and Monarchs, Kinship and Kingship: Tanqian in Sui Buddhism and Politics* (Kyoto: Scuola Italiana di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, 2002). As for the bestowal of this purple robe, Fuzheng dated it in Wanli 21 (1593), while Fan Jialing 範佳玲, *Zibo dashi shengping ji sixiang yanjiu* 紫柏大師生平及思想研究 (Taibei: Fagu chubanshe, 2001), said that it happened in Wanli 18 (1590). However, according to Deqing’s record, it occurred in the summer of Wanli 20 (1592).

<sup>42</sup> *HSNP*, pp. 720-21.

<sup>43</sup> *HSMY* 2, p. 228b.

It seems that Deqing had expected dangers in advance. In the epitaph he composed for Zhenke decades after the exile, Deqing recalled that Zhenke had “told me about the clandestine and subtle situation before my disaster took shape.” (當予禍之未形也，備告之以隱微).<sup>44</sup> This is the sole reference that Deqing acknowledged he knew about the complicated environment in the capital. Deqing and Zhenke had met twice by then, once in Wanli 14 (1584) and once in the summer of Wanli 20 (1592), a politically sensitive year, as shown before. They stayed together and talked face to face for forty days and nights.<sup>45</sup> It was very likely that in this meeting Zhenke informed Deqing about the precarious situation, but Deqing seems not to have taken this warning seriously. His autobiography shows that he returned to Shandong after that meeting and stayed there until the tenth month of Wanli 22 (1594) when he went to Beijing to celebrate Cisheng’s birthday. But Fuzheng commented under the entry of this year, “[Master Han] would not have entered the capital to celebrate [the birthday] and stayed there if not for the restoration of [the Great Baoen] monastery; he would not have been criticized and have gotten into trouble if not for going back and forth between [Shandong and] Beijing and stayed there for the three years.” (非爲修寺，不入賀留京。非三年往來留京，不涉議犯患也).<sup>46</sup> “The three years” refers to the period between Wanli 20 and Wanli 23. This annotation thus suggests that Deqing kept traveling between Shandong and Beijing after his second meeting with Zhenke.

There are at least three explanations for Deqing’s arrest. Deqing spoke of the string of factors as such. First, the emperor harboured hatred of eunuch Zhang Ben for his assistance of Cisheng with spending much money for the Buddhist cause. Second, Cisheng was involved with court strife and thus exposed to attack. Third, Zhang Ben’s rival used this chance to frame a case against him. Finally, Deqing was implicated in this case only because Zhang Ben had delivered a Buddhist canon to Haiyin si. Here strife among eunuchs was seen as the major factor leading to Deqing’s disaster, and this explanation was accepted by Wu Yingbin 吳應賓 (1565-1634), who further clarified that Zhang Ben was charged with grafting public funds.<sup>47</sup> Qian Qianyi presented another explanation, “Formerly, Cisheng believed in Buddhism and sent envoys everywhere. Eunuchs slandered [her] and kept complaining that [her activities] were troublesome and expensive, but the emperor left it unnoticed. Such a message was leaked to the

<sup>44</sup> Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可, *Zibo zunzhe quanji* 紫柏尊者全集 (in *XZJ*, 73.1452) 1, p. 634b.

<sup>45</sup> *HSMY* 27, p. 592b-593a.

<sup>46</sup> *HSNP*, p. 719.

<sup>47</sup> *HSMY* 55, p. 981b.



outer court. Officials thus took Master [Deqing] as an opportunity to implicate Cisheng's attendants and investigate her donations, which was reportedly up to several hundreds of thousands of taels of silver." (先是慈聖崇信佛乘，敕使四出。中人讒搆，動以煩費爲言，上弗問也。而其語頗聞於外庭，所司遂以師爲奇貨，欲因以株連慈聖左右，並按前後檀施帑金以數十萬計).<sup>48</sup> According to Qian, the attack on Deqing was used as a way to curb Cisheng's activities and to take back the money she had spent, and court officials were the major force pushing the event forward.

Unlike these two opinions which regard Deqing as an innocent person passively caught up in the case, Fuzheng connected this disaster with court strife related to the crown prince.

In the *yiwei* year, the crown prince was fourteen years old but his status as the heir was not established yet, leaving the court in much controversy. The Holy Mother backing Taichang insisted in establishing the eldest one, while the emperor backing Prince of Fu proposed the noble one. Of eunuchs, nine out of ten sided with Courtesan Zheng. The powerful officials at the outer court corresponded to them, almost shaking the state root. As a result, people who mediated between them proposed that three princes be entitled equally at the same time, whereas upright people [sticking to principles]... were no more than a few.... People were worried about Patriarch Han because he, as someone who had [vowed to be] aloof from worldly affairs, intervened with so big an affair related to the throne by praying for the begetting of the crown prince at Mount Wutai and [attempted to] protect him in Cishou si.... Villains inside and outside the court who secretly observed the emperor's tendency thus launched attacks on the monk [i.e. Deqing] by ordering a servant at the Eastern Depot to impersonate a Daoist monk and [to issue a charge] with an unfounded matter. The matter of cutting off branches and removing the trunk was finally evolving into a big problem, but it had nothing to do with Daoist monks at Mount Lao. From the fact that the Daoist priest's charge was groundless, [we] know that [the conflict] in the inner court had become [irreconcilable] like water and fire.... Moreover, [Patriarch Han's] request that the Holy Mother save money by cutting down one hundred taels of silver a day on food for three years was not beneficial to eunuchs so that it was easy to create resentment. Additionally, the Empress Dowager is not allowed to intervene with court politics according to the Ancestral

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.55, p. 987a.

Instruction. As a result, it is no wonder that people in the inner and outer court would frame against [him]. 乙未之年，皇太子生十四歲矣，而儲位未定，廷議紛然。聖母意在泰昌，議主立長。皇上意在福王，議主立貴。內廷近侍，左袒鄭貴妃者什九，外廷權貴因之附和，幾搖國本。於是調停其間者，主三王並封之說。而挺持...者，不過數人。...識者謂，臺山祈嗣，慈壽保嗣，以出世人，幹係國祚大事，甚為愍祖危之。...內外奸人，窺伺皇上一時喜怒，遂令東廠役，假扮道士，影響借鑒，以傾和尚。披枝去本之勢，此日真成燎原，卻與牢山道士全沒交涉。惟道士沒影響，知宮庭大火矣。...且當日請聖母日減膳饑百兩、三年儲積之說，大不便於內官，隙既易生。況祖制，母后不得幹與朝政，宜一時中外之藉端排構也。<sup>49</sup>

Taichang referred to Zhu Changluo. This paragraph cast some light on Deqing's activities in Beijing, showing that he was active in Cishou si to protect Zhu Changluo. According to Fuzheng, the reasons for Deqing's tragedy are both political and economic. First, he was entangled in court strife over the crown prince and sided with Cisheng. Although politically right, this position put him in opposition to the emperor, who was in turn used by evil eunuchs for their own interest. Second, Deqing offended eunuchs, for his request of Cisheng to save on food hurt their traditional interest. Third, Cisheng's activities were deemed as a defiance of the established rules. Therefore, Deqing was a victim of a court conflict that was as irreconcilable as water and fire.

The Daoist priest involved was Geng Yilan 耿義蘭 (1509-1606).<sup>50</sup> Geng was a Shandong native who got a *jinshi* degree in the Jiajing era. He later became a Daoist monk in the Taiqing abbey 太清宮 at Mount Lao, and then travelled to Beijing where he received instructions in the Baiyun abbey 白雲觀, the largest Daoist temple in the capital. The Taiqing abbey was located in a good place, facing the sea. It was said to have been built in the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220) but had become so dilapidated that only a few Daoist priests resided there by then. Deqing first built a small hut before it in Wanli 13 (1585), and allegedly bought its foundation shortly later. When the Buddhist canon was sent there next year, he began to build Haiyin si on the foundation with money donated by the inner court. This became the envy

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<sup>49</sup> HSNP, pp. 726-28.

<sup>50</sup> Geng Yilan's short biography could be found at

<http://qpinet.qingdao.gov.cn/sizhi.nsf/0/16dfd088191bfa6e482566de00338ce7?OpenDocument> (available on June 30, 2010).

of the Daoist priests, who in Wanli 17 (1589) accused Deqing of stealing the grounds. Geng Yilan as the head plaintiff was whipped and sentenced to exile for four years by local officials,<sup>51</sup> but others continued to pursue the issue in the following years.

In the second month of Wanli 23 (1595), with assistance from the head of Baiyun abbey who was closely related with Courtesan Zheng, Geng Yilan submitted a charge against Deqing directly to Wanli.<sup>52</sup> In this complaint, Deqing was charged with colluding with eunuchs like Feng Bao and Zhang Ben, pretending to be an imperial family member and issuing fake edicts, occupying the property of a Daoist abbey, beating people to death, secretly hoarding provisions for revolt, and the like. Although many accusations were obviously unfounded, Wanli still wrote in rage, “Since [Geng] has repeatedly lodged the charge, the governor should investigate it in person and submit the result [to me]. Why did he always return the case to officials in charge? [He] connived with the evil monk to harm the Way and brought disaster to common people. What kinds of malpractices were involved with it? [I order that] the Ministry of Punishment investigate all officials who have dealt with this case and those criminals.” (既屢控巡撫理宜親審具奏，何疊批有司？黨援妖僧，害道殃民，是何情弊？仰刑部將經書官員並一千人犯提審).<sup>53</sup>

The term of “evil monk” discloses Wanli’s loathing of Deqing, and politics had left a clear mark on this case. After eight months of investigation, Deqing was sentenced to be exiled and the Haiyin si be dismantled. Deqing’s arrest had a strong symbolic meaning. Although Haiyin si never got a name tablet from the emperor, it was the only temple that got a name from Cisheng and was punished so severely. More importantly, Geng ended his charge with a claim that “I would like to be beheaded if any of my words is unfounded” (若臣半字虛誑，自甘梟首!) However, it would have been more than sufficient for Deqing to be executed if any of his charges had been validated. Thus, Deqing’s exile actually proved his innocence. Nevertheless, Deqing was exiled and in Wanli 28 (1600), five years after his exile, Geng was granted by the emperor a title *fujiao zhenren* 扶教真人 (Authentic Man of Protecting Teaching). Also the Taiqing abbey was restored on the foundation of former Haiyin si, with a bestowal of a copy of

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<sup>51</sup> It was a conflict of life and death between Deqing and Geng Yilan. On one occasion Deqing was surrounded by several hundred angry people who sided with the Daoist community. But the scarcity of sources prevents us from finding a reasonable explanation for such an intense and lasting conflict between the two.

<sup>52</sup> Deqing said that it was not Geng Yilan himself but an errand of the Eastern Depot submitted this plaintiff in Geng’s name.

<sup>53</sup> For the plaint which is still extant, see [http://www.qdlswh.gov.cn/Article/Article\\_Show.asp?ArticleID=1291](http://www.qdlswh.gov.cn/Article/Article_Show.asp?ArticleID=1291) (available on June 30, 2010).

the Daoist canon and one hundred and twenty *mu* of land.<sup>54</sup> This showed that the frozen mother-son relationship had not warmed up even by then.

Paradoxically, this disaster brought unexpected benefits to Deqing. Dozens of years later, in a verse in praise of Deqing, the Chongzheng emperor (r. 1628-1644) spoke of him as “being exercised (*qianchui* 鉗錘) by the son of Heaven.” Chongzhen appears to have chosen to overlook the real purpose of his grandfather to treat Deqing that way, but his remark remains true in terms that this event was a benefit allowing Deqing to cultivate himself. In a letter to Fudeng, Deqing reported his progress after being exiled:

Therefore, [I] knew of making progress in Buddhist practice immediately when we met thirty years ago. In the [past] twenty years, I have constantly worked hard to clean dung, and the earnest idea of [making progress] has never been far away from my eyebrow (i.e. myself). Regretfully, however, my ingrained habit was so deep that I was not able to instantly clean karma from current conduct (*xianye* 現業 and flowing consciousness (*liushi* 流識)... Fifteen years have quickly elapsed since our parting. [During this period of time], I really endured great hardships and urged myself forward intensively, daring not be lazy even a little bit. Unfortunately, I was still sunk in the net of illusion (*huanwang* 幻網) because the nebula of illusion (*huanyi* 幻翳) was not removed, and my power was not free [to use] because my mind was bound. This is certainly because my sword of wisdom was not sharp enough to break [the net] immediately. This is a weakness about which I know well, and how can I dare to hide it from you? When I luckily took the Dharmas [i.e. objective phenomena] as the condition for the experiential reality of sentient beings and knew of [something regarding] repaying Buddha’s favour, I immediately took the network of illusion as a means to perform the Buddhist services. My heart of assuming [the responsibility for Buddhism] was as [earnest] as holding nine tripods, whereas the illness of attachment to Dharma (*fazhi* 法執) increased by seven times. In doing so, I thought that I would fulfill my commission and keep abreast with the former sage, but actually it is not wise but crazy and foolish. Fortunately, I understood at heart that this act was not correct and that it was just like crossing a river in a dream (i.e. not genuine). It happened that the Holy ruler favoured me with diamond-fire, which pierced through accumulated ignorance

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<sup>54</sup> Chen Guofu 陳國符, *Daozang yuanliu kao* 道藏源流攷 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), p. 685.

and broke with ease the root of feeling (*qinggen* 情根) of the past kalpas. When looking back from this point in time, what happened in the past was like things occurring in a dream, and I thus consider it as fortunate and happy in my life. I know at heart that you must have felt happy for me. Although now thrown into a sea of malaria, I live here like sitting in a *bodhimaṇḍala* (*daochang* 道場; a place for teaching, learning, or practising religion); Although now suffering from hotness and suffocating, I treat it like drinking sweet dews. In the spare time when I do not need to carry weapons [like a soldier], I only face the *Lengyan jing* to explore the heart-seal of Buddha. I have come to realize that previously I fell in the sphere of light and shadow (i.e. illusion) rather than obtained the power of authentic *jñāna-darśana* (*zhijian* 知見; insight). Therefore, [I] come to recognize that there is more than one expedient way for Buddhas and gods to cultivate sentient beings that have affinity to Buddhism, and their purpose is only to introduce them into the great gate of pure liberation. Both accumulated fires [of hell] and the hill of knives are the place to attain the truth of *nirvāṇa*. From now on, it might be claimed that I would not disappoint my own spirit as well as my masters and friends. 故自緣會三十年前，即知有向上事。二十年中，常勤除糞。此一念苦切之心，未嘗去於眉睫。但恨積習深厚，不能頓淨現業流識……爰自離析以來，忽十五年。實已臥薪嘗膽，痛自策勵，未敢少惰。第以幻翳未消，猶沈幻網；心知被縛，力不自由。良以慧劍不利，不能頓裂。此知痛處，敢欺吾師。及幸以法爲緣，知報佛恩，即以幻網爲佛事。其荷負之心，實持九鼎。而法執之病，益增七重。將謂不負所生，敢追先哲，此實狂愚，非謂慧也。幸亦心知非正，如夢渡河。念蒙聖主隆恩，惠以金剛燄，爍破重昏，使歷劫情根，一揮頓裂。回視昔遊，皆同夢事。是故不慧以此慶快平生，心知吾師必爲我賀。今雖遠投瘴海，如坐道場；飽飲炎蒸，如餐甘露。荷戈之暇，惟對楞伽究佛祖心印。始知從前皆墮光影門頭，非真知見力。是知諸佛神力調伏有緣眾生，非止一種方便。若逆若順，無非令入清涼大解脫門；火聚刀山，無非究竟寂滅道場地。而今而後，或可謂不負己靈，亦可謂不負師友矣。<sup>55</sup>

Deqing took this disaster as a medicine to cure his attachment to the Dharma, and once summarized this experience as “entering the Dharma of the Buddha because of the law of the

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<sup>55</sup>HSMY 13, p. 380a-b.

King” (因王法而入佛法).<sup>56</sup>

Another advantage of this exile was that it enabled Deqing to expand his social circle. Before exile, Deqing was active only in North China. Although he had been appreciated by eminent scholar-officer like Wang Daokun 汪道昆 (1525-1593) in the early Wanli years, his connection with people outside the *samgha* was relatively limited.<sup>57</sup> This situation changed after the disaster. People sympathized with him because they knew that he was a scapegoat for court strife. More importantly, he was on the side of Cisheng who was deemed the ultimate bulwark against Wanli’s misadministration, and his unyielding attitude in the investigation protected her from being attacked. This helped loosen the tension between officials and Deqing who was active in asking for public funds for the Buddhist cause. As a result, it was reported that some court officials once tried to save him. Noticeably, all these officials were in opposition to the emperor in the succession issue and thus in line with Cisheng,<sup>58</sup> was as Deqing. Therefore, it is no coincidence that when Deqing departed for the south in the tenth month of Wanli 23 (1595), some officials wearing casual clothing sent him off to the ferry.<sup>59</sup>

This exile also opened a window for Deqing in south China. During the twenty plus years since his leaving the Jiangnan region at the age of twenty-seven, Deqing only returned to south China once in Wanli 17 (1589). Fortunately for Deqing, leaving Beijing gave him a chance to connect closely with people who were growingly frustrated at the emperor and thus almost treated him as a hero fighting against the emperor. Deqing had connections with more than two hundred and twenty elites in different ways in his life, and the majority of them were from the Jiangnan region and their contact happened after his exile. Without their efforts to glorify him and spread his influence, Deqing would appear very differently to us.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 14, p.393a-b. Deqing repeatedly emphasized his advancement in the Buddhist cultivation accompanying with this disaster. For example, see his letters “Yu Tixuan xiaoshi” 與體玄小師 (To the small master Tixuan), “Yu Yin’an fashi” 與印庵法師 (To the Dharma master Yin’an), “Yu Fang shanna Yun shi” 與方山衲雲師 (To the Mountain monk Master Fangyun) in *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 14, p.560a. As for other instance of Deqing’s communication with literati, see Dong Qichang 董其昌, *Huachan shi suibi* 畫禪室隨筆 (Rpt. in *Biji xiaoshuo daguan* 筆記小說大觀 [Yangzhou: Guangling guji keyingshe, 1983], vol. 12) 4, p. 6 (131).

<sup>58</sup> *HSMY* 55, p. 982a, 991b.

<sup>59</sup> *HSNP* 1, p. 724.

<sup>60</sup> Qian Qianyi was such an example. Although meeting Deqing only once in Wanli 45 (1617), he claimed himself “the disciple of Haiyin” (海印弟子). Not only did he write a biography for Deqing, but he contributed a lot to the compilation and publication of Deqing’s collection of writings.

## 5.2 Zibo Zhenke's 紫柏真可 (1543-1603) Death in Prison

Zhenke was another leading monk in the late Ming.<sup>61</sup> Like Deqing, he spent his time in the Jiangnan region during the Jiajing era and then traveled to North China in the Longqing period when he was in his late twenties. In Beijing he received instruction from Bianrong Zhenyuan for nine years. He was very proud and straightforward, as evidenced by his immediate departure of Shaolin si 少林寺 in Henan in disgust after attending a lecture by its abbot Daqian Changrun 大千常潤, the twenty fifth patriarch of the Caodong 曹洞 School.<sup>62</sup> Unlike Deqing who confined himself to North China before his exile, Zhenke frequently traveled in areas like Shanxi, Sichuan, Jiangxi, Hunan, and Anhui.

### 5.2.1 Zhenke, Daokai, and the Inner Court

Zhenke's life and undertakings obtained tremendous assistance from Mizang Daokai who became his disciple in Wanli 8 (1580). Daokai was known mainly for his contribution to the compilation and carving of the Jiaxing edition of the Buddhist canon and to the restoration of Lengyan si 楞嚴寺 where most of this project was being carried out. This canon was first advocated by monks like Faben Huanyu 法本幻余 (fl. 1602) and Zhenke and scholar-officials like Yuan Huang 袁潢 (1533-1606; *jinshi*, 1586), Lu Guangzu, and Feng Mengzhen. When Daokai participated in this project according to Zhenke's arrangement, he vowed to make every effort to complete it. Shortly later, he became the major driving force and the executive head of it. This project was money-consuming, but Zhenke insisted that the money should be collected not from a few big patrons but from as many people as possible so that all of them had the chance to enjoy the benefit of almsgiving.<sup>63</sup> Around Wanli 10 (1582) Daokai designed a system

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<sup>61</sup> About current studies about Zibo Zhenke, see Jonathan Christopher Cleary, "Zibo Zhenke: A Buddhist leader in late Ming China" (Ph.D. disser., University Microfilms International, 1985), Honda Takashige 本多道隆, "Minmatsu bukkyō no kenkyū: Shihaku Shinka o chūshin to shite" 明末仏教の研究: 紫柏真可を中心として (Ph.D. disser., Hiroshima daigaku 広島大学, 2007); Chen Yuru 陳玉如, *Zibodashi Yan Jiu* 紫柏大師研究 (Taibei: Zhongguo minsu xuehui, 1986); Guoxiang, *Zibo dashi Yanjiu*.

<sup>62</sup> See Zhenke's biography in *HSMY* 27, p. 591a-b.

<sup>63</sup> See Nakajima Ryūzō 中嶋隆藏, "Kakōzō nyūzō button to Mitsuzō Dōkai no tachiba" 嘉興入藏佛典と密藏道開の立場, *Tōhō gakuho* 東方學報 113. 1 (2007), pp. 34-50; Honda Takashige 本多道隆, "Kakō daizōkyō no kankoku jigyo to Shihaku Shinka——butsugo no denpa to jishin no senmei" 嘉興大藏經の刊刻事業と紫柏真可——仏語の伝播と自心の闡明,

in which forty men were assigned as the heads to collect funds. Interestingly, he planned to find twenty people in Beijing, ten in Shanxi, and only ten in the Jiangnan region. This designation looks unreasonable in the sense that North China was far less wealthy than south China, but it is consistent with a common optimism for North China in terms of its Buddhism in the early Wanli era. This plan also suggests Daokai's strong relationship with the inner court because he intended to depend mainly on the imperial family to fulfil the task.

That Zhenke found his way to the inner court was largely because of Daokai's influence in the inner court. No later than Wanli 12 (1584), Daokai had already set up a close contact with Cisheng through eunuch Xu Fudeng whom we have seen in Chapter Four. Judged from the casual but intimate tone in which Zhenke mentioned him, this eunuch might be a disciple of Daokai or Zhenke and was entrusted by Zhenke with important things like the delivery of the Buddhist canon and the restoration of Lengyan si, where the Jiaxing canon project was being carried out.<sup>64</sup> Daokai submitted a memorial to Cisheng and attributed the carving of the Jiaxing canon to her order in Wanli 17 (1589), although it was he himself who was in charge of the project. His strong influence in the inner court is implied in a letter, in which he warned his friend that he cannot get a suitable and elegant Buddhist canon without his intervention.<sup>65</sup> Benefited by this close relation with the inner court, when Zhenke arrived in Beijing in Wanli 20 (1592), Daokai gave his master a warm welcome accompanied by some eunuchs.<sup>66</sup> When Zhenke arrived in Beijing in Wanli 29 (1601), it is said that eunuchs rushed out to pay respects to him.<sup>67</sup>

Unlike Deqing, however, Zhenke maintained a relative balance between Cisheng, Wanli, and eunuchs. He was active in Beijing and Shanxi before the tension between Cisheng and Wanli increased, which made it possible for him not to have to side with either of them. He backed Cisheng in the issue of the crown prince, but he paid due respect to Wanli as well.<sup>68</sup> Such a stance came as no surprise, considering that Daokai visited Beijing frequently and kept him updated with court strife. It also explains why Zhenke was able to tell Deqing about the clandestine and subtle situation in Wanli 20 (1592) before the disaster befell the latter.

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*Shūkan tōyōgaku* 集刊東洋學 (2006), pp. 81-100.

<sup>64</sup> Zhenke, *Zibo zunze bieji* 3, pp. 136a-b.

<sup>65</sup> Daokai, *Mizang chanshi yigao* 1, p. 13a.

<sup>66</sup> *HSMY* 22, p. 522a.

<sup>67</sup> *WLYH* 27, p. 691.

<sup>68</sup> For Wanli's appreciation of Zhenke, see Zhenke, *Zibo zunzhe quanji* 1, pp. 631a-b. *WLYH* 27, p. 679, even says that Zhenke discussed the Buddhist teaching with Wanli.



In sharp contrast to Deqing, despite his frequent travels, Zhenke always took the Jiangnan region as his major base and enjoyed popularity among the elite there. In his thirties Zhenke had won the respect of Lu Guangzu, Yuan Huang, and Tao Wangling 陶望齡 (1562-1609), all being famous patrons of Buddhism of the age. As time passed, he became even more influential among scholar-officials and got strong support from several powerful and wealthy families in Wujiang (present-day Wujiang in Jiangsu province).<sup>69</sup> However, it seems that he was not always a good teacher, both because of his strict character and his tight schedule. Once again, it was Daokai who came to his assistance; Daokai took the responsibility to direct those people and kept them around Zhenke, like in Feng Mengzhen's case.

Zhenke was insightful in making plans and Daokai was capable of organizing and accomplishing the tasks, but Daokai was always worried about his master. They both were concerned with the Buddhism and politics of their age, but the differences between them were obvious. The master was not only absorbed in his ideals but also too proud to bend to reality, while the disciple was more practical and flexible. In a letter, Daokai said about his master to an official, "Our master has a Buddha-like heart, but ordinary people are expert at flattering. Moreover, there are no capable and insightful people serving [him]. [Therefore], you can make all decisions and make sure that they will not be against both the secular law and the vinaya. [You] will lose both of them provided that you treat one unfairly. On some [unusual] occasions, it is unnecessary to comply with our opinions." (蓋老師佛祖肚腸, 而眾生巧於投抵, 且左右無明眼護惜, 凡百在門下主張. 必期世出世法兩無傷損. 若虧其一, 必喪其兩. 一時之情, 不必盡徇我輩).<sup>70</sup> This letter demonstrates how sensitive Daokai was to the danger facing his master and how practical he was in face of the reality. Unfortunately, it proved that there was something out of his control.

### 5.2.2 Zhenke's Death in Prison

Zhenke finally got involved with intrigue and lost his life in prison. On the first day of twelve month in Wanli 31 (1604/1/1), Zhenke who then lived in Tanzhe si 潭柘寺 west of Beijing was arrested by the Imperial Bodyguard. He was tortured in the following days; he was

<sup>69</sup> Zhenke, *Zibo zunzhe quanji* 1, pp. 628a-29a.

<sup>70</sup> Daokai, *Mizang chanshi yigao* 1, p.18b. Daokai himself acted exactly in the same way. For example, he walked close to eunuchs and got their help to fulfil some tasks, but at the same time he clearly warned his fellow monks against being involved with them because "you will not able to improve yourself once you socialize with them." (一與此輩從事, 即無能進修己業矣). See *ibid.* 1, p. 18b.

beaten with a bamboo stick thirty times and his fingers were pressed between sticks one hundred times. The charges against him included composing an “evil pamphlet” (*yaoshu* 妖書), intervening in state affairs through colluding with scholar-officials, and failing to pay due respect to the deceased Emperor Muzong. Only two weeks later, on the fifteenth day of the same month (1604/1/15), he was sentenced to execution after the assizes (*jiaojianhou* 絞監候).<sup>71</sup> He deplored this hopeless situation, “Since the secular world has become as such, what is the point [for me] to keep living?” (世法如此, 久住何爲?)<sup>72</sup> Two days later, he died in prison.

Zhenke had already lived in Beijing for a few years before the event. He went to Beijing in Wanli 28 (1600) with an intention to save Wu Baoxiu 吳寶秀 (?-1600; *jinshi*, 1589), the Prefect of Nankang 南康 who had been arrested and taken to Beijing because of his resistance to the encroachment imposed by eunuch mining intendants (*kuangjian* 礦監).<sup>73</sup> There are different opinions about why he did not leave Beijing after that. Deqing said that his staying there was to fulfill three tasks: saving Deqing, stopping the tax on minerals (*kuangshui* 礦稅), and finishing the continuum of the Record of Transmission of the Lamp” (*xu chuandeng lu* 續傳燈錄).<sup>74</sup> In a record of the investigation, Zhenke admitted that he intended to save Deqing through eunuch Yan Luan 閻鸞 (fl. 1610) but had not taken action. Yan Luan, who will appear again in the next chapter, was very likely a channel between Zhenke and Cisheng. Zhenke also confessed that he resided in Beijing in the hope of obtaining a copy of the Buddhist canon.<sup>75</sup> Shen Lingyu 沈令譽 (fl. 1605) was Zhenke’s disciple. When arrested, he admitted that he frequently discussed with his master about how to save not only Deqing but also Zhang Ben, the eunuch involved in Deqing’s case and sentenced to death.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, he said that Zhenke, together with Jieshan Furu 戒山傅如 (fl. 1606) and others, was trying to send the Buddha tooth

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<sup>71</sup> For the record about Zhenke’s being arrested and investigated, see his *Zibo zunze bieji* 4, p. 150b. Cf. *WLYH* 27, pp. 690-91 and Wen, *Xian bo zhi shi* 1, p. 12 (593).

<sup>72</sup> *HSMY* 27, p. 594a.

<sup>73</sup> *WLYH* 27, p. 690, says that Zhenke went to Beijing in Wanli 29. Many people, including officials, Confucian students, and eunuchs, contributed to Wu’s being released after his arrest. It was reported that Cisheng also asked the emperor to forgive Wu when learning that his wife had committed suicide. See Wu’s biography in *Mingshi* 237, pp. 6178-79.

<sup>74</sup> *HSMY* 27, p. 594a.

<sup>75</sup> Zhenke, *Zibo zunze bieji* 4, p. 150a.

<sup>76</sup> No more reference about the Zhang Ben mentioned here is available, but he was very likely the eunuch who was punished in Wanli 23 in Deqing’s case. If so, in contrast to traditional opinions, this eunuch was not immediately killed after the sentence.

into the inner court.<sup>77</sup> The last opinion says that it had something to do with Cisheng's promise to build Zhenke a monastery.<sup>78</sup>

The real reason for Zhenke's arrest was conflicts among court officials. Zhu Changluo was finally established as the crown prince in Wanli 29 (1601), but he still faced serious threat from Zhu Changxun and Courtesan Zheng. On the eleventh day of the eleventh month of Wanli 31 (1603/12/13), a pamphlet to be known as "Evil pamphlet" (*yaoshu* 妖書) appeared in many places in Beijing. It says that Wanli was forced to make Zhu Changluo the crown prince under tremendous pressure, and that Zhu Changluo was destined to be replaced by Zhu Changxun soon. This pamphlet set off a big political bomb in the inner and outer court, and everybody wanted to keep away from it as far as possible. Shen Yiguan (1531-1615), Zhu Geng (1535-1608; *jinshi*, 1568), and Shen Li 沈鯉 (1531-1615; *jinshi*, 1565) were three Grand Secretaries at that time, with Shen Yiguan as the senior one. A strange point in the pamphlet is that Shen Yiguan and Zhu Geng were both listed in it as accomplices while Shen Li was not. Shen Yiguan was in deep conflict with Shen Li, he thus strongly suspected Shen Li of designing this scheme.<sup>79</sup>

The conflict between Shen Yiguan and Shen Li originated from another political event. In the third month of Wanli 31 (1603), Zhu Huayue 朱華越, a family member of Prince of Chu, submitted a memorial claiming that Zhu Huakui 朱華奎 (1568-1643), currently Prince of Chu, was not a son of his alleged father Prince of Gong of the Chu 楚恭王 (?-1571) but the son of the latter's brother in law.<sup>80</sup> Bribed by Zhu Huakui with big gifts, Shen Yiguan intercepted this memorial. Upon knowing of this, Zhu Huayue personally went to Beijing in the fourth month and got an order that this case be investigated by the Minister of Rites. Vice Minister of Rites Guo Zhengyu 郭正域 (1554-1612; *jinshi*, 1583) refused Zhu Huakui's bribery and disagreed with Shen Yiguan in how to investigate this case. Guo and Shen thus began mutual attacks, during which Guo disclosed that Shen received Zhu Huakui's bribery. It happened that Guo was Shen Li's student. Therefore, Shen Yiguan incited a censor to impeach Guo Zhengyu and Shen

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<sup>77</sup> It is not clear what the Buddha tooth here referred. The only Buddha tooth relic reserved in China had been buried underneath a stupa at Lingguang si 靈光寺 in Beijing in 1072 and would not be unearthed until 1901.

<sup>78</sup> *WLYH* 27, p. 690, 691.

<sup>79</sup> For Shen Yiguan and court factionalism when he was in power as senior grand secretary, see Kii, "Banreki sanjū nendai ni okeru Shin Ikkan no seiji to tōsō."

<sup>80</sup> For the problem related to Prince Chu in the Wanli era, see Sato Fumitoshi 佐藤文俊, *Mindai ōfu no kenkyū* 明代王府の研究 (Tōkyō: Kenbun Shuppan, 1999), pp. 267-302.

Li. Then another censor further said that there were close connections between the “fake Prince of Chu” case and the “Evil Pamphlet”. This unfounded charge infuriated the emperor, but the censor was not punished because of Shen Yiguan’s assistance. Finally, Shen Yiguan got a complete victory: Guo Zhengyu was arrested and Shen Li’s house was sought.<sup>81</sup>

Zhenke was involved with this infighting among officials because of his letters to Shen Lingyu. Shen was a good physician who maintained wide connections with officials, including Guo Zhengyu. When Guo was put in prison, his correspondence with Shen Lingyu led the latter to be arrested as well. With Shen Lingyu’s arrest, Zhenke’s letters to him were found too. In a letter Zhenke said, “The restoration of Haiyin si at Mount Lao was to protect the offspring of the emperor for the Holy mother. Now the temple was destroyed and [Deqing] was exiled. This harms the kindness of the Holy mother and hampers the filial piety of the emperor.”(勞山海印之復，爲聖母保護聖躬香火。今毀寺戍清，是傷聖母之慈，妨皇上之孝也).<sup>82</sup> These letters were presented to the emperor who, in rage, immediately ordered Zhenke to be arrested.

