

BUILDING A DHARMA TRANSMISSION MONASTERY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CHINA: THE CASE OF MOUNT HUANGBO

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Recent studies on Buddhism in the late Ming 明 dynasty have drawn our attention to the monastery building process in this period, which saw intensive activity among local élites to rebuild society after the suppression of Wokou 倭寇 piracy in the second half of the sixteenth century. Though scholars like Timothy Brook have investigated how the gentry lavished their patronage upon monastery building projects, it is still largely unknown how Buddhist institutions themselves were revived as the result of an internal transformation of Buddhism. This paper explores some of the institutional changes that occurred in seventeenth-century Chinese Buddhism. For this purpose, I will focus on Huangbo 黃檗 Monastery in Fujian 福建 province.

There are several reasons for this choice. First, three important Chan 禪 masters, Miyun Yuanwu 密雲圓悟 (1566–1642), Feiyin Tongrong 費隱通容 (1593–1662) and Yinyuan Longqi 隱元隆琦 (1592–1673), referred to as the Huangbo masters in this study, presided over this monastery in succession. These masters made a significant contribution to the revival of Chan Buddhism in this period. Second, Huangbo Monastery (renamed Wanfusi 萬福寺 in the late Ming) is significant in Chan history. It was the monastery where the Tang 唐 monk Huangbo Xiyun 黃檗希運 (?–850) was ordained. In addition, it was the monastery from where Yinyuan Longqi departed to Japan in 1654, where he would later build Manpukuji 萬福寺 in Uji 宇治, Kyoto 京都, modeled on Huangbo, thus becoming the founder of the Japanese Ōbaku 黃檗 school. Third, the sources on Huangbo Monastery are relatively rich. Not only do several editions of monastic gazetteers survive, but some rare sources are also preserved in Japan taken there by Yinyuan.¹

¹ The following editions of relevant monastic gazetteers are extant: *Huangbosi zhi* [Monastic gazetteer of Huangbo], compiled by Xingji and Xingyuan in 1637 (supplemented by Duwang Xingyou in 1652); *Huangbo shan sizhi*, [Monastic gazetteer of Mount Huangbo], compiled by Yinyuan Longqi in 1652 (supplemented by Daoxian in 1824). These editions were gradually expanded and updated. For a brief textual history of these editions, see Timothy Brook, *Geographical Sources of Ming-Qing History*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, 2002), pp.202–3. However, I rely primarily on the 1652 and 1824 editions preserved respectively in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* [Complete collections of the four treasuries, continued], 1110 vols (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1995–99), vol.719; and Du Jiexiang, ed., *Zhongguo Fosi shizhi buikan* [Collection of monastic gazetteers of Chinese Buddhist monasteries] (Taipei: Mingwen Shuju, 1985), series 3, vol.4.

² The name “dharma transmission monastery” did not appear in seventeenth-century Buddhist sources but was widely used at the end of the nineteenth century to refer to a particular monastic system. Hasebe Yūkei adopts this term to characterize the changes in seventeenth-century Buddhist monasteries. See his *Min Shin Bukkyō kyōdanshi kenkyū* [Studies on the history of monastic communities in Ming and Qing Buddhism] (Tokyo: Dōhōha, 1993), p.286. See also my discussion below.

In this study, I observe that the revival of Huangbo Monastery represents a process that occurred in many Buddhist institutions during the seventeenth century: monasteries were first restored members of the by local gentry but then were quickly incorporated into a broader regional monastic network in which the dharma transmission of the presiding abbots (who were initially invited by the gentry) fostered institutional connections with other monasteries occupied by their dharma “relatives”. This type of monastery, generally referred to as a “dharma transmission monastery” (*chuanfa conglin* 傳法叢林), a new creation in the seventeenth century, was organized according to the principle of dharma transmission that limited the abbacy to members of a specific dharma lineage.² In the resulting transformation of Chan monasteries, the practice of dharma transmission was formalised and rationalised to avoid confusion and false claims. For example, as this article will outline, Chinese characters indicating a shared generation were used when monks were assigned their religious names, marking their sectarian identity; certificates were issued when the monks’ master bestowed dharma transmission; and Chan histories of dharma transmission, called “lamp histories” (*dengshi* 燈史), were constantly updated in order to incorporate recently certified heirs to the lineage.

To investigate the various aspects of the institutionalisation of dharma transmission monasteries, I will first examine how Huangbo Monastery was initially revived as a local endeavor under the imperial auspices of the Shenzong 神宗 emperor (reign title: Wanli 萬曆, r. 1573–1620) of the Ming. I will then focus on how the three Huangbo masters transformed the monastery from a local institution to a dharma transmission monastery. Finally, I will explore the various means used by these monks to strengthen the ties of dharma transmission. In conclusion, I suggest that the current discussion about the role of dharma transmission in Chan history can be enriched by focusing on its social functions in the process of institution building.

The Tale of a Local Monastery

Huangbo Monastery was initially a local monastery. It had no clearly defined ownership but was controlled jointly by clergy and local gentry. This was a common situation for Buddhist monasteries in Ming China, as noted by Timothy Brook in his study of gentry patronage in the rebuilding of local monasteries:

Ming Buddhism existed as a congeries of little institutions dispersed randomly across the country, without hierarchy, internal organization, or any regulatory body other than what the state supplied. With the exception

of limited ties among sister monasteries and linked pilgrimage sites, Buddhist institutions did not participate in a larger institutional framework at any level. Unlike European Christianity, Ming Buddhism was not woven into the net of secular power.³

Indeed from the Song dynasty, Buddhist monasteries had become increasingly local; with the exception of a few big state-sponsored temples, they relied on local resources to sustain themselves. Local patrons took control of them and monasteries served local interests, providing religious services for local devotees. Even though the Southern Song 南宋 had attempted to formulate a system of “Five Mountains and Ten Monasteries” (*Wushan shicha* 五山十刹) designed to impose an official hierarchy on Buddhist institutions, this system disappeared without trace in China despite its huge success in Japan.⁴ The revival of Huangbo Monastery in the late Ming was therefore primarily a local effort in its initial phase. Before recounting the transformation of this monastery, let

³ Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p.29.

⁴ This system was transplanted to Japan and became the so-called Gozan 五山 system. See Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzaï Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

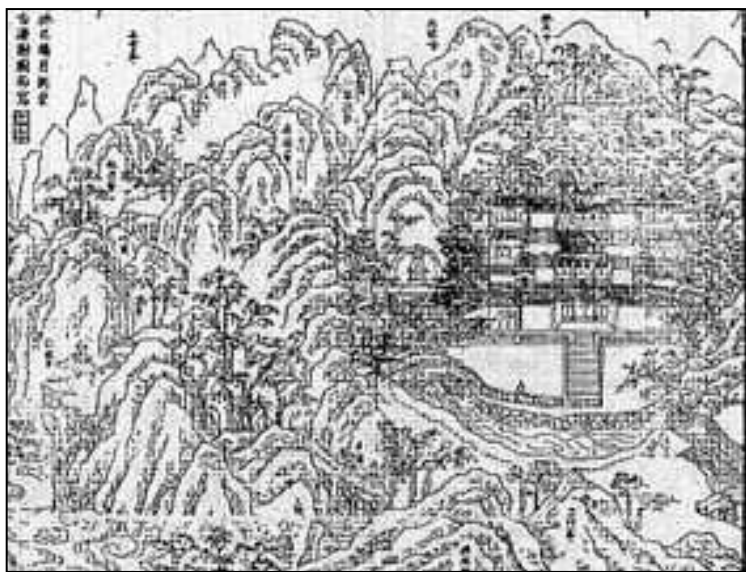
Figure 1

Mount Huangbo in 2002. Photograph by the author



Figure 2

Huangbo monastery in the seventeenth century. From Huangbo shan sizhi, in Xuxiu siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1995-99) vol. 719, p.312



⁵ The temple was rebuilt in 1991 under the patronage of an Indonesian Chinese called Chen Defa. See Xiao Timin, “Huangboshan xiujian gongcheng zai xunsu fazhan” [Reconstruction of Mount Huangbo is making rapid progress], in *Fayin* [Sound of the Dharma] 1 (1991): p.27. For /OVER

dharma was the major religion in the area. According to Edward Schafer, the Min regime invested lavishly in Buddhism not only because of its rulers’ devout belief in the religion but also for political motives to justify their rule.⁸ Based on studies by Chikusa Masaaki, Edward Schafer and Hugh Clark, it is clear that from the time of the Min state, the Fujian region was “notorious” for its overwhelming

us first turn to the locality and examine Huangbo Monastery as one of the many local monasteries in Fujian province, the so-called “Buddhist kingdom”.

Huangbo Monastery and its Environs

Huangbo Monastery is located at the southwest of Fuqing 福清 county (also referred to as Futang 福唐), a coastal area belonging to the larger Fuzhou 福州 prefecture. Close to a small town named Yuxi 漁溪, which is on the transportation route to Southern Fujian cities such as Putian 莆田 and Xiamen 廈門, Huangbo Monastery rests on a foothill of Mount Huangbo.⁵ Mount Huangbo was so named because of the exuberant growth of *huangbo* trees on the mountain.⁶

In the history of Chinese Buddhism, Fujian province gradually became significant after the eighth century, when the exploration of South China brought in thousands of immigrants and nourished a regional culture favorable to the growth of the religion.⁷ From the Western Jin 西晉 (265–316) there had been scattered Buddhist establishments in Fujian. The substantial spread of Buddhism took place during the late Tang and the Five Dynasties 五代, when Fujian became one of the most developed regions in China, characterized by maritime trade and new land cultivation. Under the patronage of the Min 閩 ruler Wang Shenzhi 王審知 (862–925), Bud-

patronage of Buddhism.⁹ Recently, Albert Welter's study of the development of Chan Buddhism there has noted that Chan lineages active in this region were instrumental in forming a national discourse of Chan dharma transmission in the early Song.¹⁰ Throughout the Song, the domination of Buddhism in the Fujian area continued to impress many sojourning officials, and descriptions of remarkable Buddhist establishments can be found in numerous historical records. The modern scholar Kenneth Dean, in his study of popular religions in Fujian, was struck by the unusually significant presence of Buddhism in its history. He provides the following statistics based on the Song *Gazetteer of the Three Mountains* [of Fuzhou] in the *Chunxi reign* (Chunxi sanshan zhi 淳熙三山志):