Unlike Deqing’s case, many people had predicted the dangers in Beijing and vehemently objected to Zhenke’s plan to move in the capital in different ways. Daokai was reported to have seen a vision in meditation that his master would have a disaster, and this hunch probably had something to do with his familiarity with the inner court. He wrote a letter in blood to warn his master of the danger but, unfortunately, failed to persuade him out of the plan. Then, all at a sudden, Daokai disappeared and never came back again, although he was then in charge of the project of the Jiaxing canon which Zhenke had entrusted to him in great earnest.<sup>83</sup> With regard to this mysterious disappearance, some think it was because Daokai was exhausted with the task, while others deem it as a desperate remonstrance against his master’s decision to visit the capital.<sup>84</sup> Elites in the Jiangnan region also strongly opposed Zhenke’s plan. By the fall of Wanli 31 (1603), even Deqing who was then thousands of miles away from the capital wrote a letter advising Zhenke to retreat into the mountains. In addition, Zhenke appears to have felt the coming of a disaster and knew that it would be a matter of life and death. In response to

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<sup>81</sup> For the discussion about this “evil pamphlet” event, see Mingshi 226, pp. 5546-47; Zhenke, *Zibo zunze bieji*, j.4; Guo Zhengyu 郭正域, “Wanli sanshiyinian guimao ‘chushi’ ‘yaoshu’ shimo” 萬曆三十一年癸卯“楚事”“妖書”始末 (in *Zhongguo ye shi ji cheng xu bian* 中國野史集成續編 [Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2000], vol. 20). Cf. Okazaki, “Banreki no kaibunsho yūkikōgi ni odorasareta hitobito.”

<sup>82</sup> Zhenke, *Zibo zunze bieji* 4, p147a. Cf. *WLYH* 27, p. 690.

<sup>83</sup> Daokai, *Mizang chanshi yigao* 1, p. 2a.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* 1, p. 1a.

Deqing's warning, he said, "I would like to abandon my humble body"(捨此一具貧骨).<sup>85</sup> In a letter to Feng Mengzhen, he even said that he would rather cut off his head, to which Feng was not able to do anything but lament.<sup>86</sup>

When and why did Beijing become so perilous for a monk like Zhenke that a temporary residence could disturb his friends and followers so much? After this case, it was said that "this serious case suddenly happened. Spies and police were everywhere in the capital. [They] made arrests only on the basis of rumors and speculation and implicated a lot of people" (時大獄猝發, 緝校交錯都下, 以風影捕繫, 所株連甚衆) and that "many people were arrested in a few days, making everybody in the capital feel in danger." (數日間, 銀鐺旁午, 都城人人自危!)<sup>87</sup> This case thus made the capital a dangerous place. But a more important problem is why Zhenke's friends and followers were worried about so much when he took a temporary residence in Beijing before the case broke out? To answer this question we have to take a few steps back. After Shen Yiguan became the senior Grand Secretary in the eleventh month of Wanli 29 (1601), Zhenke was nearly used by him to expel his political enemy Huang Hui. Another key figure in this event was Yu Yuli who was Zhenke's disciple and major patron. Yu Yuli was Shen Li's student. In the summer of Wanli 31 (1603), with assistance of Shen's other two students, including Guo Zhengyu, Yu Yuli got a promotion. And then they often visited Shen Li together, which made Shen Yiguan even unhappier. Shen Lingyu kept contact with Yu and Guo, and more importantly, he often boasted about such relations in public. Therefore, after the "evil pamphlet" event occurred, Zhenke and Shen Lingyu were seen by Shen Yiguan as a chance to attack first Guo Zhengyu and then Shen Li.<sup>88</sup>

In fact, the alarm had sounded one year before.<sup>89</sup> In the intercalary second month of Wanli 30 (1602), Censor Zhang Wenda 張問達 (?-1625; *jinsi*, 1583) submitted a memorial to the emperor, charging Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602) with advocating unorthodox doctrines to delude the world and cheat common people. This memorial ended as follows: "Recently, some gentry

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<sup>85</sup> HSMY 27, p. 594a.

<sup>86</sup> KXT 60, p. 19(75a).

<sup>87</sup> Mingshi 305, p. 7814; 226, p. 5947.

<sup>88</sup> WLYH 27, pp. 690-91.

<sup>89</sup> For the part that politics played in the death of Li Zhi and Zhenke, cf. Satō Rentarō 佐藤鍊太郎, "Ri Takugo to Shihaku Takkan no shi o megutte" 李卓吾と紫柏達觀の死をめぐる, in *Yamane Yukio kyōju taikyū kinen Mindaishi ronsō*, pp. 1189-207. Also see Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三, *Chūgoku zen kindai shisō no kussetsu to tenkai* 中國前近代思想の屈折と展開 (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1980).

and scholar-officials hold dhāraṇī, recite the Buddha's name, and serve monks with reverence. By holding rosaries (*shuzhu* 數珠) in hand, they think they are taking the Vinaya precepts; by hanging marvellous images (i.e. Buddha's images) in the room, they think they have converted to Buddhism. They defy the teachings of Confucius and are engrossed in Chan Buddhism. (近來縉紳士大夫, 亦有捧咒念佛, 奉僧膜拜, 手持數珠, 以爲律戒; 室懸妙像, 以爲皈依; 不遵孔子家法, 而溺意禪教者). The target of this comment, according to contemporary people, was at Huang Hui and Tao Wangling.<sup>90</sup> In the next month, Censor Kang Piyang sent a memorial explicitly suggesting that Zhenke be arrested and all of his followers be expelled from Beijing.<sup>91</sup> Wanli had no response to this memorial, but this message alarmed many people.

Cisheng raised no voice in this case, like in Deqing's case, but Wanli's attitude was ambiguous. Some said that Zhenke ended his life voluntarily to avoid further humiliation after knowing that Wanli wanted his death. This opinion does not seem groundless given that he was sentenced to a postponed gallows. But others argue that the emperor had no intention of killing Zhenke, which seems more convincing to me. When arrested, Shen Lingyu's correspondence with Zhenke, Yu Yuli and others were found. This made the emperor suspect that "officials were conniving with lobbyists [to get promotion]" (疑臣下與遊客交結). Lobbyism was what the emperor detested the most, and this partly explained why he kept silent about Zhenke's arrest.<sup>92</sup> Finally, however, he forgave Shen Lingyu and set him free. In fact, this case also implicated Zhenke's fellow monks. Jieshan Furu, a native of Haiyan, Zhejiang, was Zhenke's friend. Furu went to the capital in Wanli 28 (1600) in the hope of reopening the ordination platform at Great Zhaoqing si 大昭慶寺 in Hangzhou and of obtaining a copy of the Buddhist canon. He had returned to Hangzhou before the "evil pamphlet" event occurred, but he was still arrested and brought to Beijing to be investigated. Nevertheless, he was released and given a bestowed copy of Buddhist canon in Wanli 34 (1606).<sup>93</sup>

In the investigation, the censor in charge tried to implicate Shen Li and Guo Zhengyu, but Zhenke and Shen Lingyu frustrated his attempt. Zhenke had wide connections with

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<sup>90</sup> WLYH 10, p. 271.

<sup>91</sup> For Kang Piyang's personal interest behind this action, see Liu, *Zhuo zhong zhi*, j. 2.

<sup>92</sup> WLYH 27, p. 690.

<sup>93</sup> Yu, *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan si ji* p. 300-301. But *Wulin da zhao qing lü si zhi* 武林大昭慶律寺志 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1980), j. 2, says that this canon was bestowed in Wanli 33.

scholars-officials, and his words in the investigation could bring a disaster to them. Decades later when commenting on Zhenke's investigation records, Qian Qianyi said, "evil men were happy with implication. They intended to use the Great Master (i.e. Zhenke) as a net to kill good scholar-officials who were not in their party. [Finally] they dared to kill an *arhat*." (奸邪小人，快心鈎黨。欲借大師爲一網，斬艾賢士大夫之異己者，遂不憚殺阿羅漢).<sup>94</sup> Zhenke would rather end his life than involve scholar-officials, which made him even respected by scholar-officials.

### 5.3 Miaofeng Fudeng 妙峰福登 (1540-1612)

Deqing's and Zhenke's tragedies represent only one type of relationship between Wanli, Cisheng, and eminent monks. To observe other kind of relationship between them, I will examine in this section the experiences of Fudeng and Zhencheng who have been neglected but actually played significant parts in late Ming Buddhist society.<sup>95</sup> They participated in the Wutai Dharma assembly as well, but they were patronized by Wanli until their death.

#### 5.3.1 Fudeng, Deqing, and Zhenke

Fudeng was held in high esteem by his contemporaries, including Deqing and Daokai, who were well known for their pride. In one place Deqing said, "The way has been obscured by *nidāna* (cause and effect) so that there are too many *māṃsacakṣus* (physical eyes) in the world. They all deem the Master as the field of merit and neglect his unannounced achievements." (以因緣障道，世多肉眼，槩以福田視師，而不知其密造). He further confessed, "I deeply appreciate him for what I have learned from our discussions. Although in name we are friends sharing the same Way, at heart [I] deem him as a teacher. It is thirty years since we departed, but surprisingly he always appears before me and [I treat him] as if facing a master." (予深感切磋之力，名雖道友，其實心師之也。雖別三十餘年，時時居然在目，如臨師保).<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Zhenke, *Zibo zunze bieji* 4, p. 150b.

<sup>95</sup> For study on Fudeng, see Puay-Peng Ho, "Building for Glitter and Eternity: The Works of the Late Ming Master Builder Miaofeng on Wutai Shan," *Orientalism* (Hong Kong) 27, no. 5 (1996), pp. 67-73; Hibino Takeo 日比野丈夫, "Myōhō Fukutō no jiseki ni tsuite" 妙峰福登の事蹟について, in *Bukkyō shigaku ronshū: Tsukamoto Hakushi shōju kinen*, pp. 583-95. For Zhenchen, see Jiang, *Wan Ming fojiao conglin gaige*.

<sup>96</sup> *HSMY* 30, p. 638b.

There was nothing in common between the early lives of Fudeng and Deqing. Fudeng was an ugly orphan from Pingyang, Shanxi. He became a monk at the age of eleven. Unlike Deqing who received the best education, Fudeng got little attention and had to beg to survive. His fortune changed at the age of seventeen when he coincidentally met Prince of Shanying 山陰 (1558-1603), who as a Buddhist believer immediately recognized his extraordinary potential. The prince then started to train Fudeng step by step. He first let him practice meditation in Mount Zhongtiao 中條 (in present-day Shanxi) for six years, then arranged for him to study the Lengyan jing, and finally sent him to south China. He told Fudeng, “You are a monk but have never gone out of the mountain gate. It makes you like a frog in a well. There are many good teachers in south China, and you should visit them.” (子爲僧, 未出山門, 如井蛙. 南方多知識, 子當往參). Fudeng then traveled to the south but returned within one year. When he arrived in Nanjing after having visited the Putuo island, he got sick and stayed for some time in the Great Baoen monastery, where the young Deqing was serving as the deputy lecturer (*fujiang* 副講). It is an interesting story about how Deqing met Fudeng who temporarily served as a toilet-cleaner (*jingtou* 淨頭) there, but a few days later Fudeng left without saying goodbye. This was their first meeting which occurred in Longqing 1 (1567).<sup>97</sup>

Fudeng met Deqing again in Beijing in the winter of Longqing 6 (1572), and these changes in time and place of their meetings are not accidental, considering that by then Cisheng had started supporting Buddhism as Wanli succeeded to the throne several months before. Fudeng went to Beijing to request a Buddhist canon by the order of Prince of Shanyin. He lived in Longhua si 龍華寺 north of Beijing, where he began to win a reputation among officials partly due to the recommendation of Ruian Guangzhen 瑞庵廣禎 (1528-1589), the abbot of the monastery.<sup>98</sup> Deqing had been in the capital since the summer of that year. He kept in touch with scholar-officials, most of them coming from south China, but appears to have lacked a clear plan for his future.<sup>99</sup> Although he and Fudeng were able to appreciate each other, Deqing was too proud to follow Fudeng. Wang Daokun 汪道昆 (1525-1593; *jinshi*, 1547), then Deqing’s main patron in the capital, thus told Deqing, “It is a pity that the Dharma-gate (i.e. the Buddhist teachings) is now in decline. I have observed your bone and spirit, finding that you will be the master of men and *devas* in the future. Please do not roam aimlessly. I humbly look

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid. 30, pp. 634b-36a.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. 29, pp. 623a-b.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. 53, pp. 953a-b.



around but found nobody deserving to be your master or even your friend, with an exception of Master Miaofeng.” (法門寥落，大自可悲。觀公骨氣，異日當爲人天師，幸無浪遊。小子視方今無可爲公師者，捨妙峰公無友矣). Finally, with the travelling expenses offered by Wang, Deqing finally set off with Fudeng.<sup>100</sup>

Fudeng spent most of the time from Wanli 2 (1574) to Wanli 10 (1582) with Deqing. He first introduced Deqing to Prince of Shanyin and local officials, who would continue to support Deqing even after he was exiled. Then Fudeng moved with his friend to Wutai, where they built a shelter to practice meditation. No record is available about Fudeng’s achievements in this respect, but it seems that he was in a more advanced stage so that he could give Deqing advice sometimes.<sup>101</sup> This was not surprising, considering that previously Deqing’s emphasis had been on the Buddhist doctrine while Fudeng’s was on meditation. Starting from Wanli 6 (1578), Fudeng and Deqing each began to write a copy of the *Huayan jing* in blood and planned to hold a Non-discriminating Dharma Assembly to preach *the Huayan jing*.

With regard to this assembly in Wanli 9 (1581), in Appendix E I have argued that it should not take the credit for the birth of Zhu Changluo. Deqing spoke lots about his own performance in the assembly, but said little about Fudeng’s role. Fudeng was responsible for inviting five hundred eminent monks and collecting money and provisions enough for the assembly within one year. This was not an easy task. Deqing recalled later, “Each day of the one hundred days, there were no less than ten thousand permanent residents as well as monks and laymen who came together from ten directions like clouds....after the assembly was over, [we] checked the storehouse, sealed the surplus money and provisions which could be counted in the tens of thousands of taels and passed them on to the head of [Tayuan] monastery as supply for permanent residents.” (百日之內，常住泊十方雲集縑素，每日不下萬眾，...會罷，查庫內所餘，一應錢糧，約可萬計，盡行封附本寺主者，以爲常住).<sup>102</sup> The consumption of one million people was extremely large; still there was so much money left. Without denying there was exaggeration in this account, the fact that a young monk like Fudeng could accomplish this task within one year still demonstrates his extraordinary ability to secure resources and his strong connection with the *sangha*. It also points to the widespread support Buddhism then enjoyed in North China.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid. 30, p. 636a. Deqing was appreciative of Wang’s support. See, *ibid.* 14, p. 560a-b.

<sup>101</sup> For example, see *ibid.* 53, p. 955b.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* 53, p. 960a.

Against this background, the disagreement between the two friends over the convergence of the two assemblies is interesting. Deqing seemed self-conflicting in describing Fudeng's attitudes. On one place he said that "Master Miao did not understand my point either....Eventually, my suggestion was carried out." (妙師意不解...竟行予議)<sup>103</sup> But on the other occasion he said "Master (Miao) agreed." (師然之)<sup>104</sup> Although it is possible that Fudeng first disagreed but later changed his mind to endorse this plan, it still raises a problem: why did Fudeng decline Deqing's proposal, at least at the outset? Probably the answer lies in the difference between their characters and backgrounds. Evidence shows that Fudeng kept enjoying support from local princes like Shanyin and Shen 藩, both in Shanxi, but Deqing was unwilling to accept such support. Moreover, during the one year when he was active in Beijing to collect resources and invite monks for the assembly, he might have had better understanding of contemporary politics than did Deqing who had been confined to Mount Wutai for seven years. More importantly, he had no pressure as Deqing did in restoring the Great Baoen monastery. So, it is understandable that Fudeng was reluctant to get involved in court strife.

Fudeng lived a distinct life after the Wutai assembly when compared with Deqing and never met the latter again, although their friendship would continue. He went to Mount Luya 蘆芽, about one hundred kilometers west of Mount Wutai but still in Shanxi. With support from local gentry, he built a temple there, with an iron stupa to store the sutras prepared by himself and Zhenke, both in blood.<sup>105</sup> When Cisheng summoned the three monks in charge of the Wutai assembly to the capital in Wanli 12 (1584), regardless of what his stance had been at the assembly, Fudeng went to Beijing and received a purple robe. Later, he enlarged his temple with money from the inner court, and was given Buddhist statues and a copy of the Buddhist canon by Cisheng.<sup>106</sup>

### 5.3.2 Cisheng, Wanli, and Fudeng

Fudeng was most famous for his talent in construction. Deqing once summarized Fudeng's life after their parting like this, "During the thirty years after the Wutai assembly, at the beginning he obtained assistance from unimportant princes and finally got both the holy son of

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 53, p. 959a.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. 30, p. 636b.

<sup>105</sup> Zhenke, *Zibo zunzhe quanji* 1, p. 629a.

<sup>106</sup> Huang, *Ming wenhai* 73, p. 685.

Heaven and the Holy Mother as *dānapati* (patrons). Whatever he intends to build, the almsgiving for the Buddha-truth will surge up immediately after he has caught an idea. Wherever his feet step, it will naturally become a precious abode.” (既而臺山一別三十餘年，始以小王助道，終至聖天子聖母諸王爲檀越。凡所營建，法施應念雲湧；投足所至，遂成寶坊). As a result, “Over the two hundred and more years of our Ming dynasty, as far as the achievements and virtue established in the Dharma gate are concerned, Master [Fudeng] is the only one [deserving to be mentioned].” (我明二百餘年，其在法門建立之功行，亦唯師一人而已).<sup>107</sup> Two points here deserve special attention. First, it seems rather easy for Fudeng to garner resources to start money-consuming projects. Second, his patrons came from a wide scope of people, including both Cisheng and Wanli.

Fudeng got support from both Cisheng and Wanli. In the first few years after Wanli 10 (1582), the emperor was enjoying newly acquired power. His relationship with his mother had changed but not yet been seriously troubled by the succession issue, because Zhu Changxun was not born until the third month of Wanli 14 (1586). With the benefit of hindsight, it seems safe to say that these few years were the only period for a monk to link himself simultaneously with the mother and the son. This was exactly what Fudeng did. Afterwards, Fudeng left his footprints all over the country, like Henan, Shanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, and the Jiangnan region, to feed monks, renovate or construct temples, and deliver the Buddhist canon. And in most cases he acted on the behalf of the imperial family without discrimination. This formed a sharp contrast to Deqing. Deqing did not visit Beijing frequently until Wanli 17 (1592) when the tension between the mother and son had increased drastically. He sided with Cisheng and Zhu Changluo, which means that the more he was appreciated by one party, the more he was hated by the other. So, it came as no surprise that he fell exactly at the time when he reached the highest point.

Such a relatively balanced stance helped Fudeng obtain the maximum support. He spent much of his time in the Wutai-Luya (五臺—蘆芽) area, which was about three hundred kilometres southwest of Beijing. This was an ideal distance which kept him abreast of happenings in the capital but screened him from political strife there. The imperial favour he enjoyed increased his attraction in local society. More importantly, his association with Cisheng and Wanli indiscriminately freed potential patrons from worry about “being politically incorrect”. Partly for this reason, he was always able to get powerful patrons.

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<sup>107</sup> HSMY 30, pp. 638-b.

A case in point is the cast and erection of bronze halls he vowed to build for three Buddhist sacred sites in the early years when he traveled southward. In Wanli 27 (1599), with support from Prince of Shen, Fudeng first built a bronze hall for Mount E'mei. This hall was eight meters in height and more than 4 meters in width and in depth. It was gold-mixed, with a statue of Puxian (*Samantabhadra*) inside surrounded by ten thousand small Buddhist statues. When this hall was erected at Mount E'mei, its splendour was so impressive that Wang Xiangqian 王象乾 (1546-1630; *jinshi*, 1571), then the Governor of Sichuan, decided to help Fudeng with his next project. With Wang's donation, bronze was shipped from Sichuan to Jingzhou (present-day Jingzhou in Hubei province) to make the hall for Putuo island. This hall was soon completed and shipped down the Yangtze River. When it arrived at Xiaguan 下關, Nanjing, however, it was declined by monks from Putuo who thought it might be seen as a gold hall and thus incur Japanese pirates. In Wanli 33 (1605), this hall was sent to Longchang si 隆昌寺 at Mount Baohua 寶華 nearby.<sup>108</sup> At the same time, Fudeng was making the third hall which is still extant. This one is over three meters high and weighs about five hundred tons. The money for casting it was collected from ten thousand households of all the thirteen provinces within the realm of the Ming dynasty. When Fudeng sent it to Xiantong si 顯通寺 at Mount Wutai in Wanli 36 (1608), Wanli and Cisheng both donated money and ordered eunuchs to help him.<sup>109</sup> Taking all expenditures into consideration, the expense for Fudeng to fulfill his vow might not have been less than Deqing's. Unlike Deqing's almost exclusive dependence on Cisheng, Fudeng mobilized resources from all social groups, from Wanli and Cisheng down to local officials and commoners and fulfilled his vow smoothly.

It turned out that the favour that Fudeng received from Wanli increased rather than abated over time. Fudeng was appointed as the abbot of Baishui si 白水寺 at Mount E'mei, Longchang si, and Xiantong si in a sequence around Wanli 40 (1612), and several copies of the Buddhist canon were imperially bestowed on those monasteries mainly for his sake. He was granted the title *zhenzheng fozi* 真正佛子 (Genuine Son of Buddha) by the emperor immediately after his

<sup>108</sup> Longchang si was then dilapidated. Beginning with the setup of this bronze hall, Fudeng secured support from the inner court and local society and quickly made it the most important Vinaya monastery in China. Cf. Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*, pp. 28-31.

<sup>109</sup> *HSMY* 30, pp.0637a-b. Cf. Chen Yunü, "Ming Wutai shan zhu fo si jianzhu cailiao zhi qude yu yunshu—Yi mucai, tong, tie deng jiancai weizhu" 明五臺山諸佛寺建築材料之取得與運輸—以木材、銅、鐵等建材為主, *Chengong daxue lishi xuebao* 成功大學歷史學報, no. 27 (2003), pp. 55-98.

death. Therefore, Wanli was not generally against Buddhism in favour of Daoism, as Fuzheng made efforts to make us believe. Instead, he was competing with Cisheng for support from the Buddhist community.

### 5.3.3 Kongyin Zhencheng 空印鎮澄 (1547-1617)

The favour Fudeng obtained from the inner court was not an exception, and Zhencheng was another monk trusted and patronized by Wanli. Zhencheng was native to Jingtai 金台, Beijing, and renounced his household at the age of fourteen. Unlike Fudeng who spent his early life practicing meditation in an isolated place, Zhencheng took advantage of privilege of the capital, first learning Buddhist doctrines for over ten years, with an emphasis on the Huayan teachings, and then receiving instruction from the most famous Chan master of the age. When he met Deqing in Beijing in the early Wanli years, the latter was really appreciative of him. This might be no coincidence because by then Deqing had spent most of his time studying Buddhist doctrine rather than practicing Chan meditation.<sup>110</sup> Thus, when preparing the Wutai dharma assembly, Deqing particularly asked Fudeng to invite Zhencheng to come. When the assembly was over, Zhencheng continued to stay in Wutai because Deqing convinced him that he was the right person to revive Buddhism on that sacred site. He then practiced meditation for three years, composed a gazetteer for the mountain, and built Shiziku 獅子窟 where he preached Buddhist doctrines, especially the *Huayan jing*, and attracted a large audience. Deqing revered Zhencheng as the reincarnation of Chengguang 澄觀 (737-838), the fourth patriarch of Huayan tradition, and said, “he preached the Dharma for thirty years, expounding on the *Huayan jing* three times. His disciples receiving the Dharma could be counted in the hundreds and thousands. After having checked with senior people, we can say that no Dharma lectures in North China were more successful than this.” (說法三十餘年, 三演華嚴. ...受法弟子以千百計...北方法席之盛, 稽之前輩, 無有出其右者).<sup>111</sup>

<sup>110</sup> See Jiang Canteng, “Wangming ‘Wu buqian lun’ de zhengbian yanjiu—Zhujia yijian yu kongyin zhencheng de dabian” 晚明《物不遷論》的證辯研究—諸家的意見與空印鎮澄的答辯, *Dongfang zongjiao yanjiu* 東方宗教研究, no.2 (1990), pp. 185-227; idem., “Mingmo ‘wubuyan lun’ de zhengbian: yi yi zhe Zhencheng de foxue sixiang fenxi” 明末《物不遷論》的證辯—異議者鎮澄的佛學思想分析, *Guoji foxue yanjiu* 國際佛學研究 no. 1 (1991), pp. 85-118; Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*, pp. 25-28.

<sup>111</sup> *HSMY* 27, pp. 601b-2a. For Master Chengguan, see Imre Hamar, *A Religious Leader in the Tang: Chengguan's Biography* (Tōkyō: Internat. Inst. for Buddhist Studies, 2002). About Buddhism at Mount Wutai, see Wei-cheng Lin, “Building a Sacred Mountain: Buddhist Monastic Architecture in Mount Wutai during the Tang Dynasty, 618-907 C.E” (Ph.D. disser., University

Zhencheng also received patronage from both Cisheng and Wanli when his reputation spread into the inner court. Cisheng first sent a copy of the Buddhist canon to his temple at Wutai, and then asked him to expound various sutras at Qianfo si 千佛寺 and Ciyin si 慈因寺 in Beijing. Then, Zhencheng restored Zhulin si 竹林寺, with most of its expense defrayed by the inner court, and the Southern Terrace (*nantai* 南台), both at Wutai. Zhencheng died in the sixth month of Wanli 45 (1617). When news reached Beijing, not only did the emperor offer to finance a stupa in his honor, but he also personally executed the calligraphy for its name tablet. For such unusual favour, Deqing commented, “Only in the early years of our dynasty did many Chan Masters and Doctrinal Masters open the mind of emperors and enjoy royal favours. In the following two hundred years, nobody else has enough virtue and blessings to secure attention and imperial favours like this.” (惟我國初，禪講諸師，多啓宸衷，膺寵渥。二百年來，未有福德深厚、上致眷顧隆恩之若此者).<sup>112</sup>

#### 5.4 Concluding Remarks

Current scholarship has shown that the growth of Buddhist masters in late Ming China was a result of combined efforts of the *samgha* and the secular world and that their appearance in turn increased the attraction of Buddhism to other social groups and encouraged them to invest more in Buddhism, thereby forming a virtuous circle.<sup>113</sup> Through four case studies, this chapter has further revealed how inextricably contemporary politics intertwined with the lives of these masters and their religious enterprise.

These cases have displayed three types of monk’s involvement with politics. Deqing and Zhenke both went from the Jiangnan region to North China in search of patronage from the inner court, whereas Zhenke continued to take the Jiangnan region as a base region with the assistance of his capable disciples, Deqing had not a base area throughout his life. Fudeng and Zhencheng were native to North China where they remained active. This helped them to secure

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of Chicago, 2006); Cui Zhengsen 崔正森, *Wutai shan fojiao shi* 五臺山佛教史 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2000).

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. 27, p. 602a.

<sup>113</sup> For example, Jiang Canteng revealed how consciously Xilin Yongning stressed on education of young monks and how vital his training was for the growth of Hanshan Deqing and Xuelang Hong’en as the foremost Buddhist masters of the age. And Chün-fang Yü demonstrated how attractive Yunqi Zhuhong was to different social groups in Jiangnan and the significance of his tremendous appeal to late Ming Buddhist revival. See Jiang’s *Wan Ming fojiao conglin gaige yu foxue zhengbian zhi yanjiu* and Yü’s *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*, respectively.

as much support as possible from the local society. With regard to their relations with the inner court, Fudeng and Zhencheng managed to maintain a balance between Cisheng and Wanli, Zhenke acted in the same way but was less successful, but Deqing was different from them because of his exclusive dependence on Cisheng. These differences had something to do with their personal characters and the resources that were available but, more importantly, it was largely decided by the way and timing with which they got involved with the inner court. Deqing and his disciple tried to convince us that the Wutai assembly was kind of “original sin,” but evidence shows that it was not so much this assembly as his activities in support of Zhu Changluo that put Deqing in opposition to Wanli. In fact, when Deqing and Zhenke were trapped in Beijing, both Fudeng and Zhencheng were spending most of their time in Shanxi, which was a safe distance from the capital.

These monks chose their own fates. The Jiajing era was a difficult time for Buddhist monks, and thus they were eager to seize the opportunity when change came with Cisheng’s arrival on the political scene. However, powerful and generous though she was, Cisheng’s patronage was always limited in one way or another. To compound the situation even further, her tension with the emperor over the issue of the crown prince intensified over time, and created a fatal factionalism at court. Eventually, the empress dowager survived but monks close to her were victimized. Zhencheng and Fudeng, though active in the inner court, were almost insulated from contemporary politics and lived smooth lives; Deqing got involved with strife within the inner court and ended up being exiled; Zhenke got caught up in strife not only in the inner court but in the outer court as well so that he died in prison. Once they had made decisions, things would evolve according to their own logic and often get out of control. The outbreak of the “Evil Pamphlet” event caused Zhenke’s death in prison, which in turn implicated other monks. One year earlier, Li Zhi had committed suicide there. In addition, there were other cases in which eminent monks were arrested or even died mysterious deaths, as I will discuss in Chapter Seven. Therefore, around the turn of seventeenth century the capital saw a reign of terror and became a difficult place for monks.

Deqing’s and Zhenke’s involvement with politics, although being criticized within the *samgha*,<sup>114</sup> had special political significance in the particular context of the Wanli era. As a result, their tragedies gave them moral superiority and helped their popularity among

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<sup>114</sup> For criticism to them, for example, see Yongjue yuanxian 永覺元賢, *Yongjue yuanxian chanshi guanglu* 永覺元賢禪師廣錄 (in *XZJ*, vol. 72, no. 1437) 30, pp. 780b-81a; *WLYH* 27, p. 691.

scholar-officials. Deqing was cooperating with Cisheng for the sake of their desired crown prince. This not only justified their Buddhist activities which were usually the object of criticism, but at the same time made Deqing a hero challenging the reigning emperor in the eyes of scholar-officials. So, when Deqing was exiled, scholar-officials saw him off in a way that they did to officials who were demoted or exiled for their criticism of the emperor. Even in Guangdong, he sometimes got help for the same reason.<sup>115</sup> In Zhenke's case, he was appreciated not only for his fight against eunuchs, who were supported by Wanli, but also for not implicating more people in his case. Therefore, among scholar-officials, especially those in the Jiangnan region, it seems that to support Deqing, Zhenke, and Buddhism itself became a covert way to defy the authority of the emperor and vent their anger at contemporary politics. Coming together under the banner of fulfilling the so-called "Zibo's will" (*zibo zhutuo* 紫柏囑托), they lavished support on these monks in particular and on Buddhism in general.

Deqing outlived his three friends in discussion, and his letter to Zhencheng in the 1610s reveals loneliness and disappointment he felt in his late life, "Shame of the inferiority in me, I previously followed dragons and elephants of the dharma-gate in a hope to contribute a bit [to Buddhism]. I would like to pick up a stem of grass (i.e. small contribution) and offer it to the ten directions. How could I have known I could not escape from my predestined karma and would reach old age still degraded? My heart has broken since the death of Master Da [guan] (i.e. Zhenke), and I no longer pay attention to this world." (自愧下劣，向從法門龍象之後，志期稍有建立。拈一莖艸，供養十方。豈知定業難逃，沈淪至老。自達師化後，此心已殞，無復人間).<sup>116</sup> When disaster befell him in the 1590s, Deqing took it as a chance for self-cultivation. Although his connection with the inner court was cut off, he immediately found comfort from scholar-officials. Zhenke's death ten years later reminded Deqing of the dangers lurking in the heated sectarian struggle of officials. Deqing had spent twenty years in Guangdong when writing that letter. It seems that there was nothing cheering him up. Disillusioned and disappointed, Deqing finally lost interest in affairs in the Buddhist community and mostly retreated to personal cultivation in silence, which formed a sharp contrast to the strong drive in his early life.<sup>117</sup> Unlike him, Zhenke's last words in the jail were

<sup>115</sup> See, for example, *HSNP* 2, pp. 6-7.

<sup>116</sup> *HSMY* 13, p. 384a.

<sup>117</sup> Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭, *Lingfeng ouyi dashi zonglun* 靈峰藕益大師宗論 (in *Jixing da zangjing* 嘉興大藏經 [Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1986-87] 36.B348) 4, p.319.



“I am leaving. Please express my gratitude to all Dharma-protectors in the Jiangnan region.”(吾去矣, 幸謝江南諸護法).<sup>118</sup> Despite much support he received from North China, his singling out the Jiangnan region is meaningful. Was Jiangnan really the place of new hope for Buddhism as he had expected? Before I can answer this question, I would like to find more evidence through examining the state of temples during the period of one hundred years in the next chapter.

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<sup>118</sup> *HSMY* 27, p.594a.

## Chapter 6

### Temples: Dancing with Local Society

As an essential component of the *samgha*, a Buddhist temple functions not only as a place where religious activities are carried out but also as a location of socio-cultural significances where the Buddhist community meets various groups of people.<sup>1</sup> The history of a temple reflects and is a result of the interaction between the *samgha* and the secular world, which is exposed to the general political climate of the age and the local socio-economic situation. Therefore, different stories can be expected for temples in different areas, and a close reading of these stories in connection with the local context will help disclose the similarity and differentiation in the dynamics and mechanism behind their growth. In this chapter I will examine the history of five temples with distinct features. In geography, two of them came from North China, another two from Jiangnan, and the last one from another region. I also try to keep a balance among them between urban temples and rural temples. In addition to this geographical difference, their stories highlight the characteristics of different phases of the Jiajing-Wanli period. I will not confine myself to this period because, compared with a short one, a relatively longer duration usually has a better chance to obtain insights in the development of a temple and the momentum driving the *samgha* forward or backward.

#### 6.1 Beijing Temples in the mid- and Late Ming

Beijing was an interesting but confusing place in Buddhist history. As the political and cultural center roughly since the fifteenth century, Beijing could boast the concentration of Buddhist monasteries. However, there was no one single Beijing temple that left a relatively complete and detailed record about its history in the entire Ming dynasty. And this point remains true on a broader scale, that is, in North China.<sup>2</sup> This forms a sharp contrast with the

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<sup>1</sup> For the function and significance of temples for Buddhism, see James A. Benn, Lori Rachele Meeks, and James Robson, eds. *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia: Places of Practice* (London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> For example, two biggest series of monastic gazetteers, *Zhongguo fosi shizhi huikan* 中國佛寺史志彙刊 (Taipei: Mingwen

Jiangnan region where such material is ample. Chongfu si and Tanze si are to be discussed here not only because they were famous temples in Beijing but also because they are the only Beijing temples that have relatively complete though still scarce history about their experience in the Ming dynasty.<sup>3</sup>

### 6.1.1 Chongfu Si 崇福寺

Chongfu si, located in the south of the city of Beijing, has remained one of the most important Buddhist temples in North China for more than one thousand years. It was originally built as Minzhong si 憫忠寺 by Emperor Taizong of the Tang (r. 627-649) for the soldiers killed in his defeated venture to conquer Koryo in 645 and brought to completion by Empress Wu in 696. It was destroyed in an earthquake in 1057. Thirteen years later, it was rebuilt under imperial sponsorship and settled its current structure and scale. This monastery was renamed Chongfu 崇福 in 1437 and again Fayuan 法源 in 1734 when it was designed as a Vinaya monastery. It underwent another imperially sponsored rebuilding in 1778, and continues to be one of the few most important monasteries in Beijing until now.

This monastery was in decay in the early Ming dynasty, and only by Xuande 10 (1435) did it get a new chance to be repaired. In the autumn of that year, its abbot met a eunuch Song Wenyi 宋文毅.<sup>4</sup> Song was a eunuch in the Directorate of Ceremonial who was responsible for the carving and printing of Confucian classics, and Buddhist and Daoist canons.<sup>5</sup> This meeting took place when Song left the inner court to distribute Buddhist sutras to temples in Beijing. The abbot told Song about the splendid history of this monastery but lamented that he lacked money to repair it. After returning to the inner court, Song decided to take up this task by

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shuju, 1980) and *Zhongguo fosi zhi congkan* 中國佛寺志叢刊 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2006), have collected more than two hundred kinds of monastic gazetteers, but less than ten of them are about Buddhist temples in the Beijing area. For more complete information about monastic and local gazetteers in North Zhili and Shanxi, see Brook, *Geographical Sources of Ming-Qing History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), pp. 43-48, 98-103.

<sup>3</sup> Among recent studies about Buddhist temples in Ming Beijing, the most important are Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life*; He, *Mingdai Beijing fojiao siyuan*; Brook, *The Chinese State in Ming Society* (London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), chapters seven and eight. Chen, “Kinsei kahoku chiiki ni okeru bukkuyō no shakaiteki shinto no patan.” For studies on Beijing’s individule temples, see Kenneth J. Hammond, “Beijing’s Zhihua Monastery: History and Restoration in China’s Capital,” in *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 189-208.

<sup>4</sup> This eunuch was Song Wenyi who was brought to the inner court from Vietnam and had served four emperors by then. See Zhao Qichang 趙其昌, *Jinghua ji* 京華集 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008), p. 209.

<sup>5</sup> *Fayuan si zhi gao* 法源寺志稿 (Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling guji keyin she, 1996) 4, pp. 100-101.

teaming up with other eunuchs.<sup>6</sup>

That was not a simple renovation project but a complete restoration.<sup>7</sup> Under the supervision of another eunuch, this project was commenced in the second month of Zhengtong 2 (1437) and finished in the fifth month of the next year.<sup>8</sup> One hundred and forty rooms were built or repaired, including the mountain gate (*shanmen* 山門) which had drum and bell towers on both sides, three main halls and more minor halls, the Dharma hall, kitchen, and the like. Buddhist statues were erected and necessary dharma-vessels were prepared. Shortly after the completion of this project, Song requested a name-tablet from the emperor for the monastery, thereby giving it a legal status. Further, a eunuch made a donation of eight *mu* of fields that he had bought at twenty taels of silver. Eight years later when the Northern Buddhist Canon of the Ming came out for the first time, with Song's arrangement, a copy was bestowed on this monastery and a building was constructed to store the canon.

Eunuchs were the main financial sponsor for this time- and money- consuming undertaking. A list of patrons was carved on the back of a stone stele, including one hundred and thirty-four eunuchs, twenty-seven devout officials (*xinguan* 信官), and twenty-seven laymen (*xinshi* 信士).<sup>9</sup> Obviously, eunuchs took up the major proportion here.<sup>10</sup> In doing so, Song and his fellows were creating a trend of building Buddhist temples in the Beijing area. His involvement in this project, as Song explained, was primarily to pray for the emperor's longevity.<sup>11</sup> Song was taken into the inner court from a place in present-day Vietnam in the Yongle era and then served there for forty years. Even though he was really grateful to the emperors, his choice of restoring a Buddhist temple as a way to express gratitude seems to have reflected an initial trend among eunuchs. In fact, it was recorded that around 1470s as Beijing people had become rich, "Buddhist and Daoist temples are thus increasing and flourishing day by day. Influential officials at the inner and outer courts all exhaust their wealth to construct [Buddhist and Daoist buildings] and think it as meritorious." (是以佛老之宮日益崇盛, 而凡中外貴臣, 必各竭其

<sup>6</sup> These eunuchs include Ruan Mingfu 阮明福, Li Wen Yao 黎文遙, and Du Kelong 杜可隆. Judged from their surnames, some of them seem to be Vietnamese.

<sup>7</sup> So, it is the term *chongjian* (rebuilding 重建) rather than *chongxiu* (renovation 重修) appears in the title of an essay recording this event. See *Fayuan si zhi* 4, p. 91.

<sup>8</sup> But *Fayuansi zhigao* 4, p. 93, says that it was completed in the second month of this year.

<sup>9</sup> *Fayuansi zhigao* 4, p. 95. The rest of the paragraph is unreadable.

<sup>10</sup> Both Song's seniority and his position in the Directorate of Ceremonial were helpful for him to enlist support from other eunuchs. As for how organized eunuchs patronized Buddhism, see Chen, *Mingdai ershi si yamen huanguan yu beijing fojiao*.

<sup>11</sup> *Fayuansi zhigao* 4, pp. 99-100.

資力有所建造以爲功德).<sup>12</sup> A social fashion based on religious ideology formally took shape.

The next recorded renovation of this monastery occurred in Wanli 29 (1601), one and half centuries later. At that time, its abbot was well-known for hospitality, so people liked to lodge in this monastery when they came to the capital to take the metropolitan exam or to wait for position openings. Many of these people finally acquired good ranks and high positions, and partly in gratitude for his generosity, Mingyu's appeal for renewing this temple was well responded. A Beijing native who served as a Registrar (*jingli* 經歷) of Imperial Guards in the inner court, donated several hundred taels of silver and led this project. According to a stone stele bearing the name of patrons, this man did not act alone. From the bottom part of this stele which is still readable, we can find the names of twenty-one low ranking imperial guards who were in the same situation as that registrar, one county graduate and student in National University, several devout officials, villagers, and a few Shanxi persons.<sup>13</sup> Obviously, the majority of sponsors were low ranking military officials in this project, and it seems that eunuchs did not get involve this time.<sup>14</sup>

In Chongzhen 14 (1641), a new renovation was carried out, and there are interesting points in the list of patrons. From a stone stele we know that people defraying the cost includes five County Graduates, three Tribute Students, three devote officials, and some laymen.<sup>15</sup> This list deserves particular attention. First, it was the first time that local educated persons took the major responsibility in the recorded renovation history of this monastery, which signifies that the roles of eunuchs had decreased to the least by this period. In addition, judging from their names, the five county graduates were very likely to be brothers from two lineages, which were part of the new rising local powerful families in the region. Second, compared with the two lists examined above, it is noticeable that these patrons came from various social groups, in addition to those cited, at least one eunuch, three low-ranking civil officials, a low-ranking military official, three persons from Shanxi province plus sixteen monks were listed to have provided financial assistance to support this project. Third, nobody among these patrons came from the upper social class.

Also the essay commemorating the completion of this project reveals the situation of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 4, pp. 97-98.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 4, pp. 112-15, 107-109.

<sup>14</sup> But this renovation project does not seem satisfying. Shortly afterwards three old monks called for another repair undertaking.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 4, pp. 115.

Beijing Buddhism of the age. This piece was written in Chongzhen 8 (1635) by a native who was then a censor in Guizhou province:

This monastery is now a wonderful place whose buildings [are so high] as if they can touch the sky. Day by day, [however], the number of monks in its two corridors is decreasing and its main halls are falling in decline. Some say that this is decided by destiny. Fortunately, a native monk...bravely asked almsgivers [for help], and I also made donations...in the *jiaxue* year (1634), [he] repaired the main Buddha hall and the Heavenly King hall ...I am not good at writing, but it was the place where my late father, a former Vice Censor-in-chief, once stayed, and where I joined in an association to discuss literature. I know its history very well. 乃今梵宇摩空，頗稱勝地，而兩廊僧衆日益削弱，大殿日就傾圮。或者曰氣數使然。幸有鄉僧...慨然發心告諸檀那，更自捐資，餘亦隨意佈施.....歲在甲戌，重修大佛寶殿，天天王殿...余...不能文，但念先中丞居停之所，不佞且結社論文於斯，頗悉顛末。<sup>16</sup>

Several points in it are important. First, although the monastery was kept in good shape, the number of monks there was decreasing. Secondly, because this project got wide support from the local society, therefore, the renovation was carried out on a large scale. Thirdly, the literati organized a literary association in the temple. Although such associations were very popular in the Jiangnan region, it seems rather rare among local literati in Beijing. With this in mind, those tribute students or county students appearing on the list might all be members of the literary association.

Unlike its relatively obscure history in the Ming, this monastery flourished significantly in the Qing dynasty. Its luck began with the donation of a big bronze bell, which was more than three meters in height, and a copy of the Buddhist canon by two powerful princes. During the early and mid- Qing dynasty, all emperors, Shunzhi, Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong, lent support to this monastery.<sup>17</sup> An ordination platform was built under imperial decree on the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 4, pp. 112-15.

<sup>17</sup> In policy and administration associated with Buddhism the Qing dynasty continued those restrictions practiced in the Ming dynasty, with the exception of abolishing the ordination certification in 1753. In practice, however, the Qing court strongly backed up Tibetan Buddhism largely in order to maintain its traditional alliance with the Mongols. Additionally, early Qing emperors, especially Shunzhi and Yongzheng, had real interest in Chinese Buddhism. Cf. Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*, Chapter 6.

monastery's grounds. A name-tablet and some Buddhist sutras that the emperors handwrote were granted to this temple. At least three times this monastery was renovated at the cost of the state. And two copies of the Buddhist canon were granted by the Qianlong emperor. In addition, some of the royal princes were also actively involved in this monastery.<sup>18</sup>

With the frequent presence of the royal family, scholar-officials rushed to participate in the monastery's activities and remained active until the end of the Qing.<sup>19</sup> During the three hundred years of the Qing dynasty, like their peers in other regions, scholar-officials used this place to meet friends. No evidence shows that they donated much money, but they drew a number of paintings and composed many poems to donate to the monastery for aesthetic usage.<sup>20</sup> It seems that for the first time they recognized that this was a monastery dating back to the Tang dynasty so that they spent much energy in tracing its history. In this sense, it might be safe to say that only in the Qing did Chongfu si, which had been renamed Fayuan si in 1734, enter the daily life of these people.

#### 6.1.2 Tanzhe Si 潭柘寺

Tanzhe si, seventy *li* west of Beijing, was reportedly built as Jiafu si 嘉福寺 in the Western Jin (265-316) but revered a Huayan master in the early Tang as its first patriarch.<sup>21</sup> In the Jin and Yuan dynasties, with imperial support, it grew into a big monastery which had more than one thousand residents at one point. This monastery was expanded in the Yongle era,<sup>22</sup> and then new halls and pagodas were built in the Xuande era (1426-1435) with donations from the

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<sup>18</sup> *Fayuansi zhigao* 5, pp. 197-240.

<sup>19</sup> Fayuan si was not the only instance in which lay people were more active in the Qing dynasty to carry out activities of a literary society than their peers in the Ming dynasty. In addition to the imperial presence, a more important reason for this phenomenon might be because Ming Beijing had to spend most of its time to re-establish a literary tradition which had interrupted for several hundred years since the An Lushan rebellion in the middle eighth century, while Qing Beijing, after efforts of nearly three hundred years of the preceding dynasty, was able to reap the harvest from the start.

<sup>20</sup> Among the art collection of this temple when the gazetteer was finished, for example, all twenty seven couplets were composed by the Qing people except one by a Korean. As for paintings of Buddhist stories, nine were drawn by people prior to the Ming, two by the Ming people, and twelve by the Qing people. This unbalance reached an extreme in the landscape paintings that only one was from the Ming dynasty, and the rest thirty four all seem to be produced in the Qing dynasty. See *ibid.* 5, pp. 224-62.

<sup>21</sup> *Tanzheshan zhi*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>22</sup> Wuchu, then the abbot of the temple, was native of Toshin chyu 東信州 in Korea. He first learned from Chan master Hui 慧 at the Lingyin monastery in Hangzhou, then moved to Tanzhe si which was then Qingshou si 慶壽寺 after having returned to Japan for some time. He had a close relationship with Daoyan 道衍, and was ordered to take charge of this monastery by Yongle in 1412.

inner court. It received a bestowed copy of the Buddhist canon from Emperor Ying who changed its name twice. In Hongzhi 10 (1497), a eunuch renovated this temple once again. After that, its next recorded renovation came in the Wanli era thanks to a memorial that Lu Guangzu submitted to Cisheng.

The imperial family contributed much to the development of Tanzhe si in the Qing dynasty. In the fall of Kangxi 25 (1686), Kangxi paid a visit to Tanzhe si, which marked a new start in its history. He appointed in advance a Vinaya Master who was then in charge of Guangji si 廣濟寺 in Beijing, as its abbot in the spring of that year. In his visit, the emperor brought with him some sutras and statues, including ten copies of the Diamond Sutra he had himself written by hand. Six years later, he further granted this monastery ten thousand taels of silver, enabling it to finish the construction of as many as twenty-eight Halls, towers, and pavilions, plus two temporary palaces (*xinggong* 行宮). The emperor returned to Tanzhe si in Kangxi 36 (1697) and Kangxi 41 (1702). He changed its name to Xiuyun Chan si 岫雲禪寺 and granted it gifts, including some tablets and couplets. Together with him, his mother and some princes also donated to this monastery.<sup>23</sup>

The imperial family helped cover the cost of the biggest project that was ever undertaken at Tanzhe si during the Qing dynasty. More importantly, their presence greatly enhanced the confidence of its residents inside and its reputation outside the wall.<sup>24</sup> “Since then, companions of learning have come together like clouds, and the wealth of the Dharma has been donated like rain. New buildings have kept emerging daily, making the splendor of its statues in green and gold ranking the first among all monasteries at the western mountain.” (自是學侶雲集, 法財雨施, 建造日新, 金碧像飾, 擅西山諸刹之勝).<sup>25</sup> By Qianlong 4 (1739) when the monastic gazetteer was finished for the first time, it was recorded that four big halls had been built by laymen who also sponsored the painting of more than sixty halls, two buildings by eunuchs, two halls by devout officials, and one hall, one ordination platform as well as one building by monks themselves. Notably, there appeared an association called Dabei 大悲會 which took as its base one village in Zunhua 遵化 sub-prefecture.<sup>26</sup> In addition to an ordination platform with

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<sup>23</sup> *Tanzheshan zhi*, pp. 79-86.

<sup>24</sup> For example, see *ibid.* pp. 89-90.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71.

<sup>26</sup> Zunhua belonged to Ji 薊 sub-prefecture of Shuntian prefecture in the Ming dynasty but was promoted as a prefecture in the Qing dynasty.



right and left wings attached, this association even built a branch temple to Tanzhe si.<sup>27</sup>

### 6.1.3 The Relationships between Patrons

The author of the Shangfang mountain 上方山 gazetteer charged Ming eunuchs with manipulating power and harming the loyal officials but at the same time building many Buddhist temples to seek blessings. He seems to have felt delight in seeing the collapse of temples that were patronized by them, although his writing of this piece suggests he was a patron of Buddhism himself.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the compiler of the Tanzhe gazetteer felt proud that Tanzhe si, unlike other temples in the Beijing area, had not received patronage from eunuchs.<sup>29</sup> Although this assertion is not historically correct, the rationale behind his argument raises a problem concerning the relationship between patrons of a temple.

Eunuchs frequently acted together with the royal family when the latter got involved in a Buddhist undertaking. Some Ming royal family members offered great support to Buddhism. However, as Timothy Brook has aptly pointed out, “By the Ming dynasty...this sort of patronal arrangement between the throne and the *sangha* was not a matter of state policy... Some of his (Emperor Hongwu) successors revived the patron’s pose, bestowing gifts and recognition on favoured monks and monasteries, but they did so more as head of the imperial household, from which the funds for such gestures came, than as head of state.”<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the state treasury and the imperial treasury were operated independently.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, when backing Buddhism, the imperial family had to do so with their private funds, hence they welcomed other resources, especially those from eunuchs.

Eunuchs also built temples in collaboration with local elites. The component of local elites in the capital region was very different than that of Jiangnan because, compared with Jiangnan, the capital area lacked powerful clans and produced far fewer successful students in the civil examination. As a result, its local elites included retired native officials, low ranking military officials, county and provincial graduates.<sup>32</sup> These local elites cooperated frequently to support

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<sup>27</sup> *Tanzheshan zhi*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>28</sup> *Shangfang shan zhi* 上方山志 (Taipei: Danqing tushu gongsi, 1985) 3, p. 113.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>30</sup> Brook, *The Chinese State in Ming Society*, p. 150.

<sup>31</sup> For the two fiscal systems of the Ming dynasty and its problems, see Ray Huang, *Taxation and Governmental Finance in Sixteenth-Century Ming China*.

<sup>32</sup> In fact, even eunuchs could be considered as half local elite in that most of them came from areas around the capital and that they remained very active in local society.

Buddhist institutions. Eunuchs also supported local Buddhist projects when they had the chance to go out,<sup>33</sup> which enabled them to connect with local society closely and tied country society outside the capital to the center of state power. Sometimes, local elites also joined the project that eunuchs had initiated.<sup>34</sup>

Scholar-officials had different attitudes towards eunuchs and the imperial family. Shown above, the emperors' presence was an encouragement to the appearance of scholar-officials in Buddhist monasteries, and this was especially true in the early Qing dynasty. In contrast, scholar-officials seldom appeared together with eunuchs in Buddhist projects. This is largely because they always despised eunuchs for their lack of moral standards. Also having links with eunuchs might have been politically dangerous to them. Therefore, they usually kept this relationship at a low level, even though they had to interact with eunuchs in practical life.<sup>35</sup>

## 6.2 Jiangnan Temples in the Jiajing-Wanli Transition

After having examined Buddhist monasteries in Beijing, I will move on to Jiangnan and examine Shixing si 實性寺 in Shaoxing prefecture and Puhui si 普惠寺 in Jiaying prefecture. They were not among the most important temples in this area, but their experiences during the period from mid-Jiajing to early Wanli eras, which happened to be closely related to Lu Guangzu, one of the most important patrons of Buddhism, present us with rare images about the complex interaction of the *sangha* and scholar-officials in this transition period.

### 6.2.1 Shixing Si 實性寺 in Shaoxing

Shixing si was a famous temple close to the seat of Sheng county 嵊縣, Shaoxing prefecture. Originally founded in the Tang dynasty known by the name Taiqing chapel 泰清院, The monastery owned large imperially bestowed landholdings and was the place for local officials to hold official ceremonies, like praying for healthiness for the emperor and stability for the state. It was destroyed in the middle of the ninth century and was rebuilt in 935. Shixing si was repaired once again in Hongzhi 3 (1490). It was abolished in the Jiajing era but

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<sup>33</sup> For example, see *SKHB*, vol. 52, p. 63, 64, 144; 53, p. 5, 37, 105.

<sup>34</sup> For example, see *ibid.* vol. 53, p. 105.

<sup>35</sup> A common practice among them is to exclude essays written for eunuchs on various situations when compiling their own collections of writing. See Liang Shaojie 梁紹傑, *Mingdai huanguan beizhuan lu* 明代宦官碑傳錄 (Hong Kong: Xianggang daxue Zhongwen xi, 1997), pp. iv-v. As an example, Liang points out that although evidence shows Li Dongyang wrote at least six records for the monasteries established or sponsored by eunuchs, none of them is included in his collected writings.

reinstalled in the early Wanli era. An essay records the destruction and restoration process of this temple in detail.

In the Jiajing era, Magistrate [of Sheng county] Lü Zhang destroyed this temple out of his personal hatred (*shihui* 私恚) and moved the dragon plate bearing “Long live the Majesty” and Buddhist statues to Shanfeng village, where its branch chapel existed. Monks also lodged in a borrowed place to pay taxes [for the monastic assets]. However, the reputation of this temple cannot be covered, and its spare space was rented by the Provincial Graduate Zhou Zhen. [Zhou] built a personal villa on its grounds and extended the property by purchasing a field nearby.<sup>36</sup> He lived there for thirty years. Mr. Zhou later became an Assistant Department Magistrate (*biejia* 別駕) in Heng Prefecture. When returning home from the post, he suddenly felt regretful and unhappy. He told his son Mengxiu who was a County Graduate, “People in the past would not do a single unrighteous thing even if it could bring him everything under the heaven. Virtuous people in the Jin and Tang dynasties, like Chamberlain for the Capital (*neishi* 內史) Wang and Duke Xuan of Lu,<sup>37</sup> all donated their houses as Buddhist temples. On the contrary, I rented a temple as my house and have the reputation of unrighteousness. I would rather die in a ravine than continue to live here. You must restore it.” 嘉靖中，邑令呂章以私恚毀寺，徙萬歲龍牌、伽藍神像於下院三峰莊，僧亦寓棲以供額稅。然寺之名即不可沒，而寺之隙地爲鄉進士周君震佃而得焉，遂治爲宅。益買旁近地廣之。居三十年矣。周君後爲衡州別駕，歸，忽悔恨不樂，謂其子庠生夢秀曰：古人行一不義，雖得天下而不爲也。且晉唐名賢，如王內史、陸宣公，皆舍宅爲寺，予乃佃寺爲宅，負不義之名。吾寧填死溝壑，弗忍居於是矣。汝必復之。<sup>38</sup>

The father of Lu Guangzu, whom we have met before, was Zhou Zhen’s friend. When learning of Zhou’s plan, this old man wrote several letters to discuss the matter with him. It

<sup>36</sup> Yan Sizhong 嚴思忠 and Cai Yichang 蔡以瑞, *Shengxian Zhi* 嵯縣志(1870) 8, p. 2a, said that Zhou Zhen rented a vacant foundation west of the hall and hills nearby, where he built a house to live.

<sup>37</sup> Duke Xuan of Lu referred to Lu Zhi 陸贄 (754-805) who had a biography in *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975) 139, pp. 3791-3819. Cf. Josephine Chiu-Duke, *To Rebuild the Empire Lu Chih's Confucian Pragmatist Approach to the Mid-T'ang Predicament* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> *Shaoxing fuzhi* (1673) 23, pp. 50a-51a.

happened that Lu Guangzu sent back part of his salary to his father, and the latter then decided to use it to help Zhou Zhen redeem the monastic field for monks of Shixing si. The record continues by saying,

Mr. Zhou got a serious illness in the winter of Wanli 2 (1574). He summoned his close relatives and enjoined, “I would like to see the restoration of the temple. I am waiting for it so that I can die without regret.” His son immediately submitted a request to me for a permission to restore the temple with the house and the nearby field they had bought. I approved it with happiness. Then the Magistrate Zhu Yibai called monks together and returned the temple to them. Some people had antagonistic opinions, but they were all dismissed by officials like the Prefect and Provincial Governor. After having given away the house, Zhou [Mengxiu] moved to a place which was simple and shabby. Other people would not bear this situation, but Zhou only feels happy because he fulfilled good deeds of his father. 萬曆二年冬，周君寢疾，會其族父兄子弟而囑之曰：“吾願及見寺之複也。吾待而瞑矣。”於是周生立以其宅，並益買旁近地，請複爲寺。以狀來上，余懼然嘉歎，判而複之。邑令朱君一栢即召寺僧法彰等，還寺如故。有異議者，守巡諸上官皆絀之。周生既舍宅，乃徙居他舍。他舍敝陋，人所不堪，周生惟以克成父善爲樂。

Zhou Zhen and Lu Xufeng both died shortly afterwards. When Lu Guangzu found the thirty taels of silver he had sent to his father before, he decided to redeem the monastic field with it. When people who had rented land knew their act, it was recorded that some of them accepted the ransom money but others not, and still others half of it. Only from then on, monks in Faxing si had the money to maintain the temple's operation. At the end of the account, Zhou was praised for his insistence on correcting the mistake he had made. Lu Xufeng was praised for assisting Zhou with fulfilling his wishes. Lu Guangzu and Zhou Mengxiu were both praised for completing the desire of their fathers. And the author commented, “There were no scholar-officials to destroy Buddhist temples as their assets prior to the Hongzhi and Zhengde eras. This is because they kept respect to the law and abided by Confucian regulations strictly. Only in recent ages are there people who seek for their own interests on the pretext of driving the heterodox away.” (余惟弘、德以前，士大夫無毀寺爲業者，畏國憲而謹儒行也。近世始

有藉口異端之辟以姿其利便之私).<sup>39</sup>

This record was written by Peng Fu 彭富 (*jinshi*, 1562), then the acting Prefect of Shaoxing, in the early Wanli era.<sup>40</sup> Lü Zhang was a Shexian 歙縣 native who got a Provincial Graduate degree in Zhengde 14 (1519) and became the Magistrate of Sheng county in Jiajing 11 (1532). In the eyes of the Sheng county people, he was an official who was “diligent, astute, and very capable.” (居官勤敏, 綽有才能).<sup>41</sup>

As for Lü’s destroying Shixing si, Peng Fu recounted only one side of the story. A local gazetteer narrates this event in more detail. “In Jiajing 16 (1537), when Magistrate Lü Zhang checked temples [in the country] as usual, he found that monks [in Shixing si] were performing unlawful activities. He thus destroyed the temple and changed its main hall to become a shrine for Confucius. Provincial Graduate Zhou Zhen rented a vacant ground west of the hall and hills nearby, where he built a house to live.”<sup>42</sup> Obviously, for the author of this gazetteer, Lü Zhang’s destroying the monastery was to carry out his responsibility rather than “out of personal hatred” as Peng Fu charged; it was the monks who did wrongdoings that resulting in the destruction of this temple. Judging from the conversion of a Buddhist hall into a Confucian shrine, Lü Zhang might have seen Buddhism as a heterodox religion and declined to support it. But since Shixing si was the only Buddhist temple that he destroyed, it seems that it was not his priority nor had he any interest in suppressing the religion as a whole. As for Peng Fu, he was obviously a Buddhist judging from his praise for Zhou’s restoration of the temple as a correction of his former mistake. This makes it easy to understand why he was so angry with Lü.

Nonetheless, Lü’s actions and Peng’s comments cannot be fully understood without placing them in a wider context. It would be hard for Lü Zhang to destroy the temple if he had been in the Wanli era, and Peng Fu would have never leveled so strong a criticism against Lü Zhang if his record were written in the Jiajing era. Another interesting point in the record is the “antagonistic opinions” of other people. As for this point, Lu Guangzu happened to offer a footnote to it in another letter. In that letter, Lu Guangzu first simply described how he and Zhou Mengxiu were engaged in the reestablishment of Shixing si to fulfill the desire of their

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<sup>39</sup> *Shaoxing fuzhi* (1673) 23, pp. 50a-51a.

<sup>40</sup> Peng Fu was a native of Heqing 鶴慶, Yunnan, and was finally promoted as Provincial Governor of Guizhou.

<sup>41</sup> *Shenxian Zhi* (1870) 9, p. 8a.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 8, p. 2a.

own fathers, and then said:

Recently I have clandestinely heard that there are controversies over [the project]. That virtuous people in the Tang and Song dynasties who donated their houses [and changed them into] monasteries could be found everywhere. My ancient ancestor Duke Xuan donated his house to become Nengren si and the ancestor of the fifteenth generation, the Military Affairs Commissioners (*shumi* 樞密), donated his house to become Faren si. The offspring of our clan have persisted in protecting and supporting [these two temples] without interruption.<sup>43</sup> Shixing si is a temple with a history of thousands of years. What Ruiquan did is nothing more than returning what he had rented previously and restoring it. His cause is justifiable, and his act was suitable. That is different from building a new [temple]. Are there people that disapprove of it? Jishi and I both have to take the task because it was the desire of our late fathers. Formerly, Su Shi (1037-1101) donated to a temple four statues of the Heavenly King which had been valued by his father. He recorded that “I donated it for my father. Who has no father?” His words are sorrowful and moving. 頃微聞有異同者，夫唐宋名賢舍宅爲寺，班班可攷，而我遠祖宣公亦舍宅爲能仁寺，十五世祖樞密公舍宅爲法忍寺，我陸氏子孫至今護持，無敢廢墜，況實性寺系千年古剎，瑞泉不過以己之所佃還而復之，其義甚正，其名甚順，又與創施者不同，他復何說乎。孤與繼實並以先人之意，不敢不任。昔蘇子瞻以老泉所寶四天王像施之佛寺而作記曰：“吾爲父而施。人孰無父哉？”此言悲惻而感人。<sup>44</sup>

In this letter, Ruiquan 瑞泉 referred to Zhou Zhen 周震 and Jishi 繼實 to his son Mengxiu 夢秀. The Military Affairs Commissioners referred to Lu Xuanji 陸旋吉 (fl.1074). This letter was written in Wanli 3 (1575). Obviously, although it was already in the Wanli era, Lu Guangzu was still criticized for his rebuilding of Shixing si and had recourse to filial piety

<sup>43</sup> It deserves notice that by then Buddhism had become an important part of the family tradition in some powerful clans in Jiangnan. For the relationship between the Lu clan, Buddhism, and local society, cf. Fang Fuxiang 方復祥 and Yao Lijun 姚立軍, “Ming Qing Pinghu Lushi Yu Difang Shehui” 明清平湖陸氏與地方社會, *Wenshizhe* 文史哲, no. 1 (2006), pp. 54-59.

<sup>44</sup> Lu Guangzu 陸光祖, *Lu zhuangjian gong yi gao* 陸莊簡公遺稿 (1629) 6, pp. 9a-10b. Feng Mengzhen narrated a mysterious story about how the temple was lost to the hands of the Zhou’s and how it was restored in the Jiajing-Wanli period. See *KXT* 46, pp. 8a-b.

which was at the center of the Confucian value system to justify his behavior.<sup>45</sup> Finally, Lu Guangzu rebuilt Shixing si, but had to relocate it because the former buildings were still functioning as government offices even in the Wanli era. In this process he got support from Zhang Yuanbian 張元忭 (1538-1588) who got his *jinshi* degree in 1571 and became a compiler in the Hanlin Academy (*Hanlin xiuzhuan* 翰林修撰).<sup>46</sup> In addition to recovering Shixing si, they also built a chapel for it.<sup>47</sup>

### 6.2.2 Puhui Si 普惠寺 in Jiaxing

After the restoration of Shixing si, Lu Guangzu received a letter from Zhou Jishi. The original manuscript of this mail is lost; however, we do know that in the letter Zhou reminded Lu Guangzu that one of his houses was originally a Buddhist temple. The temple involved was a large temple called Fuyuanpuhui chansi 福源普慧禪寺, which was founded in the Yuan dynasty and rebuilt in the Yongle era. In Jiajing 33 (1554), to defend against the invasion of Japanese pirates into the Jiangnan region, a large number of forces stationed in Pinghu County and high-ranking officials including the Supreme Commander and Provincial Governor gathered in the area. Pinghu county was too small to promptly prepare new headquarters for these troops; therefore, the Magistrate destroyed Fuyuan si and transformed it into the Military Defense Circuit (*bingbei si* 兵備司).<sup>48</sup> On the surface, this was a simple story about the tragic end of a Jiangnan temple under the pressure of Japanese pirates; such stories were not uncommon in the Jiajing era. Lu Guangzu's reply in Wanli 4 (1576), however, reveals more layers underneath the story. In the letter, after expressing his appreciation to Zhou Jishi for his reminder, Lu Guangzu gave a detailed explanation about the specific house.

When the temple was destroyed, I was serving in office. All of its assets were rented by scholars-officials and commoners, with an exception of a [field] in the southwest corner and several small rooms. The Magistrate did not give them to people because he originally had other plans to use them. When I returned home, Zhenchuan, the keeper of the field and rooms and an acquaintance of mine, out of fear that they would be robbed by others,

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<sup>45</sup> Lu, *Lu Zhuangjian gong yigao* 6, pp. 9a-10b.

<sup>46</sup> Zhang Yuanbian had a biography in *Mingshi* 283, pp. 7288-89.

<sup>47</sup> *Shenxian zhi* (1684) 6, p. 22b.

<sup>48</sup> *Pinghu Xian Zhi* (1627) (Rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai shu dian, 1990) 3, p. 5a (165-66).

requested me to purchase them. I declined several times, but [he] even cried to make the request. Finally, I had to buy them but deemed them as useless. Later, my late father bought a patch of field at the back of the rooms from Assistant Prefect (*tongpan* 通判) Pan, and finally turned it into the foundation of the house.

I did not return home until more than one year after the temple had been destroyed, and the monks and the Pan's did not sell the field until more than one year after I had returned. Therefore, I was the last one among dozens of officials and commoners who rented the monastic land. In addition, I bought it through private transaction and did not send a single word [about it] to local officials. The year and month and the contract are very clear, and the monk selling the houses remains alive. I am always conscious of karma, knowing that even a grass of the *saṃgha* cannot be used, let alone its landholding and rooms.

When Magistrate Liu destroyed the temple, it happened all too suddenly. If I were at home, although my rank was still low, probably I could prevent him from doing so. Nowadays it has been changed as the government office which looks magnificent. It is a curse left to our county, and I really hate it. I do not enjoy the house outside the southern gate. But I am old and hesitant to start another construction project. Additionally, this matter is so significant that I fear it would frighten others and cause many troubles. Hence I have not done anything for it. Also it is because I am not guilty, for it is not my intention to rent the temple. If I feel guilty, I would replace the mat even before my imminent death, how could I have a peaceful ease even only in a single day? Now you Jishi hope that I can sacrifice myself to stop the secret hope of evil persons to appropriate the temple, which really has aroused my interest. 當寺廢之時，僕在官中，士民告佃都盡，惟西南一隅與小屋數間，縣官始欲他用，故未授人。及僕歸，而地屋主僧真傳者，乃僕故人，恐爲他人所奪，求售於僕。僕堅辭數次，至涕泣哀懇，不得已而買之，亦視爲無用之物耳。後先君於小屋之後又轉買潘通判之地，遂成宅基。蓋寺廢歲餘而僕始歸，歸復歲餘而僧與潘家賣地，故告佃而分寺地者，官民凡數十家，惟僕最後，又買之於人，絕無一字到官，其年月與契券甚明，賣屋僧尚在也。僕素明因果，凡僧伽藍之物，雖一草不可用，況地與屋耶？當時邑令劉君廢寺起於倉卒。使僕在家，官雖尙小，或能力阻之。今改爲官署宏壯，至遺吾邑之害，甚可恨也。然南門之宅非僕樂居於此，但老年憚于他營，又事體重大，恐徒駭俗而多梗，故遂因循。亦以實非佃寺心，無愧怍耳。苟有愧怍，雖臨死猶當易簣，可苟一日安耶。今繼實欲望僕損己以絕小人僭寺之患，僕不覺惻然



At the end of the letter Lu Guangzu invited Zhou Jishi to discuss the matter face to face. He also said that he would deliberate on it with his sons and pray to the gods or his late father before making a decision. In the end, he donated the house and founded Nanchan si 南禪寺.<sup>50</sup>

The temples in these two cases were victimized by the alliance of officials and gentry, although for different reasons. This suggests that such a phenomenon was not uncommon in the Jiajing era and the fragility of the *samgha* in face of Japanese pirates, officials, and local gentry. The appearance of Lu Guangzu and Peng Fu and their acts, on the other hand, demonstrated the growing support that Jiangnan *samgha* began to enjoy since the early Wanli period. Nevertheless, it deserves notice that although these two temples were reinstalled in the Wanli era, their patrons were overly concerned about other people's response and had to justify their activities in one way or another.