In the Greater Fuzhou area alone some 38 monasteries were established in the Southern and Northern Dynasties and another 80 were added in the Tang. The Min Empire saw the establishment of 267, and another 331 were added soon after. The Song dynasty saw the establishment of 1406 monasteries. Some 1523 monasteries were still active in the Shaoxing 紹興 period (1131–1162). At a high point, earlier population registration records gave a figure of 51,233 monks and novices for the Northern Fujian area.¹¹

As in most counties around Fuzhou, Buddhism flourished in Fuqing along with the growth in population. Several editions of local gazetteers preserve information about Buddhist institutions in the locality.¹² According to a local gazetteer compiled in 1672, the first dated Buddhist temple can be traced back to AD 528, under the rule of the pious Emperor Wu 武 of the Liang 梁 state.¹³ According to the *Chunxi sanshan zhi*, there were already 196 monasteries in Fuqing during the Southern Song.¹⁴ In the seventeenth century, among 67 existing religious institutions in the area, there were 44 Buddhist monasteries, five Taoist temples, and eighteen institutions of popular religion. Of the Buddhist institutions, one was built in the Han 漢, two were built in the Northern and Southern Dynasties 南北朝, ten in the Tang, seven in the Five Dynasties, thirteen in the Song and six in the Ming. Although the Ming dynasty built fewer

/this *Diamond Sūtra*. See Peter J. Gibbs and Kenneth R. Seddon, *Berberine and Huangbo: Ancient Colorants and Dyes*, British Library Studies in Conservation Science, vol.2 (London: British Library, 1998).

⁷ For the development of Buddhist institutions in the Song, see Chikusa Masaaki, "Sōdai Fukken no shakai to shigen" [Society and monastery in Fujian in the Song dynasty], *Chūgoku Bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū* [Social studies on Chinese Buddhism] (Kyoto: Dohōsha, 1982), p.147.

⁸ Edward Schafer, *The Empire of Min* (Rutland: Tuttle, 1954), pp.91–6.

⁹ Hugh R. Clark, *Community, Trade and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹⁰ See Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹¹ Kenneth Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp.32–3.

¹² One of these gazetteers was compiled by the Huangbo monk Jifei Ruyi 即非如一 (1616–71) in Japan. See Ruyi, *Fuqing xianzhi xulie* [Continued and abbreviated Gazetteer of Fuqing county], reprinted in *Riben cang Zhongguo banjian difang zhi congkan* [Series of rare Chinese local gazetteers preserved in Japan] (Beijing: Shumu Wenxian Chubanshe, 1992). The editor dates this work to 1547 according to Jifei's preface which was written in a "Dingmo" 丁未 year; however, Jifei was not born until 1616, so the correct year should be 1667, when Jifei Ruyi was in Japan.

¹³ Li Chuanjia and Guo Wenxiang, *Fuqing xianzhi* (1672), reprint ed. in *Qingdai guben fangzhi xuan* [Selection of rare local gazetteers of the Qing dynasty], series 2, no.25–26 (Beijing: Xianzhuang Shuju, 2001).

¹⁴ *Chunxi sanshan zhi, Yingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu* [Complete collections of the four treasuries from Wenyuan Pavilion in facsimile], 1500 vols (Taipei: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1983–96), hereafter *Siku quanshu*, vol.484, p.531.

/a photograph of present-day Huangbo, see Figure 1. A glimpse of the original monastery built by Yinyuan can be obtained from the Huangbo mountain gazetteer compiled by Yinyuan. In the 1930s, when Tokiwa Daijō visited Huangbo, the original structure, though dilapidated, remained intact.

⁶ The main product of the Huangbo tree (*Phellodendrum amurense*) is the alkaloid berberine, used as a natural dye and insecticide. It was widely used for impregnating government documents and religious texts

/to make them resistant to insects from as early as the seventh century. For example, the oldest dated printed text found in Dunhuang by Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943), the scroll of the *Diamond Sūtra* (AD 868), had most probably been impregnated with Huangbo extract. For details, see Waku Hakuryū, *Bukkyō shokubutsu jiten* [A dictionary of plants in Buddhism] (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankō-kai, 1979), p.23. The British Library has conducted research to analyse the chemical composition of the dye used in

¹⁵ This is perhaps the most commonly mispronounced Buddhist term. Chinese Buddhists conventionally pronounce it *bore*. See *Ciyuan* [Dictionary of phrases], revised ed. (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1997), p.1428b.

¹⁶ Liang Kejia, *Chunxi sanshan zhi, Sikū quanshu*, vol.484, p.532.

¹⁷ Tokiwa Daijō has questioned this date. See his *Shina Bunka shiseki: kaisetsu* [Investigation of cultural relics in China: explanations] (Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1939–41), vol.6, p.135.