### 6.3 South China Temples in the Late Wanli Era

The last temple under examination is the Ciguang si 慈光寺 at Mount Huang which was neither North China nor the Jiangnan region. Located in the vicinity of Jiangnan, Ciguang si did not have any social or cultural significance until the arrival of a monk from North China in the latter half of the Wanli era. This background is important because, as we will see in Chapter Seven, there was a Buddhist center shift from North China to Jiangnan. More importantly for our purpose, a rapid success of this rural temple in the following years involved all significant social groups, such as the imperial family, eunuchs, scholar-officials, and Huizhou merchants and thus deserves particular attention.

#### 6.3.1 The Promotion of Ciguang si 慈光寺 at Mount Huang

It was Pumen 普門 (1546-1625) who initiated change in Ciguang si, with support of a Huizhou merchant. Pumen, a Shaanxi native, was a disciple of Zhenchen at Mount Wutai and had spent most of his time in North China before setting out southward in Wanli 32 (1604). When seeing Mount Huang in Wanli 34 (1606), he recalled with surprise that he had seen it in

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<sup>49</sup> Lu, *Lu Zhuangjian gong yigao* 6, pp. 19a-20a.

<sup>50</sup> *Pinghu xianzhi* (1627) 3, p. 10a (175).

meditation as early as in Wanli 21 (1593) and thus decided to stay.<sup>51</sup> At that time, even though there were a few Buddhist temples in this area, Buddhism had little influence in the local society.

Ciguang si was originally a Daoist Zhusha chapel 朱砂庵 built in the Jiajing era, and this conversion of a Daoist temple to a Buddhist one seems to have been decided by a wealthy merchant Wu Yangchun 吳養春 (?-1626) in Xinan 溪南 of She county.<sup>52</sup> The Wu family was of the typical Huizhou merchant class that had amassed wealth through selling salt, silk, wood and running *qianzhuang* 錢莊 (old-style private bank). In Wanli 25 (1597) Wu Yangchun's father contributed three hundred thousand taels of silver to help the court which was at war with Japan in Korea. Wanli thus awarded honorable titles to his three sons, including Yangchun.<sup>53</sup> Wu Yangchun had more than two thousand mu of forest in the Huang mountain area. After Pumen had visited him, Wu Yangchun was convinced that Pumen was the monk he was looking for. He then gave money to build the Chan hall and other buildings on the site of the Zhusha chapel. Therefore, Wu Yangchun was very likely the main patron of the Zhusha chapel and, with a shift in his religious interest, the Daoist monks were forced to leave.<sup>54</sup>

After having renamed the Zhusha chapel as Fahai chanyuan 法海禪院, Pumen took it as the base to start his initiative. On the model of the Shiziwo 師子窩 at Mount Wutai where he had lived many years, he built a Pumen association (*Pumenshe* 普門社) to practice meditation and a Huayan Hall for laymen to recite sutras. These programs quickly attracted nearly one hundred followers and, by Wanli 37 (1609), twenty-four small huts for meditation had appeared nearby, with the owners including county students and a military official from Nanjing. But Pumen did not get much financial help from these people and, paradoxically, a crisis came as a result of his increasing attractiveness: it was said that Pumen had nothing but water to eat for nine months, during which more than seventy disciples continued staying with him.<sup>55</sup> Recognizing that local

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<sup>51</sup> For Pumen's miraculous meeting with the Huang mountain and the hardship he experienced at the beginning, see Min Linsi 閔麟嗣, *Huangshan zhi ding ben* 黃山志定本 (in *Zhongguo wingspan zhi* 中國名山志 [Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan suowei wenxian zhongxin, 2005], vols.9-10) 2, p. 375; 3, p. 498; 5, pp.132-33, 170.

<sup>52</sup> There was a mysterious version of this change from a Daoist temple to a Buddhist one, see *ibid.* 2, pp. 212-13, 365-66.

<sup>53</sup> About the tragedies that happened to the Wu family in the late Ming period, see [http://www.news365.com.cn/wxpd/wz/shhm/200910/t20091019\\_2496137.htm](http://www.news365.com.cn/wxpd/wz/shhm/200910/t20091019_2496137.htm) (available on June 30, 2010).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 2, p. 390, pp. 342-43. In fact, this was not the only case in which Wu shifted his donation from Daoism to Buddhism. Another case could be found in *ibid.* 2, p. 238.

<sup>55</sup> For Pumen's attraction, see *ibid.* 3, p. 474; 4, p.703, 716. For this famine, see *ibid.* 4, p. 767; 5, p. 136.

resources he could achieve at that stage were limited, Pumen, like other monks with ambitions, decided to take a chance and visit Beijing in the autumn of Wanli 38 (1610).

During this visit, Pumen obtained much help from local residents. He made careful preparation for this trip, including bringing with him a famous local painter who was well known for his paintings of the scenery of Mount Huang. When they submitted paintings about Fahai si, Wanli and the crown prince were both impressed by the painting but showed little interest in the temple itself.<sup>56</sup> In addition, Pumen asked Bao Ying'ao 鮑應鰲 (*jinshi*, 1595), a native of She county and then an official in the Ministry of Rites, to write a tribute essay (*shu* 疏) for Fahai si even before his heading for Beijing. Bao also persuaded Yu Yuli, his fellow official in the same Ministry, to write another tribute essay and to make donations to this temple.<sup>57</sup> Their essays further attracted Tang Binyin 湯賓尹 (1569-1628?; *jinshi*, 1595) who wrote four lines in praise of it.<sup>58</sup> Tang, a native of Xuan sub-prefecture, was an influential official through leading the so-called Xuan Faction (宣黨), one of the three biggest factions in the late Ming political context.<sup>59</sup> Although Tang's four-line eulogy was simple, it proved important for the popularity of Fahai si in the capital.

Nevertheless, it was eunuchs and Cisheng who really brought good fortune to Pumen and his temple. Cisheng put a private temple called Ciming si 慈明寺 under the charge of Ma Jin 馬進, a eunuch of the Directorate of Imperial Stud (*yuma jian* 御馬監). Upon meeting Pumen, Ma Jing invited him to stay at Ciming si, claiming that he had seen Pumen in meditation. Pumen accepted this invitation. Many people present there were celebrities, with some of whom Pumen gradually established connections. Meanwhile, through Ma's network, especially a Buddhist association (*hui* 會) organized by eunuchs in the Directorate of Imperial Stud to which Ma belonged, Pumen attracted more and more eunuchs.<sup>60</sup> Later, when Cisheng asked Ma Jing to hold vegetarian feasts for monks at Mount Panshan 盤山 in Ji 薊 county (present-day Tianjin),

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<sup>56</sup> The painter was Zheng Zhong 鄭重 who was said to have observed Tiandu peak, where Fahai si was, for one year before he painted. See *ibid.* 3, p. 576. For the response of Wanli and the crown prince, see *Ibid.* 2, p. 341.

<sup>57</sup> Bao Ying'ao had ever encountered Pumen in Datong, Shanxi, and seems to have discussed the Buddhist teachings with him, see *ibid.* 5, p. 131. As for Bao's and Yu's essays, see *ibid.* 3, p. 562, 610.

<sup>58</sup> Tang Binyin also showed support to other temples at Mount Huang, including Zhibo Chan monastery 擲鉢, Shizi lin 師子林, and Cuiwei si 翠微寺. See, *ibid.* 2, p. 217; 3, pp. 510-11, 518-19.

<sup>59</sup> For Tang's political life, see Herry Miller, "Opposition to the Donglin Faction in the Late Ming Dynasty: The Case of Tang Binyin." *Late Imperial China* 27.2 (2006), pp. 38-66.

<sup>60</sup> For the invitation, see *ibid.* 2, pp. 330-31. For the travel, see *ibid.* 5, p. 126, 137, 144.

Ma Jing traveled there with Pumen.

A turning point suddenly came when he met an old man surnamed Zuo. When learning of Pumen's plan to build a monastery with an imperially-bestowed canon, Zuo Xiang donated three hundred taels of silver, which was supplemented by Bao Ying'ao and another two natives of Hui prefecture where Mount Huang existed. With this collected money, Pumen obtained a copy of the northern canon, which was further decorated with beautiful embroidery granted by Cisheng and the crown prince.<sup>61</sup> Then, through eunuch Yan Luan, Pumen submitted a memorial to Cisheng requesting a name for the temple and a protecting edict for the canon.<sup>62</sup> In the sixth month of Wanli 39 (1611), Wanli renamed Fahai chanyuan as "Ciguang." Moreover, it happened that a seven-tier gold-blended (*shenjin* 渗金) statue of the four-faced Vairocana (*simian piluzhena* 四面七層毘盧遮那) which Cisheng had ordered cast was about to be completed.<sup>63</sup> Since Cisheng had not decided where it should go: Mount Wutai, Mount E'mei, or the Putuo Island, Cai Qin 蔡欽, another otherwise unknown eunuch, submitted a memorial asking the statue to be given to Pumen's temple. It is said that Cisheng, Wanli, and his empress cast a lot (*nian* 拈) three times, all results pointing to Mount Huang as the right place.<sup>64</sup> Things

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<sup>61</sup> Eunuchs were very likely to contribute to this acceptance of this canon which, unlike the Southern canon which could be purchased with money, was exclusively used the imperial family as a gift to the favoured monks and monasteries. Zuo was a Shanxi person according to Bao Ying'ao but a Pinggu resident according to Yue Hesheng. A possibility is thus that he was a Shanxi people who migrated to Pinggu. See *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, p. 496; 5, p. 126.

<sup>62</sup> For Pumen's acquisition of the canon, see *ibid.* 3, pp. 562-63; 5, pp. 136-37. For Pumen's memorial asking for the name-tablet, see *ibid.* 3, pp. 455-56. The protecting edict preserved in the same book has a mistake: this canon was bestowed in Wanli 39 rather than Wanli 27. See *ibid.* 3, pp. 449-450.

<sup>63</sup> In the Tantric Buddhism, the four-faced Vairocana refers to dharma-body as wisdom (*zhi fashen* 智法身) in the Diamond realm (*jinggang jie* 金剛界; Skt. *Vajradhātu*). See the *Jinggangding yuqie zhong yuechu niansong jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經 (*T.* 866. 18) 1, p. 814). The Vairocana statue at the Ciguang si no longer exists, but given that it was described in the original text as a *qiceng baolian simian pilu rulai fo* 七層寶蓮四面毗盧如來佛, I suspect that it looked like a three-tier four-faced Vairocana statue at Longxing si 隆興寺, Zhengding, Hebei, which was imperially cast in late Ming and could still be found at <http://baike.baidu.com/image/8759287a9732e6fb2e73b3ba> (available on June 30, 2010). That the four-faced Vairocana sits on a pedestal comprising one thousand lotus has a textual basis the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (*T.* 24.1484) 2, p.1003. By the way, it is worth noticing that similar Vairocana statues that were imperially cast and bestowed in the late Ming can be found at Shaolin si 少林寺 in Henan and Shengzuolongchang si 聖祚隆長寺 in Beijing as well, but the latter one has been moved to Fayuan si 法源寺. Cf. [http://tupian.hudong.com/a3\\_54\\_67\\_01300000044935121040677395402.jpg.html](http://tupian.hudong.com/a3_54_67_01300000044935121040677395402.jpg.html) (available on June 30, 2010).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 2, p. 212; 3, pp. 453-55, 495, 498-99. Yue Hesheng said that the bestowal of the Buddhist canon took place after Pumen's reception of those Buddha statues, but Bao Ying'ao advocated a reverse order. Bao was correct not only because he had a much deeper involvement in these affairs than Yu but also because Pan Zhiheng supported his claim. See *ibid.* 3, pp.

were thus decided. In addition, Cisheng awarded Pumen one purple robe, one walking staff (*zhang* 仗), and three hundred tales of silver.<sup>65</sup>

Pumen's success in the capital turned into a bugle call of mobilization in the Huangshan area. A Huangshan person then in Beijing immediately sent a messenger back asking the local person to prepare for this unusual event. Fahai chanyuan was too small to have a separate building to store the canon as required. Pumen's disciples discussed this situation with laymen, like Pan Zhiheng 潘之恒 (1556-1621) and then decided to build a pavilion to preserve it temporarily. Tang Binyin happened to return home and was thus invited to coordinate these matters. Tang accepted the invitation and wrote two essays requesting support for this temple.<sup>66</sup>

To deliver from Beijing to south China those Buddhist statues and a canon comprising seven thousand volumes was a challenge that required various means of support from the local people. In the sixth month of Wanli 40 (1612), three eunuchs, including Ma Jing and Yan Luan, got Cisheng's order to escort these things to Ciguang si. In the Huangshan area, however, this news created panic to such a degree that Bao Ying'ao had to write a letter to reassure local people that these eunuchs would not bother them like other eunuchs did in their visits to local communities. To minimize the disturbance, Pumen and the accompanying eunuchs did not use the postal system (*yidi* 驛遞) as usual. In the eighth month of the same year when they arrived in Shandong, Mi Wanzhong 米萬鍾 (1570-1628; *jinshi*, 1595) who appreciated Pumen arranged grain transporting ships to take this group south. Finally, they arrived in Hangzhou, the southern end of the Grand Canal, and took a rest in Zhaoqing si 昭慶寺. However, a flood was taking place there, and a rumor spread that it was the Buddha they were carrying who brought the flood.<sup>67</sup> Hangzhou people thus gathered and wanted to destroy the statues. In no time, the situation became so chaotic that local turbulence became imminent. Finally, Yue Yuansheng 嶽元聲 (1557-1628; *jinshi*, 1583) wrote a letter on the behalf of the envoy to local officials, who wasted no time and dispatched four hundred labourers to ship this cargo to She

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495-96, 562-63; 5, pp. 126-28.

<sup>65</sup> We have met eunuch Yan Luan in Chapter Five. Pan Zhiheng confused the surname of 閻鸞 as a homophone “顏.” See *ibid.* 2, p. 331. In fact, although Pan was a crucial figure to enhance Mount Huang and Ciguang si, his “Cijian ciguan si ji” 敕建慈光寺記 (*ibid.* 3, pp. 561-65) includes some errors. For the silver, see *ibid.* 2, p. 212.

<sup>66</sup> For Tang's activities during that period, see *ibid.* 3, pp. 492-94, 565; 4, pp. 743-62.

<sup>67</sup> The rumour said that that Buddha was the daughter of the water mother (*shuimu* 水母) who cannot stand three straight days without rain.

county on the same day.<sup>68</sup>

Pumen established Ciguang si as a public (*shifang* 十方) monastery, but this temple failed to attract a good abbot for a long period of time. Alarmed by the much higher chance of decay in temples where abbotship was inherited only from master to disciple, Pumen vowed to run the temple as a public monastery and declined to be its abbot.<sup>69</sup> As a result, in the second month of Wanli 39 (1611), a monk was assigned by the Ministry of Rites as the abbot of Ciguang si. This monk had received three invitation letters from Pumen, eunuchs, and others respectively, but he was mentioned only once after that appointment.<sup>70</sup> This outcome suggests that he might be favoured by eunuchs but not by local people.

In contrast, Pumen continued to obtain support from scholar-officials. With support from local residents, he built an independent hall for himself, where a Dabei Buddha with fourteen arms was erected in the middle, with Yaowang 藥王 (*Bhaiṣajya-rāja*) and Yaoshang 藥上 (*Bhaiṣajya-rāja-samudgata*) placed on both sides.<sup>71</sup> His calling on casting a big bell for the

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<sup>68</sup> For the general situation, see Ibid. 2, p. 330; 3, p. 451, 503. For Bao's letter, see ibid. 5, pp. 126-28. For Mi Wanzhong's meeting with Pumen, see *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, pp. 639-60. For the trouble in Hangzhou, see *Huangshanzhi dingben* 2, pp. 342 and 5, pp. 129-30. Nevertheless, the statues did not arrive in Ciguang si until Wanli 43, see Pan Zhiheng 潘之恒, *Huanghai* 黃海 (in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu*, vols. 229-230), pp. 67-68.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 5, pp. 134-35.

<sup>70</sup> For the invitation letters and the official document assigning Ruxiao as the abbot, see ibid. 3, pp. 451-53; 5, pp. 134-37, 141-44.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 2, pp. 212-13, 331; 3, p. 472-74. This Dabei Buddha was very likely a tantric form of Guanyin, with those fourteen arms representing her fourteen merits of fearlessness (*shisi wuwei de* 十四無畏德). The textual source of this kind of icon could be found in the *Da foding rulai miyin xiuzheng liaoyi zhu pusa wanxing shou lengyan jing* 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經 (*T.19. 945*), j.6. The Yaowang Buddha and Yaoshang Buddha were good at treating patients with medicine, and their inclusion in this hall might be because Cisheng was struggling with an eye disease and other illnesses in her final years. It is Prof. Chün-fang Yü who reminded me that this Dabei Buddha might be a tantric form of Guanyin, which I really appreciate. She also pointed out that placing this bodhisattva in the center flanked by Yaowang and Yaoshang is a most unusual iconic arrangement, but I suspect that this particular arrangement had something to do with the *Qianshou qianyan guanshiyin pusa guangda yuanman wuai dabeixin tuoluoni jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經 (Skt. *Nīlakaṇṭha-dhāraṇī*), which is still used among laymen and monks in Chinese Buddhism and has seven extant Chinese translations. This *dhāraṇī*, although devoted to Avalokiteśvara, includes Yaowang and Yaoshang and, more importantly, promises to cure human eye disease (*T. 20.1060*, p. 110b) and protect a country from being troubled by domestic trouble and foreign invasion (*T.20. 1060*, p. 109c), two biggest problems which were worrying Cisheng and Wanli. For the images and the confessional ritual related to this *dhāraṇī*, cf. *Zhongguo lidai guanyin wenxian jicheng* 中國歷代觀音文獻集成 (Beijing: Zhonghua quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 1998), vol. 2, pp. 173-685. By the way, Emperor Yongle wrote a preface for the version of this *dhāraṇī* translated by Bhagavat-dharma (*Jiafandamo* 伽梵達摩) in the Tang dynasty (*T. 20. 1060*, p. 105c), which might partly explain its popularity in the Ming inner court. Additionally, the *Qianshou qianyan*

hall received prompt response from a powerful local clan.<sup>72</sup> In Wanli 43 (1615), an artist came from Jiangnan to choose the site for Ciguang si. Moreover, Ding Zhixuan bought a patch of land from another temple to Ciguang si. He also advocated planting eighteen thousand pine trees around the temple, which received active responses. Wu Kongjia 吳孔嘉 (*jinshi*, 1625) advocated purchasing more than one hundred *mu* of fields. However, in Tianqi 3 (1623) when laymen began to gather and the Chan hall was founded, Pumen left for Xiangfu si 祥符寺 in Wuxi for unknown reasons. There witnesses said that Pumen and his followers had no food to eat for seven days. Two years later, Pumen traveled north with an alleged hope to curb eunuchs' misdeeds but ended with an unexpected death in that summer.<sup>73</sup>

Pumen's regret for not finishing his enterprise was revealed in his last words that "I would come back to finish the task" (再來了此一局). He made a perfect design for the hall housing the bestowed four-faced Vairocana statue, but it was never constructed.<sup>74</sup> The statue was hence dismantled into several parts which were put in different rooms. Due to the lack of suitable storage place, the bestowed canon was damaged by bookworms. In addition, the financial supply for the temple was so unstable that it was reported that hundreds monks survived only by eating bamboo seeds for several months. Therefore, although this temple still obtained support from local society even after Pumen's death,<sup>75</sup> generally it remained in poor condition during the Ming-Qing transition.<sup>76</sup>

New hope for Ciguang si was not ignited until the Kangxi era, and again it was because of a Huizhou merchant. Yuling Tongxiu 玉林通琇 (1614-1675) was a talented monk who was invited to be the abbot of Baoen si 報恩寺 in Huzhou at the age of twenty-three and who was respected as the National Master (*guoshi* 國師) by the Shunzhi emperor (r. 1644-1661). When Tongxiu visited Ciguang si in 1662, he predicted that this temple would revive after having seen

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*guanshiyin pusa zhibing heyao jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩治病合藥經 (T. 20.1059) is similar to that *dhāraṇī* in content but less popular than it.

<sup>72</sup> For the bell, see *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, pp. 521-24.

<sup>73</sup> For Ding, see *Huangshanzhi dingben* 2, p. 337; 3, p. 564. For Wu, see *ibid.* 2, p. 351. For Pumen's death, see *ibid.* 5, pp. 166-72.

<sup>74</sup> For this wooden model, see *Huanghai*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>75</sup> For example, local literati voluntarily collected donations for this temple. See *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, pp. 498-500.

<sup>76</sup> *Huangshanzhi xuji* 黃山志續集 (in *Zhongguo mingshan zhi* 中國名山志 [Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan suowei wenxian zhongxin, 2005], vol.11) 1, pp. 83-87; 8, p. 721.

miraculous phenomena.<sup>77</sup> Four years after he made the prediction, Huang Zhuan 黃僎 (fl. 1670), a local son of Huangshan area who had been the biggest salt merchant in Yangzhou for twenty years came to rescue the monastery. Previously Huang Zhuan and his older brother had a chance to meet with Pumen. During that period, Pumen was searching for a patron to build the main hall for the statues. Because this was a big and costly project, no positive response came initially. Huang Zhuan, then a child, surprised his brother and Pumen by saying that it would not be a problem at all. Several decades later, after having learned from Yuling Tongxiu's disciple of the recent situation of Ciguang si, Huang Zhuan decided to rebuild it. Roughly from 1666 to 1670, after spending more than forty thousand taels of silver, they eventually brought a successful end to the project, including the main Buddha hall, Chan hall, the pavilion for storing canon, and more than one hundred rooms. This monastery was reconstructed by modeling after the Great Bao'en monastery in Nanjing. Although this monastery was slightly smaller than the latter in scale, it was reported to be equally splendid in design. This result far exceeded Pumen's expectation and made the monastery the largest one in the region.<sup>78</sup>

This renovation brought another wave of patronage to Ciguang si. After learning that Ciguang si had new patronage and the potential to expand, a local person donated to the monastery a piece of land he had bought to build private estates.<sup>79</sup> By the final years of the seventeenth century, a record says that more than one thousand monks resided in this monastery. Its abbot Zhongzhou was held in high esteem, not only for his skills in expounding and practicing Chan, but also for his accomplishment in composing poems and drawing paintings. In 1701, with two hundred donated taels of silver, this abbot repaired the monastery.<sup>80</sup> Unfortunately, Ciguang si caught fire in 1737, from which it never got a chance to recover.

### 6.3.2 Ciguan Si in the Historical Context

The growth of Ciguang monastery coincided with the growing popularity of Mount Huang. The Huangshan area was five hundred kilometres in circumference, with its major part in three counties of Xiuning 休寧, She 歙, and Taiping 太平 which belonged to She 歙 and Xuan 宣 sub-Prefectures respectively. During the period under discussion, this area was home to two

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<sup>77</sup> *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, pp. 413-14.

<sup>78</sup> *Huangshanzhi dingben* 2, pp. 404; 5, p. 111. *Huangshanzhi xuji* 3, pp. 159-64.

<sup>79</sup> *Huangshanzhi dingben* 2, p. 354.

<sup>80</sup> For the monk Zhongzhou and his maintenance of Ciguang monastery, see *Huangshanzhi xuji* 7, p. 617, 628; 1, pp. 15-17, 75-80, 83-87.



influential groups: Huizhou merchants (*huishang* 徽商) and a large number of *jinshi*.<sup>81</sup> In other words, Huangshan was in a place full of wealth and literary talent, and so was Ciguang si. Prior to the Jiajing era, it seems that local people did not have much interest in this mountain. A landmark event in the local history happened in Jiajing 21 (1542) when sixteen literati organized a Tiandu association (*tiandushe* 天都社) and spent one day together at the Tiandu peak of Mount Huang to compose poetry.<sup>82</sup> These participants seem to have lacked influence even on a regional level, but nonetheless this gathering was seen as a memorable event by local literati shortly after. As local wealth increased rapidly and the social status of local sons grew quickly, they increasingly felt dissatisfied with the obscurity of their hometown and thus started a launch an effort to reshape and promote the image of their hometown. As an important step they chose to promote Mount Huang which, fortunately for them, was full of gorgeous scenery. As a result, aiming to promote it into China's most foremost mountains, like Mount Tai, Wutai, and Song, they compiled at least three voluminous books exclusively for this mountain during a short period of time.<sup>83</sup>

The imperial presence in Ciguang si was partly a result of this campaign of promoting local pride,<sup>84</sup> and its appearance in turn advanced such efforts. When comparing Buddhist temples in the area, Bao Ying'ao clearly pointed out that Ciguang si was in high esteem due to the bestowed statues.<sup>85</sup> In fact, in the literature related to Ciguang si, Pumen, the statues as well as the canon, and the gorgeous scenery were the most common topics and, more interestingly,

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<sup>81</sup> Huizhou merchants, the family clans in that area, and their relationship have sparked strong interest among scholars. See H. T. Zurndorfer, "Learning, Clans, and Locality in Late Imperial China: A Comparative Study of Education in Huichow (Anhui) and Foochow (Fukien) 1600-1800. Part II," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 35.2 (1992), pp. 109-44; Michael Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship: Clan and Descent in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002); K. Hazelton, "Patriline and the Development of Localized Clans: The Wu of Hsiu-Ning City, Hui-Chou, to 1528," in *Kinship organization in late imperial China, 1000 – 1940*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 137-69; Qitao Guo, *Ritual Opera and Mercantile Clan: The Confucian Transformation of Popular Culture in Late Imperial Huizhou* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005); and Brook, "Funerary Ritual and the Building of Clans in Late Imperial China."

<sup>82</sup> Tiandu is a major peak of the Huang Mountain. For the first association named after it, see, *Huangshanzhi dingben* 2, pp. 324-26; 5, pp. 211-12.

<sup>83</sup> For the ambition of those people in this regard, see *Huanghai*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>84</sup> The ties between Ciguang si and the inner court continued for some time. For example, when learning that the temple lacked enough space housing the canon and statues, it is said that Wanli collected several thousand taels of silver for it, but this story cannot be substantiated. See *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, p. 499, In Wanli 43, Ma Jing was still seen in the Ciguang si. See, *Huanghai*, p. 179a.

<sup>85</sup> *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, p. 568.

Pumen and the canon were mentioned much more because of the royal flavor than their religious value.<sup>86</sup>

Pan Zhiheng, a native of She county, actually served as a coordinator in this movement through his extensive connection with other scholar-officials, particularly those in Jiangnan.<sup>87</sup> He reestablished the Tiandu Association after sixty nine years of the first gathering of this association. In this newly founded association, performing literary work, practicing meditation, and reciting the Buddha's name were central to the group's activities. Pan Zhiheng also organized an association named after Pumen explicitly devoted to Buddhism. Some members of these two associations overlapped. Accordingly, the Tiandu Association declared it to be the outer protector of the Pumen Association,<sup>88</sup> and they often acted together.<sup>89</sup> Besides, Pan Zhiheng had a close connection with leading literati of the age, like Yuan Hongdao, Li Zhi, Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550-1616; *jinshi*, 1583), Tu Long 屠隆 (1543-1605; *jinshi*, 1577).<sup>90</sup> Obviously, such a large network enabled him to get wide support for his undertakings. For example, when compiling the *Huanghai*, he attained assistance from as many as fifty-five literati to collate the draft.<sup>91</sup>

In this process of promoting local pride, the people in the area of Mount Huang also got the assistance from scholar-officials in other regions. This area was in the vicinity of Jiangnan's core region, through which it had close relationships with all other parts of the country due to its extreme success in the civil examination and commerce. As a result, many leading literati, such as Feng Mengzhen, Yuan Huang, Ge Yinliang 葛寅亮 (*jinshi*, 1601), Qian Qianyi, and Xu Xiake in Jiangnan participated in this enterprise. They visited this area and wrote many laudatory writings for it.<sup>92</sup> Besides, there were some literati who did not visit this area but still

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<sup>86</sup> For example, see *Huanghai*, p. 164b, 173b.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Brook, "Family Continuity and Cultural Hegemony: The Gentry of Ningbo: 1368–1911," in *Chinese Local Elites and Patterns of Dominance*, ed. Joseph W. Esherick and Mary Backus Rankin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 27-50; Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

<sup>88</sup> *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, pp. 487-88.

<sup>89</sup> For example, see *ibid.* 3, p. 565, and *Huanghai*, p. 35.

<sup>90</sup> For Tu Long, cf. Araki, "To Ryū to Kan Shidō" 屠隆と管志道, *Nihon chūgoku gakkai ho* 日本中國學會報, no. 28 (1976), pp. 187-99.

<sup>91</sup> For this kind of networks, see Tobie Meyer-Fong, "Packaging the Men of Our Times: Literary Anthologies, Friendship Networks, and Political Accommodation in the Early Qing," *Harvard journal of Asiatic studies* 64. 1 (2004), pp. 5-56.

<sup>92</sup> Feng Mengzhen recorded his trip to Mount Huang in poetry, essay, and diaries. See, for example, *Huangshanzhi dingben* 4, pp. 674-87; *KXT* 26, pp.6-11, 406-8. For other people, see *Huangshanzhi dingben* 5, pp. 38-65, *Huanghai*, pp. 46-47, 53,

participated in that campaign. For example, a literary man in Hangzhou wrote a piece to praise the purity and beauty of Mount Huang, but he admitted that he had never visited Mount Huang and that he only heard of the mountain from Tang Binyin and Pan Zhiheng.<sup>93</sup> Dong Qichang ranked Mount Huang as the sixth most important mountain in China, but he had not actually visited it.<sup>94</sup> As a result of these collective acts, the influence of this area expanded quickly.<sup>95</sup>

Pumen and Ciguang si also had particular attraction to these literati. With regard to Pumen, his close tie with Wutai was an asset for him to attract scholar-officials all around. Mount Wutai had been a sacred Buddhist site roughly since the Tang dynasty, and it even became a must-visit place for Dharma-seekers in the late Jiajing and early Wanli era, as we will see in Chapter Seven. In addition, Pumen's master Zhencheng, as discussed in Chapter Five, was a leading monk favoured by both Cisheng and Wanli. Pumen's activities at Mount Huang had obvious marks of Wutai. For example, his establishment of the Pumen Association modeled on an example set by Zhencheng at Wutai.<sup>96</sup> When Pumen built the Dabei chapel, he also asked his master to write an essay for it, which he did.<sup>97</sup>

In addition, the public nature of Ciguang si appealed to the literati for two reasons. First, it proved that Pumen was selfless, which increased the chance to have a qualified abbot. Pan Zhiheng pointed out that a Buddhist temple should not be headed by a selfish person, and that the decay of Buddhism in the Ming dynasty, when compared with the Tang and Song dynasties, had much to do with a shift in the establishment of an abbot from public selection among virtuous people to inheritance between a master and his disciple.<sup>98</sup>

More importantly, a public monastery opened a door for patrons to take part in, if not control, the running of the temple. Two of three regulations that Pan Zhiheng set for the Pumen Association were as follows:

First, once the association is built, it should be permanently shared with people of the Way from ten directions, and the head of the chapel is prohibited from accepting disciples without permission. In the case that his disciples or family members attempt to control the

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107-111, 119-21.

<sup>93</sup> *Huanghai*, p. 59.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

<sup>95</sup> *Huangshanzhi xuji*, p. 7.

<sup>96</sup> *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, pp. 486-88, and *Huanghai*, p.37.

<sup>97</sup> *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, pp. 472-73.

<sup>98</sup> *Huanghai*, pp. 37a-b.

property, [they] would be charged with stealing property of monks of the ten directions and discarded by all for the common benefit of monastery. Second, this chapel does not establish a constant head. A virtuous person will be selected as a leader at the start of a year. All things, big or small, will be carried out according to his direction. He steps down at the end of a year. If invited once again, he will lead for another year. [A leader] who is reluctant to resign would be abandoned by all people. 一、是院既成，永與十方爲道者共，不許火主私度弟子。如火主弟子、家人爭主其業者，坐盜十方僧物，以叢林大義共擯之。一、是院無常主，每歲首推有德一人爲主事，無大小悉聽施行，至歲終告退。如更請，更主周歲。貪位不退者，共擯之。<sup>99</sup>

Two points deserve particular attention. First, it imposed strict restrictions on an abbot lest he completely control the association. Second, the yearly selection of the abbot actually opened the door for lay patrons to participate in the choice of its leader and thus its daily running. This point confirms Wu Jiang's argument that the involvement of literati with monastic administration was no longer a rarity but had become a reality in the late Ming and early Qing period.<sup>100</sup>

Against this background, it thus comes as no surprise that Ciguang si was not the only temple in this area which grew rapidly during this period. Except for Pumen, three other important monks were also active in the area,<sup>101</sup> each of whom founded important monasteries and received enormous support from Huangshan natives, as Pumen did.<sup>102</sup>

#### 6.4 Concluding Remarks

The development of Buddhist temples in the mid- and late Ming was sensitive to changes in patrons, largely because their independence had been substantially weakened since the late Yuan and early Ming period. In different periods and regions, Buddhist temples had different types of patrons who, as to be discussed in the last chapter, were different in the way they responded to political changes according to their different positions in the power structure, and

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. 37a-b.

<sup>100</sup> See Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*, pp. 258-63.

<sup>101</sup> They were Yuan Guangji 寓安廣寄 who build Yungu si 雲穀寺, Yicheng 一乘 who built Shizi lin 獅子林, and Xinyue 心月 who founded Tianhai 天海.