¹⁸ According to legend, Huangbo Xiyun was acquainted with the Xuanzong 宣宗 emperor (r. 847–60) in the Tang dynasty who had once become a novice under Xiyun's tutelage in fear of assassination by his brother, the notorious anti-Buddhist Wuzong 武宗 emperor (r. 841–46). He was also one of Pei Xiu's 裴休 (797–870) most admired Chan masters. The devout Prime Minister Pei Xiu was formerly renowned as a lay disciple of another Chan master, Zongmi 宗密 (780–841). However, during his encounter with Xiyun, Pei Xiu seemed to be "converted" by him and claimed to have Xiyun's "dharma seal". Xiyun's most important work, *Chuanxin fayao* [The Essential Teaching of Mind Transmission], was compiled by Pei Xiu. In addition, Xiyun had taught the extraordinary student Linji Yixuan, who was to spread Huangbo Xiyun's teaching and established the Linji school.

temples, sixteen renovation projects were undertaken, especially in the mid and late Ming. Among these Buddhist institutions, several monasteries (such as Huangbo) remained nationally significant.

Huangbo Monastery stood out from the many local monasteries because its name was associated with the famous Chan master Huangbo Xiyun, who was the teacher of Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (?–867). The history of the monastery can be traced to the mid Tang, in the eighth and ninth centuries, when Buddhism spread to remote areas in the south. Chan monks were particularly active in this process. Many of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng's 慧能 (638–713) disciples, such as Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744) in Hunan 湖南 and Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思 (?–740) in Jiangxi 江西, became leaders of Chan communities. Some of their followers brought Chan teaching to Fujian as well. Nanyue Huairang's disciple Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–88), for example, was believed to have visited Jianning 建寧 prefecture in northern Fujian in 741. In addition, the Chan masters Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (749–814), Dazhu Huihai 大珠慧海, Guishan Lingyou 闍山靈祐 (771–853), Caoshan Benji 曹山本寂 (840–901), and Yunmen Wenyan's 雲門文偃 (864–949) teacher Xuefeng Yicun 雪峰義存 (822–908) were all Fujian natives. Among the many Chan masters sojourning in Fujian, legend has it that one of Huineng's disciples visited Mount Huangbo and built a small cloister that later became the nucleus of Huangbo Monastery. According to a monastic gazetteer of Mount Huangbo compiled in the seventeenth century, in the fifth year of the Zhenyuan 貞元 reign of the Tang (789), the Sixth Patriarch Huineng's disciple Zhenggan 正幹 arrived there and erected a cloister called "the Terrace of Prajñā" (*Boretai* 般若臺).¹⁵ It was said that he had once studied with the Sixth Patriarch Huineng. "When he obtained the principle," the record says, "he bade farewell to his master. The Sixth Patriarch saw him off and told him to stop when he experienced suffering or bitterness (*ku* 苦)"; as the bark of Huangbo trees tastes bitter, the word *ku* implies the assertion that Zhenggan will stay at Huangbo mountain.¹⁶ However, no other records corroborate that the Sixth Patriarch had a disciple called Zhenggan. As Tokiwa Daijō argues, if he had indeed studied with Huineng, his encounter with the master would have occurred when Huineng was very old because when Zhenggan built the cloister at Mount Huangbo, Huineng had already been dead for 76 years.¹⁷

Although Zhenggan's life is still a mystery, Huangbo Xiyun, who also came from Mount Huangbo, is much better known in Chan history. Having being ordained at Mount Huangbo, he left for the Jiangxi area to study with Mazu and became a distinguished Chan master. Later, he renamed the mountain he resided on in Jiangxi "Huangbo", probably because Mount Huangbo in Fujian was his home monastery.¹⁸ Although the fame

of Mount Huangbo in Jiangxi overshadowed the original Mount Huangbo in Fuqing, the latter was very prominent in its locality at least at the beginning of the Southern Song.¹⁹ For example, the *Gazetteer of the Three Mountains in the Chunxi Reign* records that the revenue generated by Huangbo Monastery amounted to five *guan* 貫 (strings of coins) and 558 *wen* 文 (coins).²⁰ This figure indicates how much tax money Huangbo Monastery paid annually. This figure is greater than that for most other Buddhist monasteries in the county and is suggestive of the size of the monastery at that time. Calculated according to the ratio of money that land could produce per *mu* 畝 in Fuqing county (2.4 in this case), the total amount of arable land (probably excluding orchards) owned by the monastery might have amounted to 2,316 *mu*.²¹

From the Song dynasty onward, as Chikusa Masaaki observes, Buddhist institutions had been in a state of steady economic decline.²² Other studies of Fujian Buddhism in the late Ming support Chikusa's conclusion. As T'ien Ju-K'ang notes, Buddhist monasteries in Fujian in the late Ming and early Qing were in a deplorable condition, in no way comparable to their glory in the Tang or early Song. T'ien regards the moral degeneration of Buddhism and the secularization of Buddhist monks as the main causes of Buddhism's decline.²³

In contrast to this pessimistic picture, Timothy Brook's study points to an extraordinary revival of Buddhist monasteries during the late Ming. Monasteries were rebuilt under the sponsorship of the local gentry, whose patronage of Buddhism symbolised the rise of another wave of local activism that further strengthened the power of local society while weakening state control. In particular, Brook documents the revival of four local monasteries, including Tiantong 天童 and Ayuwang 阿育王 (Aśoka), which were occupied by Miyun Yuanwu and his dharma heirs.²⁴ Similarly, Wolfram Eberhard's statistics of Buddhist monasteries in local gazetteers also indicate that in addition to the tenth century, the years between 1550 and 1700 were one of the most active time periods for temple-building activities.²⁵ Judging from the conclusions of these studies, there would seem to be little doubt that a national movement to revive local Buddhist monasteries was taking place at that time.

Huangbo Monastery likewise experienced a revival during this period. The direct impetus for rebuilding the monastery was the destruction caused by incursions of the Wokou (made up of Chinese and Japanese bandits) during the Jiajing 嘉靖 reign (1522–66). From 1545, the year when they first attacked Fuqing, to 1564, when General Qi Jiguan 戚繼光 (1528–87) finally quelled them, pirates visited Fuqing almost every year. During an attack in 1555, the main buildings of Huangbo Monastery were destroyed. Although pirate incursions made the already declining situa-

¹⁹ Because Huangbo Xiyun's Chan thought nourished generations of Linji Chan monks, Mount Huangbo in Jiangxi was revered as the "ancestral hall" of the Linji school in China and Japan.

²⁰ *Chunxi sanshan zhi*, vol.36, p.532. The "money generated" (*chanqian* 產錢) was a unique taxation system implemented in Fujian during the Song. It was calculated in accordance with the quality of arable land, and served as the basis for the spring and autumn taxes. The figure given in the Song gazetteer is marked as the "old" number, which was effective before "remapping of territory" (*jingjie* 經界) in 1141. Officially, one string is equal to a thousand coins. However, owing to the shortage of coins in the Song, one string often contained 770 coins. See Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p.22.

²¹ For the calculation of the tax rate in Song dynasty Fujian, see Chikusa Masaaki, "Sōdai Fukken no shakai to shigen," p.157.

²² *Ibid.*, pp.181–7.

²³ T'ien Ju-k'ang, "The Decadence of Buddhist Temples in Fukien in Late Ming and Early Ch'ing", in E.B. Vermeer, ed., *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), pp.83–101. T'ien's depiction of late-Ming Buddhism as in decline is not completely accurate, however.

²⁴ Brook, *Praying for Power*, pp.255–64.

²⁵ Wolfram Eberhard, "Temple-building Activities in Medieval and Modern China," *Monumenta Serica* 23 (1964): 264–318.

tion of Buddhism in the region worse, a reconstruction of social life in the locality took place after their suppression. This included the rebuilding of Buddhist monasteries such as Huangbo.

Bestowal of the Imperial Canon upon Huangbo Monastery

²⁶ On Shenzong's and his mother's patronage of Buddhism, see Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temple and City Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp.156–61.

²⁷ Ye Xianggao served twice in the grand secretariat, for the Wanli and Tianqi 天啟 (r. 1621–27) emperors respectively. He was elected a member of the grand secretariat in 1607 with six other officials. Despairing of politics, he was eventually permitted to retire in 1614. From 1621 to 1624, he was again summoned by the Tianqi emperor to be the chief grand chancellor (prime minister). For details of his political career, see Leng Dong, *Ye Xianggao yu Mingmo zhengtan* [Ye Xianggao and the politics of the late Ming] (Shantou: Shantou Daxue Chubanshe, 1996). In addition, he was a patron of Christianity. He introduced the Jesuit missionary Giulio Aleni (Chinese name: Ai Rulüe 艾儒略, 1582–1649) to the Fujian region. See my dissertation, "Controversy, Orthodoxy and the Transformation of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-century China" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2002), ch.4.

²⁸ His efforts in this regard are well documented in his voluminous writings, including epitaphs, inscriptions and various essays concerning religion. Huangbo was one of the many monasteries of which he was a patron. For Ye's involvement in the revival of Buddhism in Fujian, see Hayada Yoshio, "Mindai ni okeru Fukken to Bukkyō" [Fujian and Buddhism in the Ming dynasty], *Kenkyū kiyō* [Research Bulletin] (Kyoto Joshi Gaku'en Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūjō) 17 (1987): 111–45, especially pp.132–7. He actively participated in other Buddhist construction projects as well. For example, the magnificent Buddhist pagoda *Ruiyun* 瑞雲塔 [Pagoda of Auspicious Clouds] was erected under his and his son's sponsorship in 1615. For an artistic and architectural analysis of

While the rebuilding after the pirate incursions revived local Buddhism in Fuqing, the true resurrection of Huangbo Monastery could not be realised without the sponsorship of the Shenzong emperor (r. 1573–1620). The emperor's personal interest in accumulating merit for his mother and himself made him one of the greatest patrons of Buddhism in late-imperial China. Under his auspices, Buddhist monasteries throughout the country were rebuilt, eminent monks were sponsored and, most importantly, the Buddhist canon was reprinted and bestowed upon his favorite monasteries as significant "symbolic capital". It would also have become easier for those monasteries receiving imperial copies of the canon to attract further support from their local communities.²⁶

The idea of receiving such a royal benediction became appealing to a monk named Zhongtian Zhengyuan 中天正圓 (1537–1610), who was residing in the dilapidated Huangbo Monastery. Lamenting the monastery's destruction, he was determined to restore the Buddhist tradition there. In 1601, driven by the idea of glorifying Huangbo, he decided to go to Beijing 北京 to request a complete set of the Chinese Tripiṭaka from the Shenzong emperor. After waiting in Beijing in vain for eight years, however, he died there without any response from the imperial house. But in 1607, a Fuqing native named Ye Xianggao 葉向高 (1562–1627) became the grand chancellor of the court. Probably as a response to his petition, in 1614, the Shenzong emperor, in order to accumulate merit for his deceased mother Dowager Empress Cisheng 慈聖 (1546–1614), finally bestowed a complete set of the Buddhist canon upon the monastery. He subsequently changed the name of the monastery from Jiandesi 建德寺 to Wanfusi.