<sup>102</sup> For example, *Huangshanzhi dingben* 3, p. 512, records patronage to Yicheng, including a patch of land.

who had different agendas, depending on economic, cultural, and social circumstances. Such diversity in patronage finally resulted in the different regional and temporal features in the development of Buddhist temples.

During the period under discussion, the development of Buddhist temples in Beijing primarily depended on inner court elite, common laymen, and local elite whose members were very different from their counterparts in the Jiangnan region. In the Jiangnan region, they relied primarily on scholar-officials. These groups were not always supportive of Buddhism. Instead, they might have been indifferent to Buddhism or, in the case of scholar-officials in Jiangnan, even hostile to it. In addition, eunuchs and scholar-officials both were eager to act in cooperation with the imperial family, particularly the ruler himself, but the relationship between the two groups was subtle: scholar-officials were cautious to minimize their appearance in Buddhist projects which were under the charge of eunuchs, but they appeared to accept more easily the latter's presence in their own projects through presenting it as a kind of imperial symbol.

These above-examined cases demonstrate several types in the development of Buddhist temples from mid- to early Qing. Their fates were eventually determined by the interaction of the *saṃgha* with different social groups, and such interactions were in turn decided by both the general political climate and the social, economic, and cultural situation in local society. It is worth noticing that different areas had their own local agenda even under the same political context and that Jiangnan society was becoming more independent of the state than the society of Beijing/ North China. As a result, temples in different regions were distinct in the directions and timing of developments. In order to have a clearer look at how these growths at different paces finally changed the contour of Buddhism at a higher level, I will proceed to a regional study in the next chapter.

## Chapter 7

### 1600: The Buddhist Centre Shifts

In the preceding chapters, I have examined how different social groups in Ming lay society adjusted their relationship with Buddhism according to the shifting cultural, social and political climate of the times; I have also examined how the *sangha* and Buddhist monks responded to and were influenced by these changes as well. However, these studies are mostly built on case studies from which it may be difficult to arrive at a more complete picture of Buddhism in this age. To solve this problem, I will adopt a more regional approach in this chapter and closely observe the evolution of Buddhism in North China/ Beijing and Jiangnan. I will also examine the interrelation between Buddhism in these two areas, thereby understanding the dynamism on a national level behind the late Ming Buddhist revival.

This chapter consists of three sections. First, through tracing and mapping changes in the activities of eminent monks and the fluctuation of temple building projects during the Jiajing-Wanli period, I will provide an overview of the trajectory that Buddhism experienced in contemporary major Buddhist centers, including Beijing/North China and the Jiangnan region. Then, I will explain why Buddhism had different trajectories in relation to contemporary politics, patrons, and local context. Finally, I will explore the interaction between these two Buddhist communities, which although two thousand kilometres apart, were both pivotal to the development of Buddhism at the time. By the end of the chapter a more complete image of the late Ming Buddhist revival will emerge.

#### 7.1 Mobility of Eminent Monks

Examining monks' activities provides a sensitive indicator of the overall wellbeing of Buddhism in any given time, and this is particularly true for the Ming period- a time when Buddhism lacked doctrinal creativity. Biographies of eminent monks remain the most comprehensive and fundamental primary resources for scholars who wish to understand the lives and thoughts of individual Buddhist masters or the *sangha* in general for this specific

period.<sup>1</sup> Thus my study in this section will be mainly based on these collections.

### 7.1.1 Temporal Distribution of Eminent Monks

At least five collections of biographies were published about eminent monks in the Ming dynasty period, including the *Da Ming gaoseng zhuan* 大明高僧傳, *Bu xu gaoseng zhuan* 補續高僧傳, *Gaoseng zhaiyao* 高僧摘要, *Shijian jigu lue xuji* 釋鑒稽古略續集, and *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan si ji* 新續高僧傳四集.<sup>2</sup> Together they present us the most comprehensive biographical information about nearly three hundred eminent monks. Drawing on these sources, this section will trace the various activities of Buddhist monks of the time and in particular monks in Beijing.

Table 6 below is constructed using these five sources along with a variety of other sources used to supplant information when necessary. There are at least three kinds of biographies in the biography of eminent monks, depending not only on the importance of the protagonist but also on the accessibility of his information. In this Table, a “formal biography” refers to a detailed biography attached to a major figure while an “attached biography” (*fuzhuan* 附傳 or *fujian* 附

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<sup>1</sup> As we shall see later, some problems exist in this kind of material. For one thing, the information accessible to the authors was usually incomplete, which was exacerbated by socio-political disorders that frequently took place. For the second, sectarian concerns could become so evident in these collections that readers have to question their standards of inclusion and exclusion. Nevertheless, so far they are still the most comprehensive and reliable source we can obtain. For general discussion about the nature of biography of eminent monks, see Shinohara Kōichi 篠原亨一, “Two Sources of Chinese Buddhist Biographies: Stupa Inscriptions and Miracle Stories,” in *Monks and Magicians: Religious Biographies in Asia*, eds. Phyllis Granoff & Koichi Shinohara (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1988), pp. 94-128. Idem. “‘Biographies of Eminent Monks’ in a Comparative Perspective: The Function of the Holy in Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” *Chung-hwa Buddhist Journal*, no. 7 (1994), pp. 477-500.

Some Japanese scholars have studied Buddhist monks in a similar way. Yamazaki Hiroshi 山崎宏, *Shina chūsei bukyō no tenkai* 支那中世仏教の展開 (Tōkyō: Shimizu Shoten, 1942), studied the expansion of Buddhist monks from the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220) to the Tang dynasty (618-907). Shigenoi Shizuka 滋野井恬, “Juichi seiki igo Chūgoku no bukyō kyōsen no gaikyō” 11世紀以後中國の仏教教線の概況 (*Ōtani nenpō* 大谷年報 19 [1967], pp. 255-312), researched the spread of Buddhism in China after the eleventh century. Hasebe Yūkei, *Min Shin bukyō shi kenkyū josetsu* 明清仏教史研究序説 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1979), tried to observe the development of the Buddhist communities during the Ming and Qing period. In addition, Chen, “Mindai bukyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū,” pp. 162-95, explored the activity of eminent monks on the basis of their biographies. A big difference between my study and theirs is that the unit of time I use is relatively smaller, which would have particular advantage when Buddhism experienced dramatic changes during a short time, which is what exactly happened in the period under discussion.

<sup>2</sup> The *Da Ming gaoseng zhuan* 大明高僧傳 (T.50.2062; 6 vols) was composed by Ruxing 如惺, the *Bu xu gaoseng zhuan* 補續高僧傳 (T.77.1524; 26 vols) was collected by Minghe 明河, the *Gaoseng zhaiyao* 高僧摘要 (XZJ 87.1626) was collected by Xu Changzhi 徐昌治, and the *Shijian jigu lue xuji* (T.49.2038; 2 vols) was composed by Huanlun 幻輪. The *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan si ji* was collected by Yu Meian 喻味庵 and published in Taipei in 1967.

見) refers to biographical details mentioned in passing when recounting others' stories. "Nominal biographies," are those which offer nothing more than a name. Generally speaking, the historic usefulness of a biography decreases as we move through the formal then to the attached and finally the nominal biographies.<sup>3</sup>

Table 6: Temporal Distribution of Eminent Monks, 1522–1662

Type Death Year		Formal Biography	Attached Biography	Nominal Biography	Total
Jiajing (1522–1566)	1-10	0	1	9	9
	11-20	0	0	0	0
	21-30	0	1	1	2
	31-40	3	0	0	3
	41-45	6	0	7	13
	Unclear	15	5	0	20
Sub-total	45	23	7	17	47
Longqing (1567–1572)	1-6	4	0	1	5
Wanli (1573–1620)	1-10	12	1	0	13
	11-20	18	4	0	22
	21-30	16	1	0	17
	31-40	8	3	1	12
	41-48	9	1	0	10
	Unclear	12	1	0	13
Sub-total	48	93	33	3	129
T-S (1621-1662)	Tianqi 1-7	13	2	5	20
	Chongzhen 1-17	24	10	0	34
	Southern Ming 1-18	29	10	0	39
Sub-total	42	66	22	5	93
Total	141	186	85	28	299

In Table 6, for convenience the monks are categorized according to the year of death. The earliest year of which is Jiajing 1 (1522) and the latest is 1662, the final year of the Southern Ming

<sup>3</sup> A typical biography of a monk might include details such as his name, native place, reasons for leaving home, masters and monasteries he visited and/or was affiliated with, his activities after becoming a senior monk, and a description of his death. Sometimes, his age, the death year and even birth year are also given. However, it rarely offers any temporal information when these events actually happened.



which overlapped with the Qing dynasty for nearly twenty years.<sup>4</sup> As a rule, a monk could also be counted in if he has been ambiguously grouped in the late Ming and early Qing in these collections. The period from 1621 to 1662 is used only for comparison in this paper and represented by “T-S” (Tianqi-Southern Ming) for convenience. “Unclear” is used to group those who are ambiguously said to die in a given reign period but the date of death is not offered.<sup>5</sup>

Even without considering the differences in the nature of these three kinds of bibliographies, it becomes clear on the basis of Table 6 that although the different reign periods cover a similar span of time of over forty years, the appearance of eminent monks fluctuated drastically: 47 monks emerged in the Jiajing period, and this number almost tripled in the Wanli period, which was followed by a one-third drop in the T-S period. More specifically, during the first three decades of the Jiajing period it is rare to see eminent monks, and when you do encounter them there is very little information given, only their names. Roughly commencing in 1550 (Jiajing 29), the appearance of eminent monks increased; moreover, the last five years of the Jiajing era put an optimistic cap on his reign period with a soaring four-fold increase over the preceding ten years. This surge extended into the Longqing period (1567-1572) and finally reached its peak in the 1590s. Then a continuous drop came during the next thirty years, during which the lowest point appeared in the early 1600s. Beginning with the 1620s, once again eminent monks became active to a moderate degree until the end of the Southern Ming in 1662. This Table confirms a general image that Buddhism was stagnant in the mid-Ming and prosperous in the late Ming, but it also raises some problems: why did such an increase start around 1560 at the exact time when Jiajing suppressed Buddhism? Where did this revival get its dynamic allowing it to escalate into the first

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<sup>4</sup> Among two hundred and ninety-nine monks studied here, one hundred and seven are given the birth and death years. They had an average age of 68.59.

<sup>5</sup> This Table does not count thirty three biographies in the *Xinxu gaoseng zhuan si ji*. It is hard to identify the time of protagonists' activities but fall between biographies within the one hundred and forty years under discussion. Given that as a rule biographies in this collection are first grouped into ten categories and then organized chronologically within each group, it seems safe to say that most of these biographies, if not all, could also be included in this study. They are excluded from this Table simply because of the lack of information for further analysis. The *Shijian jigu lue xuji* is also edited chronologically, with a lower quality. It puts together some biographies under a year after an interval of time, and this year is thus used for analysis if no more information is found elsewhere.

By the way, although these collections record most eminent monks of the time, they neglect a few of them, like Juelang Daosheng 覺浪道盛 (1592-1659). This regret could not be easily remedied by referring to the collections of biographies of contemporary Chan masters, for they follow different standards of selection. More importantly, since the majority of Chan masters were natives of the Jiangnan region and became increasingly active only after the 1620s, counting them in would reinforce rather than weaken the conclusions we will reach at the end of this paper.

decades of the Wanli period? Most importantly, why did a sharp drop happen in the 1600s until Emperor Wanli's death?

In addition to the temporal imbalance, the appearance of eminent monks was also uneven in space. In fact, although Beijing and Jiangnan were two small regions in the much larger Ming polity,<sup>6</sup> the percentages of eminent monks present in these two areas amounts to about eighty-five percent of the entire Ming dynasty during the Wanli era and more than seventy in the T-S period. Such a high share of the entire realm's community of eminent monks displays the dominant position of North China and Jiangnan in the Buddhist world of the age. For that reason, I will mainly examine North China and the Jiangnan in the following section.

#### 7.1.2 Patterns of Mobility of Eminent Monks in Beijing/North China and Jiangnan<sup>7</sup>

With this knowledge of the regional dominance of Beijing/ North China and Jiangnan in mind, we are now in a better position to closely observe the activities of eminent monks during the mid-to late Ming period. A major component of my analysis is to consider the pattern of eminent monks' activities as depicted in their biographies. A typical pattern consists of information stating the birthplace of a monk, the places and masters he visited for instruction, and the region that he finally stayed in to educate new novices. I assume that the trajectory of mobility represents a series of choices that a monk has made in response to the state of the *samgha* and the secular world. With sufficient cases, therefore, such quantitative analysis can reveal significant messages, such as regional diversity in people's interest in Buddhism, the places and masters that were considered by contemporaries to be suitable for visit,<sup>8</sup> and to what extent a place was attractive for a monk to stay for his religious activities. When such examinations cover a period of one hundred years, it might become possible to display what Buddhism experienced in a given place, and the relationship between this place and occurrences in other areas. This understanding in turn requires an examination of local Buddhism in the national context.

Only a small group of eminent monks were active in the Jiajing era and only a few of them

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<sup>6</sup> As for the definitions of North China and Jiangnan in this dissertation, see footnote 48 in Chapter Three.

<sup>7</sup> A portion of this section was published as an article "The Collapse of Beijing as a Buddhist Centre: Viewed from the Activities of Eminent Monks, 1522 to 1620," *Journal of Asian History* 43.2 (2009), pp. 137-63.

<sup>8</sup> It could be controversial about when and where a monk received his dharma transmission, as this involves not only the completion of his apprenticeship but - more often than not - the choice to align himself with a specific line of Buddhism. It is not unusual to fabricate such a clan because "by means of dharma transmission, Dharma heirs gain legitimacy to succeed to the patriarchal position in an imagined family." (Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*, p.34). In such cases, I follow the conventional opinion as much as possible.

were present in the capital region during this era. To be specific, six monks sought Buddhist education in Beijing, including one Beijing native. Among the five non-Beijing monks, four came from different provinces and then stayed in the capital area. The fifth non-native Beijing monk came from the Jiangnan region and eventually returned home. For contrast, in the Jiangnan region three monks came from nearby areas and four were native.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, roughly speaking in this period Beijing was able to attract more monks from other areas, while local monks in the Jiangnan region were generally more interested in remaining in their locality.

Hanshan Deqing may agree with this observation. He once said in a comment,

Since [the court was] moved northward [from Nanjing to Beijing], the Chan school has fallen in obscurity, while the doctrinal schools alone have concentrated on the capital. In the Jiangnan region, the way of Dharma fell into decay gradually so that it was no longer known to anybody. By the Zhengde and Jiajing transition, even in the [Buddhist] lecturing altar of North China, there were only two great masters (*dalao* 大老) of Tong<sup>10</sup> and Tai.<sup>11</sup> They occupied the magnificent seat in the capital [to preach the Buddhist teaching], and learners congregated there from all over the country. 自北遷之後，而禪道不彰。獨講演一宗，集於大都。而江南法道，日漸靡無聞焉。正、嘉之際，北方講席，亦唯通、泰二大老，踞華座於京師，海內學者畢集。<sup>12</sup>

This paragraph reveals regional differences in the religious choice between North China and South China.<sup>13</sup> More importantly, it shows a shift of the Buddhist centre from Jiangnan to Beijing

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<sup>9</sup> Noticeably, three of them were recorded owing to their efforts to protect monasteries from being appropriated by the local powerful or plundered by Japanese pirates.

<sup>10</sup> Master Tong once lived in Tianning 天寧 monastery in Beijing. A 1546 memorial claimed that he attracted over ten thousands of participants when preaching Buddhist teachings and imparting the precepts. Although this description appears to have been an exaggeration, Jiajing ordered his arrest out of the security concern.

<sup>11</sup> Like many of his contemporaries, nothing is known about Master Tai. Such lack of knowledge about masters of their importance demonstrates the decline of Buddhism of that period.

<sup>12</sup> *HSMY* 30, p. 639b.

<sup>13</sup> For the popularity of the doctrinal school in Beijing, for example, scholars have pointed out that by the Jiajing-Longqing transition period the Huayan School still remain influential which it had obtained since the Yuan dynasty. See Chen, “Ming Huayan zongpai Bianrong heshang ruyu kao.” In fact, it has long been observed that people in north China generally prefer the doctrinal school of Buddhism over the Chan School, which makes them different from those in South China. And these regional differences in the choice between the text studies over abstract speculation also take place among different schools of Confucianism and Daoism.

accompanying with the moving of the imperial capital from the former to the latter. As for the activities of eminent monks in the Wanli period and after, let us look at the following tables.

Table 7: Mobility of Monks in Beijing/North China during the Wanli and T-S periods

Pattern	Place \ Time	Wanli Period		T-S Period	
		Beijing	North China	Beijing	North China
Leave (for)	Jiangnan	9	14	2	6
	Other places	2	2	1	1
Stay (from)	Native	5	7	0	0
	Jiangnan	1	1	0	0
	Other places	18	23	3	5
Share in the country		35 (34%)	47 (46%)	6 (8%)	12 (17%)

Table 8: Mobility of Jiangnan Monks during the Wanli and T-S periods

Pattern	Time	Wanli Period	T-S Period
Leave (for)	Beijing	1	1
	Elsewhere	2	3
Stay (from)	Native	26	19
	Beijing	1	2
	Elsewhere	12	16
Share in the country		42 (41%)	41 (57%)

The mobility outlined in the above two Tables displays two basic patterns: one categorizes people who travelled to a new place to learn and then left; the other categorizes those who also went to a new place to learn but never left. Those who chose to leave are further categorized into two groups according to their destinations and those who remained into three groups according to their native places. The A (B) format in the last lines of Tables 7 and 8, A refers to the number of monks in a specific category, and B shows the percentage that they accounted for in the entire country.

From Table 7, it becomes evident that, with its share of 46 percent of all eminent monks appearing in the whole country, the ability of North China in the Wanli period to attract these monks was stronger than any other region comparable by scale. In the T-S period, however, this percentage dropped dramatically to 17. This tendency applies to Beijing, whose percentage

plummeted to 8 in the T-S period from 34 in the Wanli period. Given that Beijing had a dominant position in North China in terms of Buddhism, such a phenomenon is not surprising. According to Table 8, in contrast to their running out of steam, the share of the Jiangnan region increased from 41 to 57 between these two periods, and that of other regions more than doubled.

Although Table 7 shows that eminent monks were more likely to concentrate in North China/Beijing in the Wanli period, their distribution must be unequal given that the Wanli period covers forty eight years. From Table 9, we see the number of monks active in Beijing continuously increased in the first twenty years of the Wanli period, with a peak emerging around 1590, and then continuously declined in second half of this reign. Thus, the 1580s and 1590s took more of their share in the whole Wanli period. Accordingly, during these twenty years Beijing occupied a more important position in the Buddhist network across the country. In other words, Beijing was most attractive for eminent monks in the 1580s and 1590s.

Table 9: Temporal Distribution of Eminent Monks in Beijing during the Wanli Period

Time (yr).	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	40-48	Unclear
People	5	9	7	6	6	10

In addition, Beijing/North China had the strongest influence on Buddhism across the country in the Wanli period. A monk could leave or stay in the place where he had received the Dharma transmission. Their presence as senior monks was an asset for a place because they were able to independently expand the Buddhist teachings. Thus, their staying or leaving could be readily converted to be an indicator of the influence of Buddhism in a given place.

In Table 10 below, A in the A (B) format refers to the number of a specific group in a category and B the percentage that this group occupied in the entire category. According to Table 10, 31 percent of monks who had studied in Beijing finally left for other regions, and 66 percent chose to stay behind. The percentage of monks leaving North China was a little higher. In the T-S period, half of the monks who studied in Beijing finally chose to leave. “Leaving” means the output of Buddhism and thus could be seen as a safe indicator of influence of a locality over other areas. In sharp contrast, Jiangnan’s figure in this regard was as low as 7 percent in the Wanli period, and rose slightly to 10 percent in the T-S period. Given Beijing/North China had a higher percentage

than all other areas, at least in the Wanli period, Beijing/North China had the biggest contribution to and thus influence on Buddhism at the national level.<sup>14</sup>

Table 10: Index of Eminent Monks' Influence on Different Areas

Time		Wanli Period	T-S Period
Pattern			
Influence on other places	Beijing/North China	11(31%)/ 16(34%)	3(50%)/ 7 (58%)
	Jiangnan	3 (7)	4 (10%)
Local Influence	Beijing/North China	24(69%)/ 31(66%)	3(50%)/ 5(42%)
	Jiangnan	39 (93)	37(90%)

Therefore, before the 1600s, especially in the 1580s and 1590s, Beijing/ North China were the place where eminent monks were most active and this region exerted the biggest influence on other regions in the Buddhist *samgha*. Contemporary people actually noticed this phenomenon. Tao Wangling 陶望齡 (1562-1609) pointed out that the imperial capital was “where the genuine Dharma existed” (道法所在) and where the Dharma-seeker must visit. And the Buddhist temples dotted inside and outside the capital everywhere.”<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Wang Yuanhan 王元翰 (1565-1633) described Beijing as “the sea of monks”(僧海). He observed that the number of its temples was up to one third of civilian houses in Beijing and that the donation that temples obtained was up to three-tenths of the provision for the frontier army. As a result, monks from ten directions all converged at Beijing (故十方緇流, 咸輻輳於是). In an oft-quoted paragraph, Wang Yuanhan recalled the state of Buddhism in Beijing in the 1580s and

<sup>14</sup> One might be reluctant to accept this point. In fact, a simple comparison of the frequency by which those famous Buddhist sites are mentioned in our sources might help reaffirm this point.

Place	Beijing	Mt. Wutai	Mt. Funiu	Mt. Song	Mt. E'mei	Mt. Jizu	Putuo Island	Mt. Tiantai
Time								
Wanli	43	32	16	10	11	11	13	8
T-S	15	13	5	2	3	7	3	5

Beijing and Wutai are located in North China; Funiu and Mount Song 嵩 in central China; Mounts E'mei 峨嵋 and Jizu 雞足 in southwest China; Mount Tiantai 天臺 and the Putuo 普陀 Island in south China. As this table shows, in the Wanli period, areas in North China were most frequently visited, south the least, and central as well as southwest in between. During the T-S period, a drop happened universally in all places, with those in North China suffered from the biggest loss.

<sup>15</sup> *SKHB* 58, p. 136; Tao Wangling 陶望齡, *Xiean ji* 歇庵集 (Taipei: Weiwen tushu chubanshe, 1976), pp. 31a-33a.

1590s as follows, although it includes some exaggerations.<sup>16</sup>

At that time, people seeking for the Buddhist way in the capital were as dense as a forest. The great friends included Dagan, Langmu, Hanshan, Yuechuan, Xuelang, Yin'an, Qingxu, Yu'an and others. Officials had Huang Shenxuan, Li Zhuowu, Yuan Zhonglang, Yuan Xiaoxiu, Wang Xinghai, Duan Huanran, Tao Shigui, Cai Wuyue, Tao Butui, and Li Chenzhi. They sought for common interest from each other and matched with each other like a case and its cover. 其時京師學道人如林。善知識有達觀、朗目、憨山、月川、雪浪、隱庵、清虛、愚庵諸公。宰官則有黃慎軒、李卓吾、袁中郎、袁小修、王性海、段幻然、陶石簣、蔡五嶽、陶不退、李承植諸君。聲氣相求，函蓋相合。<sup>17</sup>

In fact, Beijing/ North China were almost a unanimous site for Dharma-seekers in the first half of the Wanli period, particularly for those who would play the most important roles in the Buddhist revival. Roughly beginning with the final years of the Jiajing period, monks resumed their tradition of travelling everywhere to seek instruction. A typical route of the time was from their hometowns to Beijing, to Mount Wutai, and to Mount Funiu 伏牛 and Mount Song 嵩. The frequency of visiting Beijing is much higher than other areas, as evidenced by a fact that almost all important monks who completed their apprenticeship before 1600s shared a trip to Beijing for further instruction, such as Deqing, Zibo Zhenke, Yunqi Zhuhong, Xuelang Hong'en, and Daqian Changrun.<sup>18</sup>

## 7.2 Fluctuations in the Buddhist Infrastructure

In addition to the activities of monks, the construction of temples is another important

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<sup>16</sup> Some of them did not appear in the capital at the same time. For example, Deqing had been exiled to Guangdong before Li Zhi arrived in Beijing. Meanwhile, Xuelang visited Beijing only for a short period of time in the early 1580s.

<sup>17</sup> Wang Yuanhan 王元翰, *Ning cui ji* 凝翠集 (in *Congshu jicheng xubian* 叢書集成續編 [Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1994], vol.117), p. 201. To observe the flourish of Beijing Buddhism in the Wanli era, for example, see a monk's life of six years described in *Xing xu gaoseng zhuan*, p. 1147.

<sup>18</sup> There were several key monks who attracted Dharma-seekers to Beijing during this period. For the doctrinal tradition, Dharma masters Song 松 and Xiu 秀 magnetized many young people. For the Chan tradition, it was Bianrong Zhenyuan and Xiaoyan Debao 笑岩德寶 (1512-1581). In fact, almost all of these monks mentioned here once sought instruction from Bianrong and Xiaoyan.

indicator of the state of Buddhism at any given time.<sup>19</sup> Here I look at the fluctuations in temple building during the Jiajing-Wanli era and draw on evidence provided primarily by local gazetteers.<sup>20</sup> In addition, given that the Jiangnan region which was not a singular administrative unit in the Ming dynasty lacked a unified record about Buddhist temples, I will examine the general development of Buddhism in this region through studying its smaller parts including: Suzhou, Songjiang, and Hangzhou. The reason for this choice is because taken together, these three prefectural cores were the most important Buddhist centers in the Jiangnan Region.

I roughly group these Buddhist structures into the two categories of temples and chapels, with the first including those called *si* 寺 (monastery), *miao* 廟 (temple), *chang* 廠 (plant) and *lin* 林 (forest) and the second those *an* 菴/庵 (chapel), *yuan* 院 (yard) and *ta* 塔 (stupa). Although there were no strict distinctions between the two, a temple in the Ming dynasty usually had a name tablet conferring legitimate status whereas a chapel did not. Also temples were bigger in scale and generally older in pedigree than chapels. Moreover, many chapels in the Jiangnan region were built exclusively to practice meditation.<sup>21</sup> And a chapel had a higher chance of housing nuns than a temple. Therefore, differentiation between these two categories of Buddhist structures is significant in political, economic, religious and social terms.

Table 11 below calculates all recorded Buddhist building, rebuilding, repair and renovation projects that took place during the period under discussion. For temples that experienced more than one construction project each of these projects has been counted individually. Data concerning the Tianqi-Chongzhen period herein is used only for comparison and it will not be analyzed in any detail. Some observations could be made on the basis of Table 11.

A) Generally speaking, temple building in the Beijing area was decreasingly active starting in the Jiajing era into the Longqing and Wanli eras and ended with a drastic fall in the Tianqi-Chongzhen period.

B) Specifically, in the Jiajing era, there was a decrease in building in the second decade following the first ten years of his reign. This tendency was reversed in the third decade and then increased throughout the later half the Jiajing period. The Longqing era did not change this rising trend. In the first decade of the Wanli era, the yearly average of temple construction

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<sup>19</sup> For previous study in this field, see Eberhard Wolfram, "Temple Building Activities in Medieval and Modern China," *Monumenta Serica*, no. 23 (1964), pp. 264-318.

<sup>20</sup> Given that the gauge that the authors of gazetteers recorded the temples were very different, I will not simply compare the number of the (re)built or destroyed temples but compare the general tendency that the temple building experienced in different regions over time. Cf. Chen, "Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū," pp. 149-161.

<sup>21</sup> For the sudden appearance of chapels in the Jiangnan region, see *Songjiang fuzhi* (1631) 51, p. 1353.



reached its highest point during the one hundred and twenty three years under question. This figure decreased a little bit in the second decade but dropped by half in the third decade. There was a slight increase in the fourth decade, which was followed by an even bigger drop. Finally, we see the lowest figure in the last twenty years of the Ming dynasty.

C) If excluding the projects whose start and end dates are unknown, we can roughly say that temple building was the most active in the Beijing area during the forty two years from Jiajing 30 (1551) to Wanli 20 (1592), with an yearly average of 3.45, but least active in the forty two years from Wanli 31 (1603) to Chongzhen 17 (1644), with an yearly average of 1.31.

Table 11: Temple Construction Projects in the Beijing Area

Type Building Year		Temples	Chapels	Total	Yearly Average
Jiajing (1522–1566)	1-10	14	11	25	
	11-20	9	6	15	
	21-30	14	8	22	
	31-40	17	20	37	
	41-45	11	9	20	
	Unclear	14	15	29	
Sub-total	45	79	69	148	3.29
Longqing (1567–1572)	1-6	12	6	18	3
Wanli (1573–1620)	1-10	27	15	42	
	11-20	17	11	28	
	21-30	11	3	14	
	31-40	14	6	20	
	41-48	7	5	12	
	Unclear	18	4	22	
Sub-total	48	94	44	138	2.88
T-C (1621-1644)	Tanqi 1-7	5	0	5	
	Chongzhen 1-17	13	5	18	
Subtotal	24	18	5	23	0.92
Total	123	203	124	327	2.66

Now, let us turn to the Jiangnan region by taking Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Songjiang prefectures as the sample. Like Table 11, Table 12, 13 and 14 below group the building projects

into two categories of temples and chapels. Unlike the former, however, these three Tables include a unique “destroyed” column, which is designed to record three kinds of destroyed temples, *hui* 毀 (destroyed), *zhan* 占 (occupied), and *gai* 改 (converted). The temples included in the “destroyed” category were damaged in wars against Japanese pirates and some in fires. “Occupied” temples are those which were taken over by powerful families or local officials. “Converted” temples are those which were changed by local officials into public places such as schools and headquarters for armies. To evaluate how active temple building was in a given period, these “destroyed” buildings are detached from the overall building statistic.

Table 12: Temple Construction Projects in Hangzhou Prefecture <sup>22</sup>

Type Building year		Temples	Chapels	Destroyed	Total	Yearly Average
Jiajing (1522–1566)	1-10	0	2			
	11-20	2	0			
	21-30	0	0			
	31-40	2	1			
	41-45	1	0			
	Unclear	7	3			
Sub-total	45	12	6	-11	18 (-11)	0.16
Longqing (1567–1572)	1-6	2	5	0	7	1.17
Wanli (1573–1620)	1-10	0	0			
	11-20	0	1			
	21-30	5	5			
	31-40	6	3			
	41-48	4	3			
	Unclear	27	48			
Sub-total	48	42	60	0	102	2.13
Tianqi-Chongzhen (1621-1644)	Tanqi 1-7	1	9	-1		
	Chongzhen 1-17	10	22	-6		
Sub-total	24	11	31	-7	42(-7)	1.46
Total	123	67	102	-18	169 (-18)	1.23

<sup>22</sup> The data source of this Table is based on *Hangzhou fu zhi* 杭州府志 (1764) (in *Zhongguo Mingshu Zhi* 中國民俗志 [Taipei: Dongfang wenhua gongyin she, 1970]), j.28-32.

Table 13: Temple Construction Projects in Suzhou Prefecture <sup>23</sup>

Type Building Year		Temples	Chapels	Destroyed	Total	Yearly Average
Jiajing (1522–1566)	1-10	2				
	11-20	0				
	21-30	1				
	31-40	3	1			
	41-45	1				
	Unclear	9	6			
Sub-total	45	16	7	-13	23 (-13)	0.22
Longqing (1567–1572)	1-6	5	2	0	7	1.17
Wanli (1573–1620)	1-10	6	3			
	11-20	11	4			
	21-30	5	4			
	31-40	7	14			
	41-48	7	2			
	Unclear	14	24			
Sub-total	48	50	51	-3	101 (-3)	2.04
Tianqi-Chongzhen (1621-1644)	Tanqi1-7	7	14	0		
	Chongzhen 1-17	23	32	1		
Sub-total	24	30	46	-1	76 (-1)	3.17
Total	123	101	106	-17	207 (-17)	1.54

Table 14: Temple Construction Projects in Songjiang Prefecture <sup>24</sup>

Type Building Year		Temples	Chapels	Destroyed	Total	Yearly Average
Jiajing (1522–1566)	1-10					
	11-20	1	1			
	21-30					
	31-40					
	41-45	1	1			
	Unclear		3			
Sub-total	45	2	5	-11	7 (-11)	0

<sup>23</sup> This data source of this Table is based on *Suzhou fuzhi* (1693), j. 38-40.

<sup>24</sup> This Table is made on the basis of *Songjiang fuzhi* (1631) (Rpt. Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe), j. 50-52.

Building Year	Type	Temples	Chapels	Destroyed	Total	Yearly Average
Longqing (1567–1572)	1-6	1	2		3	0.5
Wanli (1573–1620)	1-10		6			
	11-20	1	3			
	21-30	1	2			
	31-40	3	3			
	41-48	1	4			
	Unclear	10	10	-1		
Sub-total	48	16	28	-1	44(-1)	0.9
Tianqi-Chongzhen (1621-1644)	Tianqi 1-7	0	11	0		
	Chongzhen 1-17	0	5	0		
Sub-total	24	0	16	0	16	0.67
Total	123	19	51	-12	70 (-12)	0.47

Based on these three Tables, we can make some observations about temple building in Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Songjiang prefectures:

A) Generally speaking, there was a clear and increasingly upward tendency from the Jiajing era to the Longqing and Wanli eras, which was followed by a drop in the Tianqi-Chongzhen period. In terms of the yearly average, the Longqing era was seven times that of the Jiajing era, and this was doubled in the Wanli era; however, this was followed by a drop of about 30 percent in the Tianqi-Chongzhen period. Temple building activities in Suzhou experienced a similar pattern, with an exception that there was increase of about 50 percent from the Wanli era to the Tianqi-Chongzhen period. In this regard, the experience of Songjiang Prefecture was more like that of Hangzhou.

B) In the Jiajing era, temple building activities were almost negligible in the Hangzhou area, and so too in the Suzhou area. Songjiang was not an exception in this respect. In fact, because of the great loss in the wars against Japanese pirates, destroyed temples even outnumbered those newly built by 4 in that area. In the Wanli era, roughly starting from Wanli 20 (1592), there was a jump upwards and then this increasing tendency remained until the end of Chongzhen era. Suzhou and Songjiang display a similar pattern, but in Songjiang the rise ceased earlier by the end of the Tianqi era.

C) If we take these three prefectures together into consideration, it is clear that temple building was becoming more active to a moderate degree in the first three decades of the Wanli era. Then a sudden increase happened in the fourth decade. And this upward tendency continued

until the end of this dynasty, with a yearly average of 5.58 in the Tianqi-Chongzhen period.

### 7.3 The Mobility of Monks, Temple Building, and Contemporary Politics

Taking the activities of eminent monks and the temple building together into consideration, it is easy to find that the trajectory that Buddhism experienced in North China/Beijing during the Jiajing-Wanli period looks like an n. That is, it was least active in the first two decades of the Jiajing era but then grew gradually more dynamic in the third decade. Then the building/renovation of temples increased rapidly in this area, but an obvious growth in the eminent monks did not appear until ten years later. Nevertheless, generally speaking, from the fourth decade of the Jiajing era to the first twenty years of the Wanli era, there was a rising tide of building and renovating temples, with its peak appearing about 1590. A drastic fall took place around the 1600s, then a slight increase followed, and finally a fall continued until the end of this dynasty.

Against the political context discussed in the first three chapters, we can see how the state of Buddhism in North China/ Beijing fluctuated in accordance with the political situation of its major patrons – the imperial family and eunuchs. For these people, contemporary politics changed not only their attitudes towards Buddhism but their ability to influence its institutions. The first half of the Jiajing period was characterized by the success of Emperor Jiajing in gradually freeing himself from the grip of his ministers and in patronizing Daoism at the cost of Buddhism. Meanwhile, with this increase in his own personal authority, his reign placed stricter controls on eunuchs and the imperial family. Accordingly, the state of Buddhism deteriorated in this period. As for the resurgence of Buddhism beginning with the third decade of this era, it coincides with Jiajing's retreat from the court to the Western Garden. This rising wave continued until the first twenty years of the Wanli era when Cisheng, with tremendous support from eunuchs and other imperial members, was able to lavish support on Buddhism, although she had to adjust her ways to support Buddhism after the death of Zhang Juzheng and the exile of Feng Bao. That the state of Buddhism in Beijing rapidly grew worse in the third decade is highly revealing in that, due to problems with the successor, a negative relationship developed between the emperor and his officials and mother. Soon after, however, there was a slight thaw in the political climate which was reflected in the state of Buddhism at the time.

In addition, changes in chapel building also reflect the political climate. In the building and renovation of chapels in North China/ Beijing, the Jiajing era was most active but the Wanli era

the least, with the Longqing period in between, which thus shows a general downward trajectory. To be specific, only a few chapels were built in the first half of Jiajing era, but the situation changed dramatically in the second half of the period when it grew to reach its highest point. This upward tendency was reversed in the Wanli era, gradually falling from the first ten years to the minimum yearly average by its last decade. If we consider Jiajing's harsh treatment of Buddhism, it is not surprising to find that only a few chapels were built in the Beijing region from 1522 to 1544. In fact, Jiajing ordered officials to destroy over six hundred chapels. Therefore, the rapid appearance of chapel building in the rest of this period was actually a compromise where Buddhists tried to compensate for their losses but also sought to avoid attracting too much official attention. This was not the case in the Wanli era, however. In the first decade of the Wanli era there was thus a decrease in chapel building, which forms a sharp contrast with an increase in temple building of the age.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast, represented by Suzhou, Hangzhou and Songjiang, Buddhism in the Jiangnan region evolved at the pace of scholar-officials, its major patrons, who acted under the enormous influence of politics. Echoing the emperor's discrimination against Buddhism, during the entire Jiajing period the *samgha* not only did receive little attention but it was also preyed upon by powerful clans, local officials, and Japanese pirates. Comparatively more support was given to Buddhism in the Longqing and early Wanli years, but the first two decades of the Wanli era was in nature a "thaw" period in which Buddhism began to recover its conventional ties with society. A palpable increase in both temple building activities and the frequency of the appearance of eminent monks in this area happened around Wanli 30 (1602). This phenomenon had much to do with the intense court factionalism of the time which poisoned not only the relationship between the emperor and officials but also the relationship between officials. This sinister situation dampened scholar-official's political enthusiasm and forced them to turn from the central government back to their local societies. Accordingly, as the social and political conditions deteriorated even more, more Buddhist temples and chapels were increasingly built and renovated in this area.

So far it has become clear that the pattern that Buddhism experienced in Beijing/ North China was very different from that in Jiangnan. First, during the last twenty years of the Jiajing

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<sup>25</sup> A possible explanation for this decrease is that eunuchs had changed the way they supported the Buddhist institution by cooperating with Cisheng. In fact, eunuchs who participated in Cisheng's projects were as many as one thousand or so. Since eunuchs were an important patron group to chapels, their participation in Cisheng's projects must have drained much of their resources.

era when temple building was quite active in Beijing, very little was invested into such activities in the Jiangnan region. Secondly, during the first two decades of the Wanli era when temple building reached its highest point in Beijing, Jiangnan was only beginning to warm up. Thirdly, around the 1590s when the number of temple building began to decrease in Beijing, patronage patterns increased in Jiangnan and so too did temple building. Finally, as a result of these opposite trends, by the Chongzhen era, the least active temple-building appeared in Beijing whereas the most active in Jiangnan. In other words, Jiangnan was about twenty years behind in starting the campaign for temple building when compared with Beijing; however, it eventually got an upper hand over Beijing around 1600 and then continued its dominance for the rest of the Ming period. In these regional differences, one key question arises: was the appearance of these regional differences independent events, or were they created by internal relations between them?

#### 7.4 A shift from Beijing/ North China to Jiangnan

To examine the possible interrelation between Buddhism in Beijing/North China, and Jiangnan, let us come back to Table 10. This table shows that the percentage of monks who chose to stay in Beijing/North China dropped from 69/ 66 percent in the Wanli period to 50/ 42 in the T-S period. During the same period in the Jiangnan region, this figure was slightly down from 93 to 90. This sharp contrast between the two regions is revealing, as it discloses that the accumulation in terms of Buddhism was processing at a much higher pace in Jiangnan than in Beijing/North China in both the Wanli and T-S periods. In addition, a majority - 82/ 88 percent in the Wanli period and 67/ 86 percent in the T-S period - of those monks leaving Beijing/North China finally headed to Jiangnan. The gap between the two regions was small even when Buddhism in Beijing was in its golden age. Suppose such a different rate of accumulation kept apace, it would only be a matter of time before the Beijing/North China region was eclipsed by Jiangnan region.

More importantly, such a low involvement of local people in Buddhism in Beijing/North China has been substantiated by evidence in Table 15 below, which is made based on Table 7. A in the A (B) format in this table refers to the total of native eminent monks and B the percentage they account for in the special category. According to Table 15, the percentage of monks who were educated and stayed in their hometowns dropped from 14/15 to 0/0 in Beijing/North China and from 62 to 46 in Jiangnan, in the Wanli and T-S periods. The significance of this result is twofold.

First, it clearly shows that local people in Beijing/North China had much less interest in Buddhism than their counterparts in the Jiangnan region and that Buddhism had a much weaker local basis in Beijing/ North China than Jiangnan; this gap further widened from the Wanli to T-S periods. Secondly, Buddhism in Beijing/North China expanded at a speed less than one fifth that of Jiangnan in the Wanli period. Shen Bang 沈榜 (1540-1597), a magistrate of Wanping 宛平 county of Beijing in the 1590s, reaffirmed this low level of local involvement and influences. He said that under his jurisdiction thousands of monks and Daoists were housed in over five hundred and seventy Buddhist monasteries and Daoist temples, but points out indigenous people were so reluctant to participate in them that their number was less than ten.<sup>26</sup>

Table 15: Native Eminent Monks in Different Periods and Places

Place \ Time	Wanli Period	T-S Period
Beijing/North China (%)	5 (14%)/ 7 (15%)	0/0
Jiangnan (%)	26 (62%)	19(46%)

Therefore, Table 15 shows that the attractiveness of Jiangnan to non-native eminent monks increased from the Wanli period to the T-S period, but native monks still occupied nearly half of the eminent monks present there. In sharp contrast to the Jiangnan region, Buddhism in Beijing was essentially a community of non-native people in the sense that it had little success in getting the local people involved; moreover, its flourishing depended on a huge and continuous input from other regions. In other words, Beijing had a unique position in the network of Buddhism across the country: it was an education centre to discipline newcomers and then to send out its successful graduates. Every year, lots of fresh Dharma-seekers, along with more mature followers, went to Beijing, established contacts with each other, and honed their skills. After either a short or long period of time, one-third to half of them chose to leave, thereby expanding the influence of Beijing's Buddhism in the realm-wide arena and bringing Beijing to the attention of new novices. The rest who did not leave stayed behind and often served as guides for new visitors. This circle continued year after year and guaranteed that there were always quite a few monks active in the capital. However, unlike the situation in Jiangnan, local society in Beijing never participated in Buddhist enterprises in a significant way. With the exception of eunuchs, Beijing locals grudging

<sup>26</sup> Shen Bang, *Wanshu zhaji* 宛署雜記 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1980), p. 237.



patronizing Buddhism and were not loyal to the community. Therefore, a huge and continuous flow of realm-wide input was crucial for Beijing as this Buddhist centre; without such input, the collapse of Beijing's role as the major Buddhist centre could be expected.

Of course, not all monks came to Beijing for the Dharma. After pointing out Beijing was “where the genuine Dharma existed”, for example, Tao Wangling revealed that “[monks] inherited the Dharma in the past but the wealth now.” (古嗣法, 今嗣貲).<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Wan Yuanhan also pointed out that there were three different purposes for monks visiting Beijing: the best for the Dharma of masters, the worst for money of high ranking officials, and the middle for essays of famous literati.<sup>28</sup>

No matter why those monks visited Beijing, unfortunately for Beijing's Buddhism, however, this input of monks was sensitive to the political climate. This fragility became even worse due to some eminent monk's active involvement in politics. Therefore, as court strife and factional conflict among officials intensified sharply by the turn of the seventeenth century, this area became increasingly dangerous for Buddhist monks, causing a rapid decline of Buddhist monks in the capital starting around 1600.

Hanshan Deqing's exile in 1595 was a signal of such deteriorated political surroundings in Beijing, but it seems that the implication of his exile was rarely understood by his contemporaries. Not only did Hanshan Deqing maintain a close connection with Cisheng, but he also prayed for benefits for the candidate of the crown prince competing against the prince favoured by Wanli. Increasingly desperate in the combat against his mother and officials, the exasperated emperor thus arrested Deqing and threw him into prison almost immediately after he had become Cisheng's master. As one of the top monks of the period, Deqing's arrest must have sent a huge shock to the *sangha*, but it seemed that few monks understood the political significance behind this occurrence correctly. Hence, monks continued heading to the capital, although to a lesser extent. Yet, while monks continued to relocate to Beijing, new monastery construction projects plummeted in Beijing almost exactly after 1595. Given that most of such projects were sponsored by eunuchs and members of the royal family that were closest to the political arena, as discussed in Chapter Four, the sensitiveness of these people to politics is understandable. By contrast, since most eminent monks active in Beijing came from areas outside the capital and lacked direct ties with the inner court, their slowness in understanding the political climate was unavoidable. As a result, more monks came to Beijing but soon found themselves in much trouble.

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<sup>27</sup> *SKHB*, vol.58, p.136; Tao, *Xiean ji*, pp. 31a-33a.

<sup>28</sup> See Chen, “Ming Huayan zongpai Bianrong heshang ruyu kao.”

What followed were the suicides of Li Zhi in 1602 and Zibo Zhenke in 1603, who were respected by contemporaries as the “two great patriarchs” (*liang da jiaozhu* 兩大教主). Like Deqing, Zhenke also had various ties with the inner court. Although these relations helped advance his personal success and religious undertakings, they also contributed to his being arrested and afflicted in prison. Unlike Deqing’s case, which simply concerned the mother-son conflict in the Wanli court, these two cases became much more complicated because they both were unintentionally involved in larger factionalisms among court officials.<sup>29</sup> A cleavage within these officials initially emerged the early 1580s when the emperor tried to wash away Zhang Juzheng’s influence. This cleavage grew worse due to Wanli’s negligence in administration. By the turn of the seventeenth century, such factionalism was rife with not only plots but also death. On the part of monks, no matter how powerful they might have become, they were the least likely to control the situation. Thus, by this time Beijing was much more politically dangerous than in previous eras. Both attracting a large number of followers, Li Zhi and Zhenke were most influential in Jiangnan. Accordingly, their deaths must have delivered the most serious warning to the *samgha*, particularly those in the Jiangnan region.<sup>30</sup>

Noticeably, alarms warning against the perils in the capital found their way to most of the major Buddhist sites across the country. For example, in Hangzhou, Jieshan Furu was found implicated in Zhenke’s case and taken to the capital for interrogation. In fact, although keeping in good terms with Zhenke, Furu had already returned home from Beijing when he was arrested. Hangzhou was central to Jiangnan and channelled a high percentage of monks to Beijing. Obviously, this incident must have been a strong reminder for Jiangnan-based monks about how perilous the capital was and thus discouraged them from going there. In addition, E’mei Mountain, another important area channelling monks to Beijing, saw a mysterious death of Master Wuqiong Zhenfa 無窮真法 (1537-1603), who was invited by Cisheng to Beijing.<sup>31</sup> In Henan Province’s

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<sup>29</sup> *WLYH* 27, pp.1819-1821.

<sup>30</sup> For example, Feng Mengzhen maintained good terms with both Deqing and Zhenke. However, he only referred to Deqing’s exile once in his writing, in contrast to Zhenke’s death, which he mentioned repeatedly. This should not be simply explained away by the severe nature of a death penalty compared with exile, but also because he recognized that Zhenke’s case was invented by eunuchs who “wanted to implicate good people and shift misfortune to the gentry.” See *KXT* 44, p. 9a; 60, pp. 2a, 3a-b.

<sup>31</sup> See Long Xianzhao 龍顯昭, *Bashu fojiao beiwen jicheng* 巴蜀佛教碑文集成 (Chengdu: Bashu chubanshe, 2004), pp. 459-60.

Shaolin Monastery, Abbot Wuyan Zhengdao 無言正道 (?-1609) was also invited by Cisheng to the capital, but this visit ended with several months of his life spent behind bars.<sup>32</sup>

Together the death, exile, and arrest of these influential monks marked the turn of the seventeenth century. Panic in Beijing's Buddhist circles reached such a high point that this might be one of the most perilous times for Ming monks since the Hongwu period. Eminent monks declared that Beijing was no longer a place suitable for studying and preaching the Buddhist teachings and declared all to stay away unless they wanted trouble. By 1600 the effects of this driving away campaign became evident. To make this point more clear, let us take a look at the response of the eminent monks most central to these political changes:

According to Table 16 below, the percentage of eminent monks who chose to leave Beijing was 24 in the first thirty years of the Wanli period, then up to 42 in the remaining years of this reign, and finally up to 64 in the T-S period. These changes are consistent with fluctuations in the political climate of the age, and demonstrate that Beijing had lost its attractiveness to monks very quickly around the 1600s.

Table 16: Beijing as a Choice: To Stay or To Leave?

Choice Time		To Stay	To Leave	Unclear	Total
Wanli	1-29	14	5	2	21
	30-48	7	5	0	12
	Unclear	4	3	3	10
T-S Period		4	9	1	14

This crisis was also noticed by contemporaries. Deqing recalled that “Since the disaster (i.e. Zhenke's death in prison) befell to the Dharma, the Beijing *sangha* was shocked and all monks felt like they were in an all around perilous situation. Even though those who have been respected as masters, they all escaped like frightened fish and birds.” (自法門一變，京師叢林震驚，人人自危。即素稱師匠者，皆鳥驚魚散).<sup>33</sup> When Yuan Hongdao came back to Beijing in 1606 and recalled what he had experienced in the 1590s, he could not help but lament, “I return

<sup>32</sup> Fu Mei 傅梅 (?-1643), *Song shu* 嵩書, in *Song yue wenxian congkan* 嵩嶽文獻叢刊 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 2003), pp. 555-557.

<sup>33</sup> *HSMY* 30, pp. 645a-b.

to the capital only to find that the ash in the teaching altar of Buddhism was cold.”<sup>34</sup>

Just as the input of monks dropped sharply, so too did the status of Beijing as the dynasty's preeminent Buddhist centre. Moreover, Buddhist patronage from eunuchs and the imperial family dropped drastically as well around 1600.<sup>35</sup> It is worth noting that all of this happened within a direct reach of Cisheng. Wanli had reasons to curb Buddhism, but this extreme end might not have been what he originally planned. Nonetheless, in the remaining years of the Ming Beijing's Buddhism never had a chance to recover from this crisis, and the religious vacuum left by Buddhism's absence was quickly occupied by folk religion. The various folk religions of the age were a syncretism of Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism and promised imminent salvage from the miserable age.<sup>36</sup> With the increasing deterioration in the political, economic, and social situations, such promise became irresistible to most people, including the imperial family and eunuchs.<sup>37</sup>

After the early 1600s when Beijing lost its status as the realm's preeminent Buddhist center, the monks who would have headed to the capital now increasingly went to the Jiangnan region. At the same time, by the 1600s, more and more scholar-officials who had been frustrated with the political reality in the capital returned to or went to Jiangnan. In Wang Yuanhan's description of the flourishing of Buddhism among scholar-officials which we cited above, it should be noted that this picture roughly takes the 1600s as the bottom line of time. In other words, the text's silence on the post-1600 situation in the capital suggests that the type of active and vibrant community in Beijing described by Wang Yuanhan simply did not exist anymore. When these monks and scholar-officials died or left Beijing for various reasons, the flourishing of Buddhism in the capital ceased. In contrast, with the confluence of monks and scholar-officials in Jiangnan since about 1600, more and more monks flooded to this region more and more temples and chapels were built and repaired. In this sense, the rise of Buddhism in the Jiangnan region was

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<sup>34</sup> Yuan Hongdao, *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, p. 1561. Yuan was by no means the only one who observed such kind of change.

<sup>35</sup> Brook notices a shift that happened in Beijing's intellectual circle from tolerating or even appreciating Buddhism to criticizing it by the turn of the seventeenth century. See his *Praying for power*, p. 76. However, it appears to me that to some degree this shift was a result of the varied political climate.

<sup>36</sup> In recent years many books have come out about folk religions in North China. See, for example, Hubert Seiwert (in collaboration with Ma Xisha 馬西沙), *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), Asai Motoi 浅井紀, *Min Shin jidai minkan shūkyō kessha no kenkyū* 明清時代民間宗教結社の研究 (Tōkyō: Kenbun Shuppan, 1990), Noguchi, “Min Shin jidai no jakyō kessha to minshū” 明清時代の「邪教」結社と民衆, *Shichō* 史潮 (1985), pp. 48-62.

<sup>37</sup> Folk religion did not emerge suddenly at that time. At a much earlier time, eunuchs and the imperial family, including Cisheng and Wanli, had been involved in popular religion to a relatively moderate degree.

based on its decline in Beijing/ North China, which suggests that Buddhism in these two areas were integral parts in a bigger system at the national level.

However, crises were also behind the resurrection of Buddhism in Jiangnan. Chapel building and temple building in Jiangnan increased at different paces over the Jiajing-Wanli period. Eventually, the amount of (re)built chapels was equal to that of (re)built temples in Suzhou, twice in Hangzhou, and trice in Songjiang. Unlike this political significance behind the rapid appearance of chapels in Beijing in the latter half of the Jiajing era, this phenomenon was significant in Jiangnan for other reasons. Religiously, it reflects the dominance of Chan Buddhism over doctrinal Buddhism. Economically, although Jiangnan temples were desperate for support after having survived the Jiajing period, they did not get sufficient support because a high percentage of patronage in chapel building consumed many resources. Sociologically, the patrons, a large portion of which were scholar-officials, became more eager to intervene in the inner management of chapels than that of temples by taking advantage of the increasing dependence of the *sangha* on them.

### 7.5 Concluding Remarks

Although there are limitations in using such quantitative analysis in the study of history, the tables presented in this chapter clearly demonstrate that the growth of Buddhism during the mid and late Ming periods was very unbalanced in both the temporal and geographic sense. Beijing/ North China and the Jiangnan region were the two most important Buddhist centers of the age. The trajectory of the development of Buddhism was N-shaped in the Beijing/North China but /-shaped in Jiangnan. Buddhism was in decline in both of these areas in the first three decades of the Jiajing era. However, Buddhism flourished in the capital about 20 years earlier than it would in Jiangnan. When Beijing began to decline as a Buddhist centre in the early 1600s, the Jiangnan region picked up this slack and emerged as the realm's preeminent Buddhist centre, which would remain until the end of the dynasty.

The reason why Buddhism developed in different ways in Beijing/ North China and Jiangnan had much to do with its major patrons who were in different positions in the political power structures of the time and thus had distinct cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and agenda: in Beijing/ North China, eunuchs and the imperial family seldom preyed on Buddhism, but they were also extremely sensitive to political changes, which meant that their support of Buddhism was likely to be somewhat fickle. We see such an approach in the rapid growth

followed by a quick decline of Buddhism in the capital. In contrast, with the increase in economic and political independence of Jiangnan scholar-officials from the central government since the sixteenth century, they were able to act more independently and lesser sensitively to political changes in the imperial court. Their traditional connection with Buddhism had been seriously weakened since the early Ming. In addition, with the rapid growth of clans in this area, local people had strong interests in and the ability to encroach on the *sangha*. As a result, they did much harm to the Buddhist society in the Jiajing era and needed more time to find enthusiasm for Buddhism again. But when they finally did embrace it, their support was much more solid and consistent.

The modes of growth in these two regions were very different. Even in the most flourishing period from the 1560s to 1590s, Buddhism in Beijing/ North China was less successful in engaging local elites. Its boom was fundamentally based on continuous and large-scale inflow of monks from areas outside the capital region and resources from the inner court. In contrast, Buddhism in the Jiangnan area mainly depended on local society and involved local elites in its development much more deeply. As a result, around the 1600s when Beijing/North China became a horrific site for monks, scared monks from over the country headed for Jiangnan. At the same time, with an increasing exacerbation in the political surroundings, more and more scholar-officials, a big portion of them produced in Jiangnan, turned their attention from the imperial capital to local society and from Confucianism to Buddhism.

Two major points demonstrate the interrelation of Buddhism not only in these two areas but across the whole Ming realm: first, a large number of monks flowed into Beijing/ North China from all over the country, especially Jiangnan, during the period from the final years of the Jiajing era to the twenty years of the Wanli era. The more generous the patrons were, the more monks attracted to the capital were. Accordingly, more monks were educated in Beijing and as they left to other areas, Beijing's influence spread across the realm. Second, when more and more monks left Beijing/North China around the 1600s, most of them were not aimless but took Jiangnan as their destination. This exodus, together with scholar-officials' turning back to court, an act which happened almost at the same time, made Beijing quickly lose its advantage in terms of Buddhism to Jiangnan, and thus paved the path for the second wave of the Ming Buddhist revival twenty years later in the form of Chan Buddhism

## Conclusion

Let us come back to the story about the Great Baoen monastery cited at the beginning of this dissertation. Based on studies I have made, it seems safe to argue that the history of this monastery is not an isolated case but reflects a general fate of the Buddhist community, especially in the Jiangnan region, in the Ming and Qing periods. The decline of this monastery in the middle Ming was largely a result of the Buddhism-related policy that had been established and enforced since the early Ming. Jiajing's religious discrimination against Buddhism made the situation worse, leaving this monastery even more vulnerable to external influence. To solve the problem facing the monastery, Deqing's plan to secure assistance from the inner court was both right and wrong. He was right because he recognized that it was almost impossible to restore so big a monastery without the royal support, as was later confirmed by its history in the early Qing. He was wrong because he probably did not fully recognize the difficulty of securing substantial imperial patronage after the early Ming period. More importantly, his involvement in court strife, whether intentional or not, made the failure of his plan inevitable.

To be specific, Hongwu had reconstructed the structure of state power and prohibited any changes to it. This reform put the absolute power in the hands of a ruler at the cost of his subjects. Later, in reality a tripod of power consisting of emperor, eunuchs, and court officials gradually took shape at court. But this system was fragile, given that it led the absolute power of the sovereign to be shared by the other two, a situation which lacked a "constitutional" basis. Moreover, this discrepancy between reality and the original design left the three parties in constant tension throughout the Ming. During the Jiajing and Wanli periods, this strain appeared most acutely in the form of the "Grand Debate on Rituals" and controversies over choosing the crown prince, both of which lasted for dozens of years and involved violent strife. Alliances, splits, betrayal, and attacks between the royal family, eunuchs, and officials occurred uninterruptedly. Except for brief interludes, Beijing in the last three decade of the Wanli era was governed by a climate of anger and animosity, a tribalism pitting faction against faction that some traced back to the days of the impeachment of Zhang Juzheng. On the surface emperors would usually obtain the upper hand, but in practice there were no real winners. All involved were damaged. The political milieu at court was plagued, and its pernicious influence infected

society as a whole. As a result, the emperor receded from public service to the inner court, scholar-officials turned their back on the state and sank to local society, while eunuchs went to the fore sometimes. All of these prepared the stage for the growth of Buddhism in the mid- and late Ming and eventually led to a revival.

The interactions between the Buddhist world and politics during the mid- and late Ming are remarkable and complex. Jiajing remained discriminating against Buddhism throughout his reign. Compared to suppressions that punctuated the history of medieval China, financial concerns and anti-foreign sentiments were still at work but no longer the major driving force. Instead, it had much to do with court strife which derived from the emperor's unusual rise from a local prince to the throne. In addition, a sense of moral and cultural orthodoxy in the emperor and his ministers and competitions between different religions at court also played their roles, at least in the early stages. His discrimination measures against Buddhism advanced in step with changes in court politics. Directly their harm to Buddhism occurred mainly in big cities like Beijing and Nanjing, while indirectly their effects reached even lower social levels and extended far beyond urban centers. Thus, the loss Buddhism suffered was much bigger than has hitherto been realized, especially in the Jiangnan region where the powerful clans were taking shape and Buddhism lost its status among them.

The rapid appearance of the late Ming Buddhist revival after Jiajing's harsh treatment of Buddhism is surprising but not totally unexpected. First and foremost, it took place under the enthusiastic patronage on the Empress Dowager Cisheng who, as one of the most powerful patrons of the time, was herself a result of the increasing interest in Buddhism in the Beijing area in the latter half of the Jiajing era. This study has demonstrated the extraordinary scale of her patronage to Buddhism. It is worthwhile to know that although Cisheng was enthusiastic for Buddhism, one could find that she was rational in her activities and often restricted by her emperor-son. In the first half of the Wanli era when Cisheng had more resources at her disposal, her patronage, together with eunuchs and other court elites, concentrated on Buddhism in North China. Such support dwindled drastically around the 1600s both in quality and quantity and then resumed to a much lesser extent, often together with Wanli. Their focus also shifted from North China to Jiangnan. On Wanli's part, not only did he support his mother's Buddhist initiatives but he also invested in it out of his personal interest. When the mother-son relationship went sour as a result of the long-term combat over the selection of a crown prince, however, the furious emperor took measures to curb Buddhism as a reprisal against his mother. By the turn of the seventeenth century, the situation became even more exacerbated because



court strife was then intertwined with intense factionalism among top officials. The situation threatened to spin out of anybody's control, including the emperor, and something significant to Buddhism would thus be expected to happen.

Close to the center of power, eunuchs were able to access resources much more conveniently than others. Meanwhile, living together within a tight system, it was easy for them to act in concert. Eunuchs as a group were a constant backing force to Buddhism for cultural, regional, psychological, social, and economic reasons. On the other hand, their closeness to the political arena also made them sensitive to political changes and then adjusted themselves accordingly. Therefore, although their involvement in Buddhism dropped in the first decade of the Jiajing era when the emperor was enforcing strict restrictions on Buddhism, they were the first to patronize Buddhism in the second half of the Jiajing era when the emperor isolated himself from the outer world. Eunuchs initiated some Buddhist projects and actively elicited royal support for them. They also actively and generously assisted imperial patronage of Buddhism. In the early Wanli era, for example, sometimes the names of eunuchs listed as patrons for Cisheng's Buddhism-related initiatives were up to two thousand, and frequently more than one thousand. The situation in the second half of Wanli era was more complex: eunuchs thronged in Dongyue temples that are usually deemed as Daoist in nature. This shift has much to do with the fluctuation in Cisheng's and Wanli's influence and the deterioration of their relationship, but it is also because the Dongyue cult had a tinge of popular religion which was becoming increasingly popular in north China.

Although issues about scholar-officials and Buddhism have attracted much scholarly attention in recent years, the degree of its complexity is still beyond our expectation. The founding Ming emperor thrust a wedge between the *samgha* and society as well as scholar-officials by prohibiting their communication. This separation had profound effects on the *samgha* in that it created a vicious circle: the inaccessibility of Buddhism to those knowledgeable intellectuals made Buddhism worse, and an inferior quality of the *samgha* courted more disdain and further distance from the latter. Therefore, in the middle Ming it is not surprising to find that more records about the prey of powerful families on Buddhist assets are left than those recounting their peaceful coexistence, particularly in Jiangnan. Also, local officials were found to close their eyes to such things as long as no big troubles were produced. As politics deteriorated increasingly in the second half of the Jiajing era, frustrated scholar-officials started turning their backs on the state and became local elites. This shift in the social role required a new value system and ideology to justify itself. In this sense, the

“rediscovery” of Buddhism, together with the rapid spreading of Wang Yangming’s school of mind which happened at the same time, might be understood as a way of exploration and adjustment for scholar-officials in a new world where economic boom was mixed with increasingly political dangers.<sup>1</sup> The political deterioration hastened their turning for two reasons: first, it forced them out of public service and made them in need of Buddhism as a kind of spiritual support; secondly, it loosened control over local society which gave them more space and freedom to get involved in Buddhist affairs. Therefore, in the second half of the Jiajing era, the relationship between Buddhism and scholar-officials developed in two opposite directions: exploration and patronage. Nevertheless, we should be careful not to overestimate the scope of scholar-officials’ backing of Buddhism. The experience of Shixing si studied in Chapter Six demonstrates the struggle of Buddhist temples for survival between two forces in the Jiajing-Wanli transition.

When Wanli ascended the throne, he and his mother gave out a strong signal of pro-Buddhism with their patronage covering the empire. On the local level, accordingly, exploiting the *sangha* was not lawful and new donations were encouraged. As politics increasingly deteriorated as the result of inner court strife and outer court factionalism after the second decade of the Wanli era, scholar-officials felt more frustrated with and frightened by political life. As a result, they escaped at an accelerating pace from public service to the private world as local elites. This change in their social roles was against the Confucian education that these scholar-officials had accepted and thus created tension and anxiety. Buddhism helped to soothe this anxiety. Against this background, it seems safe to say that to a large part the turning to Buddhism of scholar-officials during this period was not their choice but what they were forced to accept, although they may have sometimes acted as if it was entirely from their own initiative. It is true that the number of these people was not large, but their political and social status influenced a larger number of literati. Feng Mengzhen, studied in Chapter Four, presents an ideal case in this regard. When he was forced out of the court and back to Hangzhou, no matter how troubled he felt in his heart, he left an impression to others that he lived like an immortal after leaving office. In the particular context of late Ming China, this way of life was

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<sup>1</sup> It took dozens of years for the Yangming School to spread, but noticeably this expansion did not advance at a similar pace. This intimate relationship between intellectual and political danger is clearly shown in the story about Wang Yangming’s enlightenment in a stone coffin. Moreover, many proponents of the Yangming School were experiencing some kinds of spiritual crisis. See Chen Lai 陳來, *Youwu zhi jing—Wang Yangming zhexue de jingshen* 有無之境——王陽明哲學的精神 (Beijing: Renming chubanshe, 1991); and Luo, *Mingdai Houqi Shiren Xintai Yanjiu*.

really impressive and attractive to other literati. Also Feng Mengzhen's status as the chancellor of the National University helped him form a big network among scholar-officials and made his image even more convincing.

Generally the royal family was not a force consistently supporting Buddhism, but we should not underestimate its significance to the *samgha*. In the cases we have studied, imperial patronage often paved the way for gentry support. Because of the relatively rare presence of the royal family in Jiangnan, these uncommon appearances seem to have made them more attractive to local people. What was given does matter; simply the fact that the gift came from the court would be enough to spark inspiration in the local society and encouraged local elites to collect social and cultural capital by investing in ways consistent with the imperial family. In contrast to what is sometimes assumed, imperial benefits did not always go only to those sites with established reputation. Once a place secured such favour, it could always expect support from local society or even local government. Ciguang si studied in Chapter Six is such a case. Without the presence of imperial patronage, we might not even know the existence of this temple.<sup>2</sup>

Monks and monasteries have been employed in this study to test how the *samgha* felt and responded to the political vibrations. All of the four Buddhist masters I have examined sought alliances with the center of power. Although they all benefited immensely from this alliance at one time, their lives and undertakings were ultimately decided by the timing and patterns that they associated with the political power. They paid different prices for their choices. Deqing actively got involved with court strife. Such an involvement helped establish his reputation at a national level, but it also made him stand in opposition to the reigning emperor and finally resulted in his exile. This big turn in his life, however, improved his religious achievement. Zhenke's involvement with politics cost his life, but basically this result has little to do with whether Wanli really wanted him to die. Zhenke just entered the capital in the worst time when court strife was intertwined with factionalism among court officials. It was his despair to the deteriorating world in general rather than only to the emperor that precipitated the death of Zhenke. Fudeng's and Zhencheng's cases, on the other hand, suggest that Wanli had no real

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<sup>2</sup> The Putuo Island is another instance. During the Wanli era, royal patronage was repeatedly lavished on this site. This triggered an outpouring of support from all levels of society, particularly the nearby Jiangnan region, and it was promoted as one of China's Buddhist sacred sites. See Ishino Kazuharu 石野一晴, "Mindai banreki nenkan ni okeru fudasan no fukkō—chūgoku junreishi kenkyū josetsu" 明代萬曆年間における普陀山の復興——中國巡禮史研究序説, *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 64. 1 (2005), pp. 1-36.

malice towards Buddhism. These masters all played important roles in the *samgha*, and thus Deqing's exile and Zhenke's death marked two crucial points in the complex process leading to the revival. On the regional level, their tragedies triggered changes in the activities mode of monks around the 1600s. Meanwhile, their tragedies had strong political connotation in the particular historical context, and fulfilling the so-called "Zibo's will" partly became a covert way for scholar-officials to express their disappointment at the emperor and the court. All of these factors finally contributed to a change in the Buddhist contour on a national level.

The history of a monastery largely reflects changes in the resources at its disposal, which ultimately came from the secular world. Of five monasteries chosen, the two in Beijing were supported mainly by eunuchs in the Ming dynasty prior- to the middle of Wanli era. After that, eunuchs almost disappeared from their patron list but other patrons who usually had low social status appeared. When the imperial patronage appeared in these temples in the early Qing, scholar-officials began to swarm there for the first time. The other two chosen temples, which were in the Jiangnan area, were blessed with the cultural and economic prosperity unique to the area. No matter where these temples were located, they all had the worst time in the Jiajing era and did not start revitalizing gradually until the early Wanli era with support from scholar-officials who were at court or in local society. In the case of Ciguang si which received imperial favour in the latter half of the Wanli era, the imperial gifts would bring in further support to the temple from local society, scholar-officials and merchants alike, which would help it survive later when royal favour dwindled.