As a Fuqing native who had become prominent in the court, Grand Chancellor Ye Xianggao must have played a significant role in this process.²⁷ Though a weak politician, Ye was a significant patron of religion in his hometown because of his high social status.²⁸ As a witness to the rebuilding of Huangbo, he provided a detailed report of this event:

In the autumn of the Jiayin year [1614], because the emperor could not ease the deep mourning caused by his holy mother's death, he distributed Buddhist canons to selected famous mountains and ancient monasteries

/this tower, see Gustav Ecke, "Two Ashlar Pagodas at Fu-ch'ing in Southern Fu-chien: with Some Additional Notes on Prime-

/minister Yeh Hsiang-kaio," *Bulletin of the Catholic University of Peking* 8 (1931): 49–66.

in order to pray for his mother's blessing. There were six such monasteries in the country, and Huangbo Monastery was among them. The eunuch Wang Ju 王巨 was ordered to accompany the set of the Buddhist canon with 300 taels of gold granted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs as travel expenses. The imperial decree reads: "You are dispatched to guard it [the Buddhist canon] to the monastery".²⁹

Under this royal decree, Huangbo Monastery was successful in securing an important symbolic asset that no doubt went on to attract more support from the local community.³⁰

The Transformation of Huangbo into a Dharma Transmission Monastery

The installation of the imperial canon paved the way for Huangbo's revival. Under the patronage of Ye Xianggao and the local gentry, the monastery was reconstructed. By 1629, almost all the infrastructure was complete. At that time, Huangbo Monastery included not only the main structure of the monastic compound with completed buildings such as the Buddha Hall, Tripitaka storehouse, kitchen and dormitories for clerics, but also some other properties in its vicinity, including nine chapels (*an* 庵), one cloister (*yuan* 院), 346 *mu* of arable land and 25 *mu* of orchards.³¹ No doubt by the 1630s, with strong support from the imperial house and local gentry, Huangbo Monastery was a well established Buddhist institution in the area. It had all the prestige and economic resources that a monastery could have. At this moment, however, the Huangbo abbots Longmi 隆泌 and Longrui 隆瑞, together with other gentry patrons, made an important decision: they would invite an "authentic" Chan master to restore the "ancestral way" and transform Huangbo into "a monastery of ten directions" (*shifang conglin* 十方叢林, that is a public monastery) forever.³²

The Three Huangbo Masters

The candidate they chose was Miyun Yuanwu. Miyun Yuanwu had already gained fame as an heir of the Linji Chan teaching, and claimed to have received the orthodox transmission as the dharma heir of the thirtieth generation in Linji's lineage. Led by Ye Xianggao's grandson Ye Yifan 葉益蕃 (1595-?), the monastery's gentry patrons wrote several letters to Miyun Yuanwu expressing their wish to invite him as abbot.³³

Miyun Yuanwu was a native of Yixing 宜興 county in Changzhou 常州 prefecture.³⁴ (For his portrait, see Figure 3.) He joined the Buddhist order at the age of 29 after reading the *Platform Sutra* (Liuzu tanjing 六祖壇經). His teacher was the Linji master Huanyou Zhengchuan 幻有正

²⁹ Ye Xianggao, "Chongxing Huangbo mu-yuan xu" [Introduction to fund-raising for rebuilding Huangbo], in Yinyuan Longqi ed., *Huangbo shanzhi, Xuxiu Siku quanshu*, vol.719, p.354b.

³⁰ The Huangbo monks must have fully understood the symbolic value of this complete set of the Buddhist canon, because upon their arrival in Japan they initiated a similar project to reproduce the canon (known in Japan as the Ōbaku edition). See Dao'an, *Zhongguo dazangjing diaoke shibua* [History of the printing of the Tripitaka in China] (Taipei: Lushan Chubanshe, 1978), pp.160–73. See also Helen Baroni, "Buddhism in Early Tokugawa Japan: The Case of Obaku Zen and the Monk Tetsugen Dōkō" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1993), pp.209–23, and her book, *Iron Eyes: The Life and Teachings of Obaku Zen Master Tetsugen Doko* (Albany: SUNY Press 2006), pp.39–54.

³¹ Yinyuan Longqi, *Huangbo shanzhi, Xuxiu Siku quanshu*, vol.719, p.324.

³² In a public monastery, as noted below, abbots were selected from among worthy candidates from outside the monastery; the abbacy was not restricted to the disciples of the former abbot (as in a private monastery) or his dharma heirs (as was to become the case in the new 'dharma transmission' monastery system).

³³ These letters are preserved in *Huangbo shanzhi*.

³⁴ For Miyun Yuanwu's role in late Ming Buddhism, see my dissertation, "Orthodoxy, Controversy, and the Transformation of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-century China", especially ch.2.