Since Beijing was made the imperial capital in 1418, the major force backing Buddhism there was court elites mainly consisting of eunuchs and the royal family. As a small group most sensitive to the political climate, the court elite in Beijing could act promptly. In addition, Beijing had the comparative advantage as the imperial capital to attract material and intellectual resources. Hence, although similarly in decline, Buddhism in Beijing began to amass energy even in the second half of the Jiajing era and appears to have well prepared for a bigger growth. In this sense, it comes as no surprise that Deqing traveled to Beijing for further instruction in religion and financial support at the turn of the Wanli era. By doing so, Deqing was part of a wave sweeping the Jiangnan area known as seeking the Dharma in North China. Under the aegis of the royal family and eunuchs, Buddhism enjoyed an abrupt prosperity in North China, particularly in Beijing. Even around the 1590s when Zhenke initiated the Jiaxing canon project, he still expected to get more support from North China than from Jiangnan. Ten years later, however, in his last words uttered in prison he expressed gratitude only to

the 'Dharma-protectors' in the Jiangnan region, without mentioning North China at all. This implied a big change in the national surroundings for the development of Buddhism.

Zhenke's last words around the turn of seventeenth century were symbolic. He actually declared the arrival of an age of Jiangnan Buddhism. During most of the middle Ming, especially under the Jiajing reign, evidence shows that Buddhism in Jiangnan was suffering from cultural and social disdain and from the prey of local gentry families. Therefore, by the start of the Wanli era, Jiangnan was not ready and needed more time to warm up to welcome a new age of Buddhism. In spite of this time lag, however, this region had particular advantages in the accumulation of momentum to support intensively increased Buddhist activities. First of all, it was far away from the political center, thus more independent from the political climate. Moreover, by then a high level of commercialization had nourished a class of local gentry who would act rather independently from the ideology and needed the "public sphere." Such independence was not automatically advantageous to the Buddhist society, as evidenced by the local gentry's prey on the Buddhist institutions in the Jiajing era. But the deteriorating political and the particular cultural and intellectual attraction of Buddhism helped to push scholar-officials closer to Buddhism. By the turn of the seventeenth century, Jiangnan replaced Beijing and once again played the most significant role in the *samgha*.

For the first time this study has revealed a shift of the Buddhist center to Jiangnan around the 1600s from Beijing, which had attained this status sometime after having become the imperial capital in 1418. Due to their particularized cultural, economic, social, and political circumstances, the mechanisms upholding Buddhism and the patterns of Buddhist development in Beijing and Jiangnan were distinct: Beijing was a place where Buddhism lacked a local foundation and its flourishing was based on a continuous inflow from all over the country and outflow to exert influence on other regions, while Jiangnan educated the majority of its Buddhist masters and attracted most of them to live there. The deteriorating political environment around the 1600s, marked by Zhenke's death in prison, was a strong warning to all heading to the capital. Shortly afterwards, with their turning to the Jiangnan region, Buddhism in Beijing declined rapidly and gave way to that in the Jiangnan region. On the other hand, after a warming up of about twenty years, Jiangnan had prepared to take on the role. As a result, a shift covering thousands of miles happened.

In summary, the emergence and evolution of the late Ming Buddhist revival was not so much driven by inner dynamics as by outer dynamics, and its evolution was basically decided by factors outside the *samgha*, among which politics was not always the decisive factor but

always remained a catalyst for other factors. With the loss of a large amount of monastic lands during the wars at the end of the Yuan dynasty, Buddhism in China to a large extent lost the economic independence it had obtained before. In addition, the policies separating Buddhism from society and scholar-officials further weakened its independence, socially and intellectually, and made it more fragile in face of challenge from the outer world. Jiajing's discriminating attitudes and practices against Buddhism made the situation even worse. As a result, during the mid- and late Ming, Buddhism was always under the shadow of politics and its evolution was exposed and vulnerable to the capricious political environment, as this study has shown. In this course, politics was not at work alone and did not always work in direct ways. Instead, in many cases it aroused responses of other elements, which in turn affected the growth of Buddhism. In this sense, the late Ming Buddhist revival was largely a reaction to the unusual political, economic, and social surroundings in the history of imperial China.

It is not my argument that in this course of events Buddhism was passively responding to the impact coming from the outer world. In fact, scholars have shown that active efforts within the *samgha*, like Xilin Yongning's emphasis on monks' education which helped Hanshan Deqing and Xuelang Hong'en to become the foremost masters of the age, and the tremendous attraction of charismatic Buddhist masters, like Yunqi Zhuhong to scholar-officials in Jiangnan, had made big contributions to the emergence and evolution of this revival. Also they have proved that, as evidenced by the appearance of Buddhist masters like Yunqi Zhuhong, Hanshan Deqing, and Zibo Zhenke, and the relatively extensive (re)building and renovation of Buddhist temples, the *samgha* was trying to take advantage of these changes and indeed attained some success. Nonetheless, I want to say that it ultimately did not obtain more independence or became less fragile. For example, the appearance of some Buddhist masters, the widespread advocacy of Pure Land Buddhism and the "reinvention" of Chan Buddhism, which have been studied by Chün-fang Yü, Jiang Wu, and other scholars, represented active efforts of Buddhism. However, they did not generally place Buddhism on a stronger foundation. In North China/Beijing where eunuchs and the imperial family served as its major patron, with a drastic reduction in the number of eunuchs in the Qing dynasty,<sup>3</sup> it is said that only thirty one Buddhist temples were built in the entire Qing dynasty, which forms a sharp contrast to more than one thousand temples built or rebuilt in the Ming.<sup>4</sup> In Jiangnan, Buddhism flourished once again

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<sup>3</sup> *Qing Shengzu shilu* 清聖祖實錄 (Rpt. Taipei: Huawen chubanshe, 1964) 240, p. 10a; Chen Yuanlong 陳元龍, *Airi tang shiji* 愛日堂詩集 (in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu*, vol. 254) 20, pp. 14a-b.

<sup>4</sup> Tian Qi 田奇, *Beijing de fojiao simiao* 北京的佛教寺廟 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1993), pp. 2-3.

beginning with the seventeenth century under the support of local society, but the monastic economy did not improve much in that area. More importantly, it was patrons rather than Buddhist monks who were leading the revival. Except a small number of most representative and influential Buddhist masters, many other eminent monks appeared at the time was not because their religious achievements were prominent but because they were needed to be there by scholar-officials in unusual political, economic, and social surroundings of late Ming China. On the other hand, due to their good educational background, scholar-officials played more and more important roles in the choice of Buddhist discourse, as evidenced by their active participation in the reinvention of Chan Buddhism in seventeenth-century China. Moreover, their control of the *sangha* expanded from the doctrine to the inner management of temples. Such a dependence on the favour of patrons placed Buddhism in a more dangerous situation. As a result, when spiritual support from Buddhism was no longer inevitable because the political climate got better and society came back to normalcy in the early Qing, China witnessed a decline in the gentry's patronage of Buddhism after the 1680s. That was an even bigger blow to Buddhism. After that, not only did the late Ming Buddhist revival come to an end but, with the departure of scholar-officials who had the ability to appreciate Buddhist doctrines, Buddhism became a religion mainly offering funeral services.

This study raises some problems that require more attention. First, although we have examined the major movements and dynamics leading Buddhism to the late Ming revival through studying Buddhism in Beijing and Jiangnan, it is worth noticing that Buddhism in the Yunnan region began to flourish exactly in the Jiajing era with continuous aid from the local government. This thus merits a separate study as an example of a third mode of Buddhist development. That it is not included here is because during the period under discussion Yunnan Buddhism was basically a pure "import" area and had little influence on a national level.

The dynamics behind the growth of Buddhism in North China also warrants further research. Eunuchs and the royal family were the main force backing Buddhism in Beijing, but their influence could hardly extend beyond the city, with an important exception to this being the Wutai Mountains. On the other hand, the revitalization of Buddhism in the Jiangnan region has proved to have had much to do with the economic boom, the literati's cultural appreciation of Buddhism, and a separation between the state and locality. However similar socio-economic and cultural situations could not be found in North China. What then were the dynamics behind the growth of Buddhism in other regions of North China? To answer this question requires us to

conceive of different concepts and perspectives from those used in Jiangnan. Susan Naquin has pointed out that Buddhism in North China seemed to have had more popular support from the uneducated masses and tended to intermingle with sectarian movements. This raises problems about the motivation of these people and the organization that made it possible for them to act in concert. In this sense, we should pay more attention to various kinds of associations which had long been used to organize commoners to collect the resources necessary for religious projects in North China.

The fall of Jiangnan as the Buddhist center after the 1450s also needs further examination. The moving of the imperial capital in 1418 is an important reason, but it does not tell the whole story. Given that Buddhism had a much closer relationship with scholar-officials in Jiangnan than in North China, my suggestion is that the policy of separation between the two in the early Ming must have had a bigger blow to Buddhism in the former than in the latter. If so, why did it really happen that scholar-officials kept themselves away from Buddhism? Are there reasons other than political ones? An answer to this question might help to answer why scholar-officials would leave Buddhism again after the middle Qing dynasty.

In addition, it would be interesting to know to what extent this study about the fluctuations of Buddhism in mid- and late Ming China could be applied to other similar cases. A “suppression-and-revival” cycle repeated itself on several occasions in medieval China. Wu Jiang has argued that “most Buddhist revivals happened in the period when state control was weakened and local society flourished.” His line of argument is similar to that of Timothy Brook whose study heavily depends on the formation of gentry society. He was generally right but did not differentiate this Buddhist renewal from those taking place previously. In fact, since no fundamental changes had occurred in politics, society, culture, and economy in medieval China as did in Late Ming China, it seems difficult to apply the conclusions and methodology of this study to other time periods.

Finally, even within Buddhism there is controversy surrounding the question of how close Buddhism should become to the state. In essence this problem concerns how and from where Buddhism could get enough resources to sustain its survival and growth. Yunqi Zhuhong consciously cut off ties with the inner court. He also expressed dissatisfaction with contemporary monks who involved themselves in politics. However, this is just one side of the story. Due to its weak position compared to the state, it is inevitable for Buddhism to find a balance rather than cut off the relationship completely. This is not only a historical problem. Given that there is a new wave of intensive Buddhist activities in Taiwan, mainland China and



other overseas regions now, how to adjust the distance of Buddhism from the state will impact its future growth.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the Tzu-chi foundation which has recently developed quickly takes it as its tenet to avoid getting involved in politics, but this might be more rhetorical than actual. See C. Julia Huang, *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Cisheng's Connection with Daoist Temples

No.	Time	Place	Temples	Sources
1	1574	Beijing	玉女祠	<i>RXJW</i> 128, p.2065
2	1574	Hebei	東嶽廟	<i>RXJW</i> 90, p.1526; 129, p. 2077
3	1575-1576	Beijing	東嶽廟	<i>SKHB</i> , v.57, pp. 40-41; v. 58, p. 34 (1592B)
4	1602B	Beijing	九天廟	<i>SKHB</i> , v58, p. 138-39
5	1606B	Beijing	東嶽廟	<i>SKHB</i> , v58, p. 186-87
6	1608B	Beijing	洪慈宮	<i>SKHB</i> , v. 59, p. 166-67
7	1606	Shandong	岱廟	Cf. 泰山岱廟的銅鐘和鐵香爐
8	1606	Beijing	東嶽廟（西頂）	Cf. 欽造岱嶽靈應玄妙金像碑銘
9	ca.1614	Beijing	都土地廟	<i>RXJW</i> 59, p.959

## Appendix B: Buddhist Temples with Cisheng's Financial Support

No.	Time	Place	Monastery	Source
1	1573B <sup>1</sup>	Beijing/ NC	延壽寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v.57, p.4
2	1574	Beijing/NC	海會寺	<i>RXJW</i> 90, p.1526
3	1574-1575	Beijing/NC	承恩寺	<i>WLYH</i> , j.27
4	1575	Beijing/NC	普安寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v.57, pp. 21-22
5	1576	North Zhili/ NC	隆興寺	<i>Chi jian Longxing si zhi</i> 2, pp. 608-609
6	1576	Beijing/NC	西域雙林寺	<i>RXJW</i> 97, p.1620
7	1576-1578	Beijing/NC	慈壽寺	<i>RXJW</i> 97, p.1611-3
8	1577	Beijing/NC	慈善寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v.57, p. 47
9	1577-1578	Beijing/NC	萬壽寺	<i>RXJW</i> 77, p. 1291-97
10	1579	Shanxi/ NC	大寶塔寺	<i>Qingliang shan zhi</i>
11	1581	Beijing/NC	千佛寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v.57, p. 101-2
12	Ca.1582	Shanxi/NC	鳳林寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j. 22
13	Ca. 1582	North Zhili/ NC	大慈宣文接待寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j. 22
14	Ca.1582	Beijing/NC	明因寺	<i>RXJW</i> 58, p. 947
15	Ca.1584	Beijing/NC	某寺	<i>HSPN</i> , j.1
16	Ca. 1584	Shanxi/NC	華嚴寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j.30
17	Ca.1584	Jiangxi	千佛寺	<i>Qingyuan zhi lue</i> 1, p. 129a
18	1584	Beijing/NC	千佛寺普同塔	<i>RXJW</i> , j107, p.1773
19	1586	North Zhili/NC	隆興寺	<i>Chi jian Longxing si zhi</i>
20	1586	Jiangxi	黃龍寺	<i>Lushan zhi</i>
21	1586	Shandong	海印寺	<i>HSPN</i> , j.1,
22	1586-1587	Beijing/NC	大慈瑞峰庵	<i>SKHB</i> , v.58, p. 97
23	1586	Beijing/NC	延壽寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v. 57, p. 141-43
24	1587	Zhejiang/ JN	楞嚴寺	<i>Zhejiang tong zhi</i> , j. 228
25	Ca. 1587	Shanxi/NC	靈應寺	<i>Yingguang, Qingliang shan zhi</i> 2, p. 21b(82)
26	1588	Henan	少林毗盧閣	<i>Songshan shaolin si jizhi</i> , p.735
27	1588	Shandong	靈岩千佛閣	<i>Mingdai huanguan beizhuan ji</i> , p.191
28	1590	Beijing/NC	慈慧寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v58, p. 32,13, 120-23;
29	1591-1593	Beijing/NC	衍法寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v58, p. 131-32
30	1592	Beijing/NC	雲居寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j.22
31	1594	Beijing/NC	慈隆寺	<i>RXJW</i> 54, p.867; <i>SKHB</i> , v.58, p. 61-62
32	1594	Beijing/NC	慈恩寺	<i>RXJW</i> 100, p.1665
33	1594(ca).	Beijing/NC	香樹庵	<i>RXJW</i> 131, p. 2117
34	1594	Beijing/NC	嘉福寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v. 58, p.50
35	Prior to1595	Henan	慈光寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j. 22
36	1599B	Beijing/NC	圓通寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v.58, p.98

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noticing that although this project was completed in the eighth month of Wanli 1 (1573), it was started on the third day of fourth month of Longqing 5 (1571/4/26).

No.	Time	Place	Monastery	Source
37	1600	Nanjing/ JN	大報恩寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j.30
38	1601	South Zhili	慈光寺	<i>Huangshan zhi ding ben</i>
39	1602	Huguang	玉泉寺	<i>Dangyang xian zhi</i> 18, pp. 54b-55a <sup>2</sup>
40	1602	Beijing/NC	重巒禪院	(Guangxu) <i>Shuntian fu zhi</i> 25, p.427a
41	1603B	Sichuan	峨嵋金殿	<i>SKHB</i> , v58, pp.152-53
42	1605	Sichuan	大佛寺	<i>E'mei Shanzhi</i> 4, p.176
43	1605	Shanxi/NC	顯通寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j.30
44	1605	Zhejiang/JN	普陀禪寺	<i>Putuo luojia shan xin zhi</i> 2, p.35
45	1605B	Beijing/NC	文殊庵	<i>SKHB</i> , v.58, pp. 170-71
46	1607	South Zhili/JN	龍華寺	<i>Longhua si zhi</i> 3, p.15
47	1607	South Zhili/JN	隆昌寺	<i>Baohua shan zhi</i> 6, pp.213-14.
48	1607B	Beijing/NC	三教院	<i>Beitie jinghua</i>
49	1612	Beijing/NC	長椿寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v.59, p.101

This Table includes the starting and completion times of a project when possible. When a time is followed by a “B”, it refers to the year when a relevant epitaph was erected. And most “ca\*\*” in this Table actually means before \*\*.

<sup>2</sup> It is unclear whether the silver that Cisheng gave to this temple was 3,000 or 10,000 taels of silver. See Brook *Praying for power*, p. 291, and *Fuqua si zhi* 2, p. 230.

# Appendix C: Bestowal of the Northern Canon in the Wanli era

No.	Time	Monastery	Province	Place	Sources
1	Longqing 6	某寺 <sup>3</sup>	Shanxi/NC	中條山	<i>HSMY</i> , j.30
2	W1 1	延壽寺◆	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>SKHB</i> , v.57, p. 4
3	W1 5	慈善寺◆	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>SKHB</i> , v57, p. 144.
4	W1 5-6	萬壽寺	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Wanshu zaji</i> , p.222
5	before W1 7	圓廣寺	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Hanwen fojiao da zang jing yanjiu</i> , p.445
6	before W1 7	承恩寺	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Ibid.</i>
7	before W1 7	慈喜寺	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Ibid.</i>
8	before W1 7	普安寺	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Ibid.</i>
9	before W1 7	三塔寺	Shanxi/NC	五臺	<i>Ibid.</i>
10	before W1 7	海會寺	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Ibid.</i> , p.446
11	Early Wanli	世剎海	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Buxu gaoseng zhuan</i> 5, p. 108a
12	Early Wanli	慈泰寺	South Zhili/JN	蘇州	<i>Baicheng yanshui</i> 3, p.50
13	W1 11/4	二聖廟	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Wanshu zaji</i> , p.221
14	W1 12	龍泉寺◆	Liaodong	鞍山	<i>Zhongguo mingsi zhi dian</i> , p.220
15	W1 12	歸宗寺◆ <sup>4</sup>	Jiangxi	廬山	<i>Lushan zhi</i> , p.726
16	W1 14	瓦官寺◆	South Zhili/JN	南京	<i>FCZ</i> , pp.823-24
17	W1 14	萬年寺◆ <sup>5</sup>	Zhejiang	天臺	<i>Tiantai fangwai zhi</i> 14, p.561-62
18	W1 14	慈善寺 <sup>6</sup>	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>SKHB</i> , v.57, p.144
19	W1 14	智果寺◆	Shaanxi	洋縣	<i>Shaanxi jinshi zhi</i> , j.30
20	W1 14	化城寺◆	South Zhili/JN	九華山	<i>Jiuhua shan zhi</i> , j.3
21	W1 14	永慈大華嚴寺	Shanxi/NC	蘆芽山	<i>HSNP</i> , j.1
22	W1 14	海印寺◆	Shandong	青州	<i>HSNP</i> , j.1
23	W1 14/3	塔院寺◆	Shanxi/NC	五台	Cf. “華北五臺山の大藏經”
24	W1 14	法源寺	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Fayuan si zhi gao</i>
25	W1 14	顯通寺◆ <sup>7</sup>	Shanxi/NC	五台	<i>Qingliang shan zhi</i> , j.5
26	W1 20	方廣寺	Huguang	衡山	<i>Nanyue zhi</i>
27	W1 14/3	寶陀禪寺◆ <sup>8</sup>	Zhejiang/JN	普陀	<i>Nanhai putuo shan zhi</i> , j.3
28	W1 14/3	黃龍寺◆	Jiangxi	廬山	<i>ZBQJ</i> , j.15
29	W1 14/3	地藏寺◆	South Zhili/JN	九華	<i>Jiuhua shan zhi</i> , j.5

<sup>3</sup> Miaofeng Fudeng got this canon in the winter of Longqing 5 (1572) but Wanli had succeeded to the throne in the sixth month of the year.

<sup>4</sup> Nozawa said that there was another copy given to Zhanyun temple 瞻雲寺, but actually Zhanyun was the name of Guizong temple in the Qing dynasty and there was no another copy to this temple in the Ming dynasty.

<sup>5</sup> Nozawa said that this bestowal happened in Wanli 14 and that there was another copy to Guangxiao temple 光孝寺 in Wanli 15, but actually 萬年報恩光孝禪寺 was one rather than two temples. And only one copy of the canon was granted to that temple in Wanli 14.

<sup>6</sup> *SKHB*, v.57, p. 147, says that this canon was given out in Wanli 15.

<sup>7</sup> Nozawa said that this bestowal took place in Wanli 13.

<sup>8</sup> Nozawa also mentioned Puji si 普濟寺, but it was actually a name that Baotuo si was called after Kangxi 38 (1699).

No.	Time	Monastery	Province	Place	Sources
30	W1 14/9	大報恩寺◆	South Zhili/JN	南京	<i>FCZ</i> , j.31
31	W1 14/9	華嚴寺◆ <sup>9</sup>	Yunnan	雞足山	<i>Jizu shan zhi</i> 16, p.474
32	W1 15	護國草庵寺（圓覺庵）	Sichuan	峨嵋	<i>E'mei shan zhi</i> , j.6
33	W1 15	楞嚴寺◆	Zhejiang/JN	嘉興	<i>KXT</i> , j.26
34	W1 15/11	少林寺◆	Henan	少林	<i>Songshan shaolin si ji zhi</i> , p.85
35	W1 15/9	大慈瑞峰庵	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>SKHB</i> , vol. 58, p.
36	W1 17	大報恩寺	South Zhili/JN	南京	<i>HSNP</i> , j.1
37	W1 17/10	大覺寺◆	Yunnan	雞足山	<i>Jizu shan zhi</i> , pp.475-76
38	W1 18	慈壽寺 <sup>10</sup>	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>HSMY</i> , j.28
39	W1 18	華藏寺◆	Fujian	福寧州	<i>Zhiti si zhi</i> , j.2
40	W1 18/8	萬佛寺	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Wanshu zaji</i> , p.221
41	W1 18B	慈慧寺◆ <sup>11</sup>	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>RXJW</i> , j.96, p.1606
42	W1 20	獅林（聖恩）◆ <sup>12</sup>	South Zhili/JN	蘇州	<i>KXT</i> , j.56
43	W1 20/4	翠峰庵	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Wanshu zaji</i> , p.221
44	W1 21/2	金山(龍遊)寺◆	South Zhili/JN	鎮江	<i>Jinshan zhi</i> , j.9
45	W1 22	方廣寺◆	Huguang	衡山	<i>Nanyue zhi</i> , j.2
46	W1 22	慈恩寺	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>RXJW</i> 100, p.1665
47	W1 22	香光寺◆ <sup>13</sup>	Beijing/NC	房山	<i>RXJW</i> , j.130
48	W1 27	靈岩寺◆	Shandong	濟南	<i>Lingyan zhi</i> , j.3
49	W1 27	海潮寺	Zhejiang/JN	普陀	<i>Putuo luojia xin zhi</i> , j.4
50	W1 27	歸宗寺◆	Jiangxi	廬山	<i>Lushan zhi</i> , p.726; <i>HSMY</i> , j.25
51	W1 27	靈穀寺◆	South Zhili/JN	南京	<i>Linggu chanling zhi</i> , j.9
52	W1 27	華藏寺◆	Fujian	福寧州	<i>Zhiti si zhi</i> , j.2 <sup>14</sup>
53	W127	佛光寺	South Zhili	潛山	<i>Jiangnan tongzhi</i> , j.47
54	W1 27/10	大慈瑞峰◆ <sup>15</sup>	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>SKHB</i> , v.58, p.97
55	W1 27/2	寶陀禪寺◆ <sup>16</sup>	Zhejiang/JN	普陀	<i>Nanhai putuo shan zhi</i> , j.7

<sup>9</sup> Nozawa said that this happened in Wanli 18.

<sup>10</sup> Dafang finally brought this canon back to Longgang temple 龍崗寺 in Henan in Wanli 22. See *HSMY*, j.28.

<sup>11</sup> Nozawa said that this event happened in Wanli 19.

<sup>12</sup> Nozawa listed Huachan si 畫禪寺 as a temple receiving a canon, but Huachan was actually the name of Shilin temple in the Qing dynasty. In addition, Nozawa listed one copy to Sheng'en 聖恩寺 temple in Wanli 17, but Shilin and Sheng'en were actually one temple. It was in Wanli 17 that the monk involved went to Beijing to seek for a copy of canon. In other words, these three names referred to only one temple. cf. *Baichen yanshui* 3, p. 53.

<sup>13</sup> Nozawa said that this bestowal took place in Wanli 33.

<sup>14</sup> Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛, *Xiaocao Zhai Wenji* 小草齋文集(in *Si ku quan shu cun mu cong shu* [Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997] 16), pp. 26-27, said that the bestowal of second copy of the canon to this temple was in Wanli 30.

<sup>15</sup> Nozawa said that this canon was bestowed in Wanli 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Putuo luojia xin zhi* said that there were three bestowed copies to this temple, but it should be only two. See *Putuo luojia xin zhi* 1, pp. 223-39.

No.	Time	Monastery	Province	Place	Sources
56	W1 27/3	定慧寺◆	South Zhili/JN	焦山	<i>Jingkou san shan zhi</i> , j.12
57	W1 27/3	獅子窩(大護國文殊寺)◆ <sup>17</sup>	Shanxi/NC	五台	Yingguan, <i>Qingliang shan zhi</i> 5, p. 8b (220)
58	W1 27/5	中台◆	Shanxi/NC	五台	<i>Qingliang shan zhi</i> , p.221
59	W1 27/6	北台(靈應寺?)◆ <sup>18</sup>	Shanxi/NC	五台	<i>Qingliang shan zhi</i> , j.5
60	W1 27/4	地藏寺◆ <sup>19</sup>	South Zhili/JN	九華山	<i>Jiuhua shan zhi</i> , pp.217-18.
61	W1 27/4 <sup>20</sup>	白水寺(聖壽萬年寺)◆	Sichuan	峨嵋	<i>E'mei shan zhi</i> , pp.258-60
62	W1 28	淨慈寺◆ <sup>21</sup>	Zhejiang/JN	杭州	<i>KXT</i> , j.42; <i>Wulin fan zhi</i> , j.7
63	W1 28/9	虎丘雲岩寺◆ <sup>22</sup>	South Zhili/JN	蘇州	<i>KXT</i> , j.57, p. 23
64	W1 28	華嚴寺◆	Fujian	福寧州	(Daoguang) <i>Fujian tongzhi</i> , j.265
65	W1 28/3	護國大華嚴寺◆ <sup>23</sup>	South Zhili	浮山	<i>HSMY</i> , j.30
66	W1 28/4	◆萬安寺	Shanxi/NC	五台	<i>Qingliang shan zhi</i> 5, p.221
67	W1 28/7	永明(顯通)◆ <sup>24</sup>	Shanxi/NC	五台	<i>Qingliang shan zhi</i> 5, p. 221
68	W1 28/9	徑山寺◆	Zhejiang/JN	杭州	<i>Jingshan zhi</i> , p.985; <i>KXT</i> , j.58
69	W1 29	龍華寺◆	South Zhili/JN	上海	<i>Longhua si zhi</i> , j.3
70	W1 29/9	放光寺◆ <sup>25</sup>	Yunnan	雞足山	<i>Jizu shan zhi</i> , pp.476-77
71	W1 30	玉泉寺◆ <sup>26</sup>	Huguang	當陽	<i>Dangyang xian zhi</i> , j.18
72	W1 30	大興國寺◆	Guizhou	貴陽	(Qianlong) <i>Guizhou tongzhi</i> , j.10
73	W1 30	天寧寺◆	South Zhili	揚州	<i>SZSL</i> 378, pp.7401
74	W1 30	天壽寺◆	South Zhili	揚州	<i>SZSL</i> 378, pp.7401
75	W1 30(?)	光明寺	Shandong	諸城	<i>Wulian shan zhi</i> , j.2
76	W1 28	國清寺◆ <sup>27</sup>	Zhejiang	天臺	<i>Tiantai shan fang wai zhi</i> 14, p. 562
77	W1 31	雲居寺◆	Jiangxi	永州	<i>Yunju shan zhi</i> , j.6
78	W1 31	冰井寺	Guangxi	蒼梧	<i>Guanxi tongzhi</i> , j.43

<sup>17</sup> Yinguang, *Qingliang shan zhi* 5, p.221, said that this cannon was delivered to the Wutai mountain by eunuch Wang Zhong 王忠, but it was in the same time that this eunuch was recorded to deliver another copy to Dinghui temple 定慧寺 at Jiaoshan. It was impossible because these two places were thousands miles apart.

<sup>18</sup> This temple was not specified in *Qingliang shan zhi*, but it might be Lingying temple 靈應寺 mentioned by Nozawa.

<sup>19</sup> Nozawa said that the temple received the canon was Dizang(Huacheng) 地藏(化城) temple.

<sup>20</sup> It was in the intercalary fourth month.

<sup>21</sup> According to *Jingci si zhi* 淨慈寺志, this canon was bestowed in Wanli 29.

<sup>22</sup> Nozawa said that Yunyan si got another copy in the same year, but actually there was only one copy. Cf. *Huqiu shan zhi* 虎丘山志 (Haikou: Hainan chubanshe) 3, p.374

<sup>23</sup> Nozawa suspected that this canon was granted in Wanli 26.

<sup>24</sup> Nozawa said it was granted in Wanli 27.

<sup>25</sup> Nozawa said this canon was given out in Wanli 26.

<sup>26</sup> Nozawa said that it cannot be decided when this canon was bestowed.

<sup>27</sup> Nozawa said that this event happened in Wanli 28.

No.	Time	Monastery	Province	Place	Sources
79	W1 31/2	雲罩寺	Beijing/NC	盤山	<i>Panshan zhi</i> , p.515-18
80	W1 33	真如寺	Jiangxi	雲居山	<i>Yunju shan zhi</i> 3, p.78
81	W1 33	大昭慶寺◆ <sup>28</sup>	Zhejiang/JN	杭州	<i>Wulin Da zhaoqing lu si zhi</i> , j.2
82	W1 35	鎮海寺 <sup>29</sup>	Zhejiang/JN	普陀	<i>Putuo luojia shan xin zhi</i> , j.6
83	W1 35	隆昌寺◆	South Zhili/JN	寶華山	<i>Baohua shan zhi</i> , j.8
84	W1 35	隆昌寺 cs	South Zhili/JN	寶華山	<i>Baohua shan zhi</i> , j.8
85	W1 35	崇因寺	North Zhili/NC	正定	<i>Zhengding xianzhi</i>
86	W1 35/6	延壽寺◆	Beijing/NC	豐台	<i>SKHB</i> , v.58, p.*
87	W1 37	天寧寺	Zhejiang/JN	海鹽	<i>Qinding xu tongzhi</i> , j. 169
88	W1 38	宏恩寺	Beijing/NC	良鄉	(Guangxu) <i>Shuntian fuzhi</i> , j.25
89	W1 39	慈光寺◆cs	South Zhili	黃山	<i>Huangshan zhi ding ben</i> , j.3
90	W1 39	慈泰寺◆	South Zhili/JN	長洲	(Qianglong) <i>Changzhou xian zhi</i> , j.29
91	W1 39/9	鎮海禪寺◆	Zhejiang/JN	普陀	<i>Putuo luojia shan xin zhi</i> , j.4
92	W1 40/6	慈延寺◆	Shanxi/NC	峨嵋	<i>E'mei shan zhi</i> , j.6
93	ca.wl 40	惠濟院	Shanxi/NC	五台	<i>Qingliang shan zhi</i> 5, p.167
94	W1 41	大忠孝禪寺	Guizhou	貴陽	<i>Guizhou tongzhi</i> (1697), j.41
95	W1 42	永延寺◆ <sup>30</sup>	Sichuan	峨嵋	<i>E'mei shan zhi</i> , j.6
96	W1 42	萬善寺◆	South Zhili/JN	丹陽	(Guangxu) <i>Danyang xin zhi</i> , j.11
97	W1 42/8	開元（通玄）寺◆	South Zhili/JN	蘇州	<i>Kaiyuan si zhi</i> , j.7
98	W1 43	萬福寺◆	Fujian	福清	<i>Huangbo shan zhi</i> , j.2
99	W1	靈岩寺◆	Shanxi	汾陽	(Yongzheng) <i>Shanxi tongzhi</i> , j.168
100	W1	明因寺◆	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>HSMY</i> , j.29
101	W1	壽安寺	Beijing/NC	北京	<i>Wanshu zaji</i> , p.226
102	W1	至源寺	Huguang	臨湘	<i>Huguang tong zhi</i> (1733), j.75
103	W1	永寧寺	Jiangxi	南昌	<i>Jiang cheng ming ji</i> , j.1
104	W1	龍興寺	South Zhili	鳳陽	<i>Jiangnan tongzhi</i> , j.48
105	W1	慈蔭寺◆	Shanxi	太平	(Yongzheng) <i>Shanxi tongzhi</i> , j.168
106	W1	雲居聖水寺	Zhejiang/JN	杭州	<i>Yunju shengshui si zhi</i> 1, p.5a
107	W1	法藏寺◆	South Zhili/JN	常州	(Guangxu) <i>Yixing xian zhi</i>
108	W1	大通寺	Shanxi	潞安	(Yongzheng) <i>Shanxi tongzhi</i> , j.168
109	W1	顯慈寺◆	Zhejiang	台州	(Jiaqing) <i>Taiping xian zhi</i> , j.6
110	W1	興善寺◆	Shaanxi	西安	<i>Daxing shan si zhi lue</i>
111	W1	靜慧（崇安）寺◆	South Zhili/JN	無錫	<i>Wuxi xianzhi</i> (1690), j.9
112	W1	延祥寺	Guangdong	南雄	<i>HSMY</i> , j.37

So far Nozawa Yoshimi has done the best study about the bestowal of the northern canon.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Xin xu gaoseng zhuan* 6, pp. 300-301, says that this canon was bestowed in Wanli 34.

<sup>29</sup> In addition to a copy of the Northern canon, one copy of the southern canon was also bestowed to the temple on the same situation.

<sup>30</sup> The accompanying edict was issued in Wanli 42. cf. Long, *Ba Shu fojiao beiwen jicheng*, p. 453. However, according to Fudeng's biography in *HSMY*, he already died in Wanli 40. It is hard to decide which date is correct.