Figure 3

Master Miyun Yuanwu (1566–1642), by Kita Genki. Reprint from Ōbaku Ingen (*Uji*, 1992). Courtesy of Manpukuji, p.7

傳 (1549–1614). After many years of service, Miyun gained his teacher's trust and eventually received the dharma transmission from him. Miyun developed an iconoclastic teaching style that emphasized the spontaneous use of beating and shouting (*banghe* 棒喝). He became increasingly popular among the literati and enjoyed the reputation of a true Linji master. After Huanyou died, he succeeded to the abbacy of Mount Longchi 龍池 in Changzhou in 1617. He became extremely successful in his career and finally in 1631 (after his tenure at Huangbo) he was invited to Tiantong 天童 Monastery, the most prestigious Buddhist institution in South China.³⁵

Mount Huangbo was one of the six monasteries he presided over as abbot. In the eighth month of the second year of the Chongzhen reign (1629), Miyun received the invitation from Huangbo Monastery and decided to accept the position. (His disciple Feiyin Tongrong, as a native of Fuqing, acted as a mediator.) On 9 May 1630, Miyun Yuanwu arrived at Huangbo and was officially installed as abbot. However, just over eight months later, he received an invitation from Ayuwang Monastery in Ningbo, one of the five most prestigious monasteries in South China, and left Huangbo for his new position. For a big monastery like Huangbo with the intention of becoming a “public” monastery, if the abbacy was vacant, then another eminent monk should be invited from outside, regardless of sectarian considerations. What happened next, however, indicates a subtle change in the nature of the public monastery. A year after Miyun Yuanwu's departure, his dharma heir Feiyin Tongrong, who had actually received dharma transmission during Miyun's presence in Huangbo, was invited to be abbot.

Feiyin Tongrong was a native of Fuqing. (For his portrait, see Figure 4). He became a monk when he was fourteen years old due to family hardship. He had studied first with masters of the Caodong 曹洞 school (a rival of the Linji school); however, his understanding of Chan teaching was not appreciated

³⁵ For Miyun Yuanwu's biography, see /*ban Jiaxing dazang jing* [Ming edition of the Jiaxing Buddhist canon], 40 vols (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1987), vol.10, no.158. in *Miyun chanshi yulu* [Recorded sayings of Chan master Miyun], *Ming-*

by his teachers, who favored scholastic exegesis of scriptures and assiduous meditation. Greatly interested in Miyun's Chan style of spontaneous beating and shouting, he met Miyun in 1622 and was converted to his teaching.³⁶ After several years of study under Miyun, Feiyin finally received his transmission in Huangbo Monastery during Miyun's brief residence there. Feiyin's chronological biography states that he was (as noted) actually instrumental in introducing Miyun to Mount Huangbo; according to this record, Feiyin returned to Fuqing for half a year in 1630 and introduced Miyun Yuanwu's name to the local Fuqing literati, hence the decision of the literati patrons of Mount Huangbo to invite Miyun to be abbot. As a result of Feiyin Tongrong's negotiation, Miyun accepted the position. In a public ceremony in the seventh month of 1630 Miyun conferred upon Feiyin the certificate of dharma transmission, with whisk and robe. When Miyun left in the eighth month, Feiyin was invited to Mafeng 馬峰 cloister in northern Fujian. In 1633, he was invited back to Huangbo as abbot. When Feiyin took over the monastery, he immediately appointed Yinyuan Longqi as Head of the Western Hall (*xitang* 西堂), the position next to the abbot in seniority and the most probable candidate to be the next abbot.

Yinyuan Longqi was also a native of Fuqing. (For his portrait, see Figure 5.) His interest in Buddhism was triggered by a trip to Mount Putuo 普陀, the famous pilgrimage site dedicated to the goddess Guanyin 觀音 (Sk. Avalokiteśvara). In 1612, when he was 21 years old, he embarked on a journey to search for his father, who had been missing since he was young. He visited Mount Putuo in 1614 and was converted to Buddhism. In 1619, he was ordained at Mount Huangbo. Bored by Buddhist exegesis, he was attracted by Miyun's teaching of the direct comprehension of truth through beating and shouting. He studied with Miyun in Jinsu 金粟 Monastery from 1624.³⁷ In 1629, when Miyun Yuanwu was invited to Huangbo, Yinyuan (as a native of Fuqing) was asked to accompany him. When Miyun returned to Ningbo 寧波, Yinyuan remained at Huangbo. He was later invited to a small cloister named Lion Cliff (*Shizi*



Figure 4

Master Feiyin Tongrong (1593–1662), by Kita Genki. Reprint from Ōbaku Ingen (Uji, 1992). Courtesy of Manpukuji, p.8

³⁶ For Feiyin Tongrong's biography, see "Feiyin chanshi jinianlu" [Chronological biography of Chan master Feiyin], in *Feiyin Tongrong chanshi yulu* [Recorded sayings of Chan master Feiyin], *Mingban Jiaxing dazang jing*, vol.26, no.178.

³⁷ For Yinyuan's biography, see Nōnin Kōdō, *Ingen zenji nenpu* [Chronological biography of Chan master Yinyuan] (Kyoto: Zenbunka Kenkyūjo, 1999).