<sup>31</sup> Nozawa, "Mindai hokuzo ko 1." Cf. He, *Beijing fojiao siyuan*, pp. 317-22.



In this Table I have corrected some of his errors and added more than thirty copies which were bestowed to various temple all over the country in the Wanli period. For the convenience of comparison, those copies that he has located are marked with ◆ in this Table.

# Appendix D: Cisheng's Connection with Monks

Mode	Monk	Province	Temple	Source
+	古風覺淳*	Beijing/NC	慈善寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j.29; <i>RXJW</i> 100, p. 1665.
+	本在*	Beijing/NC	慈善寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j.21
+	超如圓應	Beijing/NC	慈善寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j.21
+	鎮端*	Beijing/NC	資福寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j.54
+	真清象先*	Zhejiang	慈雲寺	<i>Da Ming gaoseng zhuan</i> , j.4
+	素庵真節*	South Zhili/JN	棲霞寺	<i>Da Ming gaoseng zhuan</i> , j.4
—	無跡正誨*	Huguang	玉泉寺	<i>Xinxu gaoseng zhuan</i> , p.715
+	天隱*	Shanxi/NC	塔院寺	<i>Xinxu gaoseng zhuan</i> , p.719
—	古心承芳*	Shanxi/NC		<i>Xinxu gaoseng zhuan</i> , p.914
+	真語*	Yunnan	般若寺	<i>Xinxu gaoseng zhuan</i> , p.1563
—	惟安*	South Zhili	黃山	<i>Xinxu gaoseng zhuan</i> , p.1569
+	了然能弘*	Zhejiang/ JN	楞嚴寺	<i>KXT</i> 48, p.9a
—	青融青牛*	Beijing/NC	永安寺	<i>Buxue gaoseng zhuan</i> ,*
—	碧空法師 z	Beijing/ NC		<i>Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao</i> , pp. 1572-73
+-	歸空明揚	Beijing/NC		<i>RXJW</i> 59, p.956
—	索諾木納結	Beijing/NC	西域雙林寺	<i>RXJW</i> 97, p.1620
—	足克戡古爾	Beijing/NC	西域雙林寺	(Guangxu) <i>Shuntian fuzhi</i> 113, p. 177b-78a
+	徧融真圓*	Beijing/NC	千佛寺	<i>SKHB</i> , v.57, pp. 101-102
+-	朗目本智*	Beijing/NC	廣慈	<i>HSMY</i> , j.30
+-	空印鎮澄*	Beijing/NC/Shanxi	千佛寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j.27
+	大方如遷*	Beijing/NC	慈壽寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j.28; <i>SKHB</i> , v.58, pp. 152-53
▲	紫柏真可*	Beijing/NC		<i>HSMY</i> , j.29
+	瑞庵廣禎*	Beijing/NC	龍華寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j. 29; <i>KXT</i> 42, pp. 24-25
+-	妙峰福登*	Beijing/Shanxi/NC	聖光寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j. 29; <i>E'mei shan zhi</i> , pp. 221-25
+	無暇明玉*	Beijing/NC	慈慧寺	<i>RXJW</i> 96, p.1607
+	二虎禪師	Shanxi/NC	鳳林寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j. 22; <i>Shanxi tongzhi</i> , j.171
+	智明	Henan	慈光寺	<i>HSMY</i> , j. 22
—	明澄	Shanxi/NC	文殊庵	<i>SKHB</i> , v.58, p. 152-3
+	仰崖永慶	Beijing/NC	明因寺	<i>KXT</i> 42, pp. 24-25
+	清菴	Zhejiang/ JN	師林寺	<i>KXT</i> , v. 56, p.156
+	別傳和尚*	Sichuan	峨嵋	<i>E'mei shan zhi</i> , p. 220. cf. p. 238
▲	無窮*	Sichuan	大佛寺	<i>Ba shu fojiao beiwen jichen</i> , pp. 459-60
+	不二圓信*	Huguang	武當	<i>Dayue taihe shan ji lue</i> , j.7
+	通天和尙*	Sichuan	圓覺庵	<i>E'mei shan zhi</i> , pp.2353-6
+	雲棲株宏*	Zhejiang/JN	雲棲寺	<i>Yunqi fahui</i> , j.27
▲	正道無言	Henan	少林寺	<i>Songshu</i> , p.555-57
▲	憨山德清*	Shanxi/ Beijing/NC	海印寺	<i>HSNP</i> , j.1
+	密藏道開	Shanxi/NC		<i>Mizhang chanshi yigao</i> , j.1
—	超遠禪師	South Zhili/JN	龍華寺	<i>Longhua si zhi</i> 3, p.60
—	達果	South Zhili/JN	龍華寺	<i>Longhua si zhi</i> .3, p.59
—	洪斷	Jiangxi	真如寺	<i>Yunju shan zhi</i>
—	法印	Guizhou	大興國寺	<i>Guizhou Tongzhi</i> (1697)
+	圓慧大遷	Fujian	支提寺	<i>Zhiti si zhi</i> , *

Note:

1. It is hard to precisely decide when Cisheng established connection with a monk. For convenience, these monks have been classified into three groups in this Table: + marks those who established connection with Cisheng before Wanli 23 (1595) and — those after that, but it deserves to notice that some monks obtained Cisheng's support in both phases. In addition, ▲ in this Table marks those monks who visited Beijing/NC and suffered from persecution.
2. Monks of the age frequently moved between different temples in different places. As a rule, the temples and its location listed in this Table are where monks linked them with Cisheng, with exception of those temporarily invited by Cisheng to Beijing/NC.
3. \* is attached to a monk if his biography has been collected in any of the five collected Biographies of Eminent Monks (gaoseng zhuan) of the Ming.

## Appendix E: A Reexamination of the Wutai Dharma Assembly

With regard to the Wutai assembly which had tremendous impact on Deqing's life and undertakings, our information about this assembly mainly comes from two biographies written by Deqing, one for himself (cited as HSNP hereafter) and the other for his friend Miaofeng Fudeng (cited as MB hereafter).<sup>32</sup> Some ambiguous or misguiding points in them, however, should be clarified by reference to other accounts.

### E1. Accounts about the Wutai Dharma Assembly

Let us first examine how this event is described in the HSNP:

Formerly, Master Miao (Feng) also drew blood by piercing his own body in order to copy out *the Huayan jing*. We both vowed to hold a ceremony called the “Undiscriminating Great Assembly” (pañcavarṣika) in memory of the completion [of this project]. Once Master Miao had collected sufficient money and food, he invited five hundred monks of “Great Virtue” (*dade* 大德; Skt.: bhadanta) and famous monks from the imperial capital. When the ritual space (*daochang*) and all the accoutrements were ready, it happened that His Majesty issued an edict to pray for the birth of the crown prince. He sent officials to Mount Wudang, while the Holy Mother dispatched officials to our monastery on Mount Wutai.<sup>33</sup> In my opinion, Buddhist practices that śramaṇas perform are nothing more than to pray blessings for the state and to secretly assist the ruler in governing. Since current prayer for the imperial offspring had much to do with the root of the state, there was nothing more importantly than it. I (hence) thought it was not fitting to use all preparations for the ritual space to seek for our own reputation, and intended to incorporate them into the prayer for the heir. Master Miao did not understand my point. Neither did the eunuchs sent by the emperor, as their minds were totally occupied by the idea of flattering (the emperor). I strongly opposed them and disputed (with them) vehemently. The eunuchs were offended, but in the end they carried out my plan. News about my defiance of eunuchs spread.

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<sup>32</sup> The MD refers to the “Chijian wutai shan da huguo shengguang Miaofeng chanshi zhuan” 敕建五臺山大護國聖光妙峰登禪師傳, in *HSMY* 30, pp. 674-76.

<sup>33</sup> It refers to Tayuan 塔院 monastery, with which Deqing affiliated himself since his arrival at the Wutai Mountain. Cf. the Wanli 3 entry in the *HSNP*, p. 659.

Shortly later, when evil people revolted in the Jiangnan region, those who had harbored hatred to me immediately wanted to use this incident to hurt me and destroy the ritual site. (However,) because it was performed for the sake of a crown prince, [this assembly] was eventually held without any accident...as for the offerings, utensils, food and everything else necessary for the ceremony, Master Miao who was then in the capital knew nothing, and I alone handled them without even a wink of sleep for ninety days. When the date came in the tenth month, Master Miao led the five hundred invited monks to arrive in a single day...It began with a seven-day festival of water and land. 初妙師亦刺血書華嚴經, 與予同願, 欲建一圓滿道場, 名無遮會. 妙師募化, 錢糧畢集, 京中請大德名僧五百眾, 其道場事宜俱備就. 適皇上有旨祈皇嗣, 遣官于武當. 聖母遣官五台, 即於本寺. 予以爲沙門所作一切佛事, 無非爲國祝厘, 陰翊皇度. 今祈皇嗣, 乃爲國之本也, 莫大於此者. 願將所營道場事宜, 一切盡歸併於求儲一事, 不可爲區區一己之名也. 妙師意不解, 上所遣內使亦不解事, 但以阿附爲心. 予大不然, 乃力爭, 忤之, 竟行予議. 然忤內使之名, 亦有聞. 頃之, 江南妖人作難, 忌者即欲借此中傷, 以破道場. 然以爲國求儲之題目, 竟保全始終無虞. 全應用供具器物齋糧, 一切所須, 妙師在京若罔知, 皆予一力經營, 九十晝夜, 目不交睫. 及十月臨期, 妙師率所請五百餘僧, 一日畢集....初開啓水陸佛事, 七晝夜.<sup>34</sup>

This event was recorded in the MB as follows:

I constantly considered that I had nothing that was sufficient to repay [my debt to] my parents. Therefore, I made a vow to write out a copy of *the Huayan jing* with my own blood and gold powder. Master (Miaofeng) also used blood drawn from his tongue to write a copy (of this sutra). When the copying was nearly complete, Master (Miao) descended the mountain [Mount Wutai] to collect contributions in a hope to hold a “Non-discriminating Great Assembly.” One year later, all things were ready. (He/we?) planned to expound the great Huayan sutra and scheduled to start it on the Winter Solstice of Wanli 9, *xinshi* year. Previously, the Holy Mother Cisheng (1545-1614) was building a relic pagoda at Tayuan Monastery on Mount Wutai to secure posthumous welfares for the deceased emperor (i.e. Emperor Longqing [r.1567-1572], her husband) and to protect the

<sup>34</sup> See the Wanli 9 entry in the *HSNP*, pp. 686-87.

reigning emperor (i.e., Emperor Wanli [r. 1573-1620], her son). By then the project was coming to an end, and officials who had been sent to Mount Wutai to pray for the birth of a crown prince gathered in the newly-built monastery. I discussed this situation with Master (Miao) as follows, “What we (Buddhists) do is for nothing but benefit the state and repay our parents. It would be better (for us) to turn everything over to these prayers, which is a display of the whole-hearted loyalty of us as people renouncing the world.” Master (Miao) agreed. The assembly inaugurated in the eleventh month of the year and ended in the third month of next year, *renwu* year, lasting one hundred and twenty days. 予恒思無以報二親, 乃發願刺血, 泥金書華嚴經. 師亦刺舌血, 硃書各一部. 經將完, 師欲建無遮大會, 遂下山募資具. 期年緣畢集, 欲演大華嚴, 擬萬曆九年辛巳冬日開啓. 先是, 慈聖聖母爲薦先帝, 保聖躬, 修五臺塔院寺舍利塔, 時工將竣. 求皇儲遣官於五臺, 時會方集於新寺. 予與師議曰: ”吾徒凡所作爲, 無非爲國報本也. 宜將一切盡歸之, 實方外臣子一念之忠耳. “師然之. 以是年冬十一月啓會, 明年壬午春三月圓滿, 期百二十日.<sup>35</sup>

The “Holy mother” in *HSNP* refers to Dowager Empress Cisheng 慈聖 (1545-1614). Deqing’s copying of *the Huayan jing* could be traced back to Wanli 5 (1577). In the spring of that year, he made up his mind to make a copy of this sutra with gold powder mixed with his blood in a hope to improve his understanding of Buddhism and of bring blessings for his parents. When learning of his plan, Cisheng bestowed Deqing with gold powder and paper.<sup>36</sup> This plan started from the fourth month of the next year and reportedly created many miracles during the course of copying.<sup>37</sup> “Master Miao” refers to Miaofeng Fudeng.<sup>38</sup> Praying for the

<sup>35</sup> See *HSMY* 30, p. 636.

<sup>36</sup> See the Wanli 5 entry in the *HSNP*, p. 674. Cisheng’s biography can be found in the *Mingshi* 114, pp. 3534-36. As the mother of a reigning emperor for forty-two years, Cisheng was very likely the most generous and influential patron of Buddhism in the Ming dynasty. Her ability to support Buddhism varied to a large extent in accordance with her relationship with her son, which was in turn under the influence of contemporary politics. She exerted profound influence not only on Deqing’s life but also on the late Ming Buddhist revival. However, her Buddhist undertakings have not received sufficient attention. See Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life*, pp. 156-61. Chen, “Ming Wanli shiqi Cisheng taihou de congfo,” pp.195-45.

<sup>37</sup> See the Wanli 5 and 6 entries in the *HSNP*, pp. 674-80.

<sup>38</sup> Fudeng was a lifelong friend of Deqing after their first meeting in Nanjing in 1566 and among the most successful monks favoured by both Cisheng and Wanli. He played a significant part in the monastery building and the spreading of the Buddhist canon of the period. Moreover, his Buddhist achievement even won Deqing’s respect. Despite his importance, unfortunately, he has not been given sufficient attention by scholars. I am writing a paper in order to accomplish this overdue task.

birth of the crown prince was a politically sensitive event. By the end of Wanli 9 (1581) Wanli had been married for three years but produced no child. Previously Wanli's grandfather Emperor Jiajing (r. 1522-1566) got the chance to ascend the throne only because his cousin Emperor Zhengde (r. 1506-1521) died without a son but this unusual succession created many troubles,<sup>39</sup> and Wanli's father died young in his thirties. Taking these events into consideration, it is understandable why Wanli's mother and court officials were so upset about this, although he was only nineteen years old at the time. The rebellion in the Jiangnan region might refer to that initiated in Zhenjiang, South Zhili, by a monk known only by his surname Wang 王.<sup>40</sup>

Based on these two accounts, some points concerning this assembly become clear. For example, the assembly was held in the newly built Tayuan monastery, which was mentioned as *bensi* (this monastery) in the HSNP and *xinsi* (newly-built monastery) in the MB. The amount of monks invited was five hundred. In addition, both accounts say it was Deqing who first suggested incorporating the assembly into the prayer service. Nevertheless, there are important discrepancies between these two accounts and they deserve further examination.

- a) Who was the first to advocate the indiscriminating assembly? The HSNP is ambiguous about it because the relevant sentence could be read in two ways. First, it could be punctuated as “初，妙師亦刺血書華嚴經，與予同願。欲建一圓滿道場，名無遮會”， meaning that Miaofeng had the same hope as Deqing's when copying the sutra, namely, improving his understanding of Buddhism and invoking blessings for his parents, and that he intended to hold a service called the Non-discriminating Assembly in memory of the completion of this project of copying. The other way of punctuation is “初，妙師亦刺血書華嚴經。與予同願，欲建一圓滿道場，名無遮會。” It signifies that when writing the sutra, Miaofeng shared a desire with Deqing to establish the assembly. In the MB, however, Deqing clearly claimed that it was Miaofeng who first made such a plan. This point has been affirmed by Zhencheng, who was a friend of both Deqing and Miaofeng and a participant in the assembly.<sup>41</sup>
- b) These paragraphs seem to say that these two friends took all responsibility necessary for the assembly: Deqing orchestrated everything in the monastery, while Miaofeng raised money

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<sup>39</sup> For a detailed discussion on Emperor Jiajing's unusual enthronement and its consequences, see Fisher, *The Chosen One*.

<sup>40</sup> See the *jizi* day of the third month of Wanli 10 in SZSL 122, p. 3b(2276).

<sup>41</sup> See Fudeng's biography in Zhencheng 鎮澄, *Qingliang shan zhi* 清涼山志 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1989) 3, p. 151.

and food and invited monks for the assembly. However, three years later when Cisheng tried to express gratitude to monks in charge of the assembly, her list included one additional monk, the abbot of Tayuan monastery.<sup>42</sup> Deqing was a guest monk in Tayuan monastery, and it is thus hard to imagine that he alone could play a leading role in the assembly without support from the abbot.

- c) How did Miaofeng respond to Deqing's suggestion? In the MB, it is reported that he simply agreed with it. In the HSNP, however, Miaofeng was said not to get the point so that Deqing had to argue forcefully to convince him and the eunuchs. The two accounts support each other in the sense that Deqing's argument was made on the basis of a so-called monk's responsibility towards the state, but in the HSNP he further argued that a monk should yield his reputation-seeking to his duties to the state. Does it imply the criticism of selfishness for people objecting to his plan? Deqing did not tell us what Fudeng responded to it?
- d) When did the assembly start? Deqing was inconsistent in here. The HSNP says the assembly began in the tenth month with a festival of water and land which lasted for seven days. In the MB, it started in the eleventh month, and this date is in accordance with their planned time, the Winter Solstice (*dongre* 冬日).<sup>43</sup> To compound the situation further, Deqing even gave a third date: Wanli 10.<sup>44</sup> Zhencheng substantiated the third when he said that in the first month of this year, "To pray for the birth of the crown prince, His (Her?) Majesty dispatched eunuchs You Yong and Zhang Ben to the Great Tayuan monastery to hold a Non-discriminating Great Assembly for seven days" (上為祈國儲, 遣太監尤用、張本, 詣大塔院寺, 修無遮齋七日).<sup>45</sup> This seven-day Non-discriminating Assembly appeared to be the festival of water and land of seven days mentioned in the HSNP.<sup>46</sup>
- e) Who sent out whom to Mount Wutai? Zhencheng was ambiguous when speaking of "the superior" (*shang* 上) because the term could refer to the emperor or his mother, but he pointed out that among the eunuchs were You Yong and Zhang Ben. In contrast, Deqing clearly claimed that it was Cisheng who sent out *guan* 官, a term that could refer to outer- or inner-court officials (i.e., eunuchs). Moreover, he pointed out that the emperor dispatched

<sup>42</sup> See the Wanli 12 entry of the *HSNP*, p. 696.

<sup>43</sup> The term "dongri" 冬日 could generally mean winter or specifically refer to the winter solstice which is in the eleventh month of Chinese lunar calendar. The second meaning appears to be more acceptable in the context here.

<sup>44</sup> This date appears in an inscription that Deqing wrote for Zhencheng. See Deqing, *Mengyou ji* 27, p. 657.

<sup>45</sup> Zhencheng, *Qingliang shan zhi* 12, p. 220.

<sup>46</sup> This is also Fuzheng's stance. See his annotation to the entry of Wanli 10, pp. 691-92.



envoys to Mount Wudang, one of the most important Daoist mountains, for the same purpose.<sup>47</sup> So, how do we explain the difference between the two accounts?

Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525-1582), then the senior Grand Secretary, said in a letter, “The emperor...previously dispatched imperial relatives to Mount Wudang to pray for the birth of an heir. (Even they) dared not use the courier system. (Rather), they rested and ate in lodgings back and forth (to Beijing)” (皇上...前遣皇親於武當祈嗣, 亦不敢乘傳, 往來皆宿食旅舍).<sup>48</sup> Thus, imperial family members were included among the people sent to Mount Wudang, and this was not unusual considering the nature of this journey. On another occasion, Wanli said, “Recently, the Holy Mother particularly dispatched imperial relatives to famous mountains to pray for the birth of my heir. (She) also gave them traveling expenses, without using one single servant or horse (of the courier system)” (昨聖母特遣皇親爲朕祈嗣名山, 亦俱給與盤費, 往來不用一夫一馬).<sup>49</sup> Both the letter and the edict were made in Wanli 8. Considering the similarities in time, nature, people involved, and things happening along the way, very likely Mount Wudang was among the mountains where Cisheng sought for help. Moreover, considering that Wanli had been married only three years by Wanli 9, it is doubtful that there was time enough for the royal family to launch at least two waves of prayer at famous mountains. Thus, it was very likely that this prayer mentioned by Zhang Juzheng was that mentioned by Deqing, which means that it was Cisheng rather than the emperor himself who was leading the campaign.

- f) The construction of Tayuan monastery, where the assembly was held, was initiated by Cisheng for the sake of her deceased husband the Emperor Longqing and her son the reigning emperor Wanli. She defrayed the building expense with her own funds.<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, it is logical to assume that she would send people there for the ceremony.

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<sup>47</sup> Mount Wudang developed at an unprecedented speed under imperial sponsorship from the early Ming and eventually became the most important Daoist sacred site in China. This promotion allegedly had much to do with Emperor Yongle's efforts to find a legendary Daoist Zhang Sanfeng 張三豐 (1320?-1417?) and with Emperor Jianwen 建文 (r.1399-1402). Jianwen was Yongle's nephew who reportedly disappeared after his palace in Nanjing was surrounded and occupied by his uncle's army in 1402. See *Tayuetaihe shan ji lue* 太嶽太和山紀略 (in *Zhongguo daoguan zhi congkan* 中國道觀志叢刊 [Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2000], Vols. 5, 6) 5, pp. 373-88, and 395.

<sup>48</sup> See Zhang Juzheng, *Zhang Taiyueji* 張太嶽集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984) 32, pp. 398-99.

<sup>49</sup> See Zhou Yongchun 周永春, *Silun lu* 絲綸錄 (in *Siku jinhui shu congkan*, 史 vol. 74) 4, p. 18.

<sup>50</sup> Zhang Juzheng mentioned this fact in an essay in memory of the completion of this project. See his *Zhang Taiyue ji* 12, pp. 151-52.

Moreover, the Zhang Ben mentioned by Zhencheng was a eunuch Cisheng heavily relied on in her Buddhist activities.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, Deqing was right in saying that Cisheng was actually directing the assembly. If so, his claim is unfounded that “neither did the eunuchs sent by the emperor understand my point, as their minds were totally occupied by the idea of flattering (the ruler)?”

- g) Although Deqing and Zhencheng both agreed that the purpose of the assembly was to precipitate the birth of a crown prince, neither of them made it clear who they hoped would mother the boy.

Keeping those obscure and dubious points in mind, we turn now to the annotation and other accounts.

## E2. Fuzheng’s Annotation to the Wutai Assembly

As mentioned above, Fuzheng’s annotation to his master’s autobiography has been acclaimed for its comprehensiveness and accuracy.<sup>52</sup> So, let us turn to it for help. Under the entry of Wanli 9, Fuzheng commented as follows:

I, (Fu)zheng was born in the reign of Emperor Shenzong (i.e. Wanli) and was aware that the debates regarding the crown prince was the most significant thing. Among all things related to Patriarch Han(shan)’s appearance in the world, the matter relevant to the crown prince has the biggest significance. It was his accomplishment to be the first to advocate the installation of the crown prince according to the established regulation.<sup>53</sup> He was acting according to his foresight for the benefit of the state rather than following others’ suggestions about the installation of the imperial heir, which started the disaster of factionalism... The emperor sent eunuchs to Mount Wudang to pray for the birth of an imperial heir secretly on the behalf of Honored Consort Zheng, and those he depended on were Daoist priests. In contrast, the Holy Mother dispatched eunuchs to Mount Wutai secretly praying that a crown prince would be delivered by *cairen* 才人 (Lady of

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<sup>51</sup> For example, see Wang, *Putuo luojia xinzhi*, p. 209; *FCZ* 4, p. 521.

<sup>52</sup> Fuzheng sharply criticized a biography of Deqing written by Zhuanyu Guanheng 顯愚觀衡 (1580-?). See Fuzheng’s commentary under the Jiajing 25 entry of the *HSNP*, pp. 607-10.

<sup>53</sup> The term *zhugong* 諸公 here appears to be redundant. If so, this sentence would be easier to understand.

Talents) Wang,<sup>54</sup> and those she relied on were Buddhist monks. They each had gods to pray to and beneficiaries to pray for. The eunuchs had observed clandestinely the emperor's purpose. Out of fear that something unexpected would happen, they flattered the emperor and were disloyal to the order of the Holy Mother. Thus, they were reluctant to conduct the great undertaking by incorporating the Non-discriminating Assembly, which was intended to commemorate the completion of the blood-copied sutra, into the prayer for crown prince. Roughly speaking, the Non-discriminate Assembly was prepared by collecting contributions and had nothing to do with the prayer for an imperial heir, while the prayer for the heir was dispatched by the inner court without a plan of holding an indiscriminating assembly. Therefore, that Master Miao did not understand this change was because his emphasis was on Buddhism, while the reason that Patriarch Han(shan) made every effort to argue was because he focused on "the root of the state"... When the Mount Lao disaster took place later, the emperor wound up the case of Wudang and Wutai by saying that "all people at court are backing Buddhist monks, whereas I insist on supporting Daoist priests." 徵生神宗朝，知所爭皇儲事最大，當愍祖出世所關，皇儲事獨先。蓋其功在首倡定儲諸公，爲圖社稷神幾，非依附建儲末議，爲啓門戶禍局者也。.....皇上遣內官于武當，陰爲鄭貴妃祈嗣，祈之道士也。聖母遣內官於五台，陰爲王才人祈嗣，祈之和尚也。各有崇信，各有禱求。內使窺伺帝意，懼有不測，故以阿附爲心，遂二心於聖母之命，不欲歸併向與妙師所營血經圓滿無遮道場於求儲一事，以鳴盛舉。蓋無遮募成，不關求儲，求儲內遣，不建無遮。是以妙師不解，起見在佛法。愍祖力爭，矢心在國本。...厥後牢山難作，皇言有雲：”舉朝爲和尚，我偏爲道士。 “遙結武當五台一案也。<sup>55</sup>

Honored Consort Zheng (?-1630) was the favourite woman of Wanli. She delivered Zhu Changxun 朱常洵 (1586-1641), the third son of the ruler, in Wanli 14 (1586). Cairen Wang (1565-1611) was a court lady who accidentally had a relationship with Wanli and then gave birth to his first son Zhu Changluo 朱常洛 (r. 1621). The "Mount Lao disaster" refers to Deqing's exile from Mount Lao in Shandong to Guangdong in Wanli 23 (1595).

This passage clarifies some unclear points mentioned above, and it presents us with a new

<sup>54</sup> Cairen was a title occasionally granted to a consort.

<sup>55</sup> In the *HSNP*, pp. 688-89.

picture. First, Deqing was the first to advocate for the establishment of the heir, which was the most important event in the Wanli reign. Second, Wanli sent eunuchs to Mount Wudang to seek assistance from Daoist priests on behalf of Honored Consort Zheng. Third, by contrast, Cisheng dispatched eunuchs to Mount Wutai on behalf of Cairen Wang to attain help from the Buddhist monks. Fourth, aware of Wanli's preference, eunuchs at Mount Wutai sided with the ruler at Cisheng's cost. Fifth, the nature of conflict between Daoism and Buddhism was obvious in this event, as evidenced by the emperor's confession thirteen years later. Now, let's examine whether these five points can stand scrutiny.

- 1) Fuzheng gave the credit for first advocating the instalment of the crown prince to his master. It is true that "establishing the crown prince" was the dominant political event throughout the Wanli period, but this would not really be a problem until Wanli 14 when Honored Consort Zheng gave birth to Zhu Changxun.<sup>56</sup> Around Wanli 10, what people were worrying about was that the emperor had no child, let alone a boy. In fact, when mentioning this event, Deqing himself tended to use "praying for the birth of the crown prince" without clearly claiming who would be the mother.<sup>57</sup> This is closer to the truth and consistent with the edict mentioned above.
- 2) Fuzheng's second point might be wrong either. No matter who sent imperial family members, together with eunuchs, to Mount Wudang, this event happened before the first month of Wanli 10 (1582). But Honored Consort Zheng might not enter Wanli's life until the second month of that year.<sup>58</sup> If so, Wanli could not fight for her interest at that time.
- 3) Fuzheng did not perform better in the third point either. Among the three possible starting dates for the assembly, Fuzheng insisted that the right one was the tenth month of Wanli 9. Since it happened that ten months later the emperor's first son was born, he further viewed it as evidence of the efficacy of Deqing's prayer on the assumption that the boy was delivered after the usual ten months of pregnancy.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> For the complex and perilous process of establishing the crown prince, see Gu, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 67, pp.1061-1077.

<sup>57</sup> See, for instance, the Wanli 12 entry of the *HSNP*, pp. 696.

<sup>58</sup> It is hard to decide when Courtesan Zhen entered the inner court. An edict was issued to select Nine Consorts (jiubin 九嬪) from common families in the eighth month of Wanli 9 (1581), and ceremonies were held to acknowledge nine winner in the second month of Wanli 10. Honored Consort Zheng was among these nine girls. See *Ming Shenzong shilu* 120, pp.2245-46; 121, p. 2276. However, Cheng Sizhang 程嗣章 said that she entered the inner court in Wanli 6 (1578) when Wanli got married. See his *Ming gongci*, p. 149.

<sup>59</sup> See his annotation in the Wanli 10 entry of the *HSNP*, p. 691.

Following this assumption, Wanli's having relationship with Cairen Wang could not be earlier than the eighth month of Wanli 9. However, it is said that this sex happened by accident, and the emperor was very embarrassed with it. When his mother found Cairen Wang pregnant, he would not admitted it until a document clearly recording his sleep with the girl was shown.<sup>60</sup> Supposing the assembly really began in the tenth month, by then Cisheng did not know Cairen Wang's relationship with her son, let alone acted on her behalf.<sup>61</sup>

More importantly, even if Cisheng had immediate notice of this event, Fuzheng's claim still could not be true. It was Empress Xiaoduan 孝端 (1565-1620) who gave birth to Wanli's first child, the future Princess of Rongchang 榮昌 (1582-?), in the twelfth month of Wanli 9.<sup>62</sup> This means that by the tenth month of the year, Empress Xiaoduan was about to deliver a child who, if a boy, would solve the problem of the heir. Xiaoduan got Cisheng's support throughout her life.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, it is simply impossible for Cisheng to pray not on behalf of Empress Xiaoduan but of Cairen Wang. This conclusion remains true also with the possibility of the eleventh month. As for the first month of Wanli 10, it has least support in Deqing's work. Paradoxically, given that by that time Empress Wang had delivered a girl, Cisheng was really likely to pray on behalf of Cairen Wang if she had been found pregnant. But this will discredit Fuzheng's claim regarding Deqing's success in assisting the birth of the boy, for there were only eight months left.

- 4) As for the fourth point, since it was based on the first three, it is also unsustainable.

Wanli began his reign at the age of ten. Thus, at first he had to rule the country with the aid of a power triangle consisting of his mother, a powerful eunuch Feng Bao 馮保

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<sup>60</sup> See her biography in *Mingshi* 114, p. 3537.

<sup>61</sup> The title of Cairen Wang as Consort of Reverence (*gongfei* 恭妃) was not granted together with the other nine girls in the second month of Wanli 10 but separately in the sixth month of this year. Ray Huang hence suggested that Cisheng did not notice this event until the nine consorts had been conferred or else she would have arranged a formal title to the girl either. See his *A Year of No Significance*, p. 29. Despite the important role Cairen Wang played in the political life of the age, we have little and often incorrect information about her. For example, it has been long said that she was in her mid-life when she first had sex with the emperor, which made it hard for her to get his favour. However, an inscription unearthed from her tomb in 1958 shows that she was two years younger than the emperor and at the best age for a woman to conceive a child. It might be true that she was not so favoured by the ruler; but she still gave birth to his fourth daughter, see Liu, *Zhuo zhong zhi* 22, pp. 202-203.

<sup>62</sup> *SZSL* 119, p. 2223.

<sup>63</sup> For Empress Xiaoduan's good relationship with Cisheng, see her biography in *Mingshi* 114, p. 3536.

(?-1583), and the Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng. He got more freedom after getting married at the age of sixteen in Wanli 6 (1578), but his power was still limited and under the surveillance of the three, as evidenced by his mother's claim that he could not rule independently before he was thirty.<sup>64</sup> This arrangement seems to have sparked the ruler's dissatisfaction with the system,<sup>65</sup> but no evidence shows that by the end of Wanli 9 the mother-son relationship was really in tension and that the power triangle would soon break up.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, Fuzheng's charge that the eunuch sided with the emperor at the cost of Cisheng cannot be substantiated, although it is not completely impossible.

- 5) Wanli believed in Pure Land Buddhism, but it is true that he had a closer relationship with Daoism in his middle age and that he used it for political ends.<sup>67</sup> This is the background to Wanli's utterance of the words cited by Fuzheng. However, no evidence shows that he had special interest in Daoism around Wanli 10, whether for religious or political reasons. In addition, although well-known for her commitment to Buddhism, Cisheng did not totally separate herself from Daoism.<sup>68</sup>

In sum, the main points Fuzheng claimed here are mostly ill-founded. And it is safe to say that originally the prayer ceremony had nothing to do with either Honored Consort Zheng or Cairen Wang; instead, it was held to pray that the empress could give birth to a boy around the end of Wanli 9. Nevertheless, they form the basic tone running through the autobiography. When Deqing was exiled in Wanli 23 (1595), Fuzheng said that it was because he affronted the emperor and that the latter's hatred to him could be traced back to this assembly. As a result, Deqing was glorified as a tragic hero: he was insightful and would do anything for the cause of the state. Unfortunately, despite of his good wishes, he got passively involved in court strife and became a victim for political and religious reasons. This image of Deqing has been widely

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<sup>64</sup> See Zhang Juzheng's biography in Jiao Hong 焦竑 (1540-1620), *Guochao xianzheng lu* 國朝獻征錄 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju) 17, pp. 642-66.

<sup>65</sup> Zhang Juzheng had a hunch of the danger and showed his worry about it in a letter to Wang Zhihao 王之誥 (1521-1590), see Zhang, *Zhang Taiyue ji* 32, p. 401.

<sup>66</sup> Zhang Juzheng was then poor in health, but his death in the sixth month of next year was still unpredictable at this point of time.

<sup>67</sup> For Wanli's belief in Buddhism, see *WLYH* 27, pp. 679.

<sup>68</sup> Cisheng had problems with her eyes as early as Wanli 12, and would suffer from them until she died thirty years later. Evidence shows that she sometimes turned to Daoism for her health. See, for example, *RXJW* 59, p. 959.

accepted for hundreds of years.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Chen Yunü noticed the difference in the starting time of the assembly between the auto-biography and the *Qingliang shanzhi*, but she accepted the traditional opinion without much deliberation. See her “Mindai bukkyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū,” p.137 n1.