³⁸ See *Shinsan kōtei Ingen zenshū* [Newly collated edition of the complete works of Yinyuan], ed. Hirakubo Akira, 12 vols (Kyoto: Kaimei Shoin, 1979), vol.12, pp.5142–6.

³⁹ For historical background to Yin-yuan's migration to Japan, see my article, "Leaving for the Rising Sun: the Historical Background of Yinyuan's Migration to Japan in 1654", *Asia Major* (3rd series) 17.2 (2004): 89–120.

yan 獅子巖), which also belonged to Huangbo. When Feiyin Tongrong finished his three-year tenure at Huangbo, the monastery's gentry patrons decided to invite Yinyuan Longqi to succeed him. In the fifth month of the tenth year of the Chongzhen reign (1637), Yinyuan received the invitation from Huangbo. Several versions of his biography indicate that this event coincided with his receiving dharma transmission from Feiyin Tongrong. The timing of this conferral is significant, as Yinyuan Longqi refused the first invitation. His biographer suggested that the reason for the refusal was that he had not yet received his certificate of dharma transmission. Eventually the certificate from Feiyin arrived, and Yinyuan officially accepted the invitation.³⁸ With the exception of a short leave of absence in 1652, he presided over Huangbo until he left China in 1654.³⁹

A Dharma Transmission Monastery in the Seventeenth Century

The system of succession at Huangbo described above is typical of the "dharma transmission" monastery as it took shape in the seventeenth century. With the rise of Chan Buddhism, many local monasteries were converted to this new type of monastery. The appointment of a new abbot was significant for both the monastery and the local community; the current abbot would step down, and the monks in the community would give up the opportunity of succeeding to the position. Moreover, all monastic property would be subject to the will of the new abbot, who could be a complete stranger. For the local gentry, this meant that a social force foreign to the locality would intrude into their territory. As a study by Hasebe Yūkei observes, the dharma transmission model where candidates for the abbacy were selected only from among its own dharma heirs, became a popular form of Buddhist institution.

In the dharma transmission monastery, the abbot and his successors belonged to a single dharma lineage. In principle they



Figure 5

Master Yinyuan Longqi (1592–1673), by Kita Genki. Reprint from *Ōbaku bunka* (Uji, 1992). Courtesy of Manpukuji, p.6

served a tenure of three years, the position rotating within the particular dharma family according to seniority.⁴⁰ Not all dharma heirs were available or willing to serve. Therefore, very often, the position would go to several of the most influential or active of the dharma heirs in turn, one of whom would then pass the position to his own dharma heirs; the abbacy would then remain within that lineage (an example from Tiantong Monastery will be outlined in detail below). In his study of seventeenth-century monastic orders, Hasebe concludes that there was a movement to transform more and more Buddhist institutions into dharma transmission monasteries. As Hasebe points out, dharma transmission monasteries in the seventeenth century were different from the public monasteries and private monasteries that had been institutionalised in the Song.

From the time of the Song dynasty, Chinese monasteries had been classified by the government into two basic forms: private monasteries (*jiayi* 甲乙) and public monasteries (*shifang* 十方). According to the *Compendium of Song Administrative Laws during the Qingyuan Reign* (Qingyuan tiaofa shilei 慶元條法事類) compiled in 1203, the private monastery system allowed the position of abbot to be transmitted among the abbot's disciples (not his dharma heirs). The public monastery system required that the new abbot be chosen from outside the monastery rather than from among the ordained disciples of the previous abbot.⁴¹ The dharma transmission monastery system took shape as an offshoot of the public monastery system. In the seventeenth century, dharma transmission became an increasingly important criterion for selecting the new abbot. Strictly speaking, a dharma transmission monastery was neither public nor private. When Huangbo officially became a “public” monastery, it was not a genuine “ten-direction” institution consistently following the abbot-selection principle of a public monastery. Instead, as outlined above, when the first abbot Miyun Yuanwu retired, the abbacy was restricted to his dharma heirs only; and thus Huangbo changed from a “public” monastery to a dharma transmission monastery.

In the *Compendium of Song Administrative Laws*, the Song government made the following stipulations regarding the monastic system:

If the position of abbot of a ten-direction Buddhist or Taoist monastery is vacant, the prefect should commission Buddhist and Taoist administrators to convene the abbots of ten-direction Buddhist and Taoist monasteries in order to elect Buddhist monks or Taoist clerics who are senior in

/that as early as 847, immediately after the death of the Wuzong emperor in the Tang, the Chan master Xianqi 咸啟 requested that the “ten-direction” (that is public) system be adopted in Tiantong Monastery. See *Tiantong sizhi*, in *Zhongguo Fosi shizhi huikan*, vol.13, p.79–80. The ten-direction system was promoted during the Song. As the Song literatus Zhang Shangying 張商英 (1043–1121) observed at the time of the Northern Song, “the Vinaya school uses the hereditary system and Chan uses the ten-direction system”. At the same time, the system was encouraged by the Song government and adopted by other types of monasteries. See Zhang Shangying, “Suizhou Dahongshan Lingfeng si shifang chanyuan ji” [Record of the Lingfeng public monastery at Mount Dahong, Suizhou prefecture], in Rujin, *Zimen jingxun* [Admonitions to Buddhist monks], *Taishō shinsbō daizōkyō* [Newly compiled canon of the Taishō reign], ed. Takakusu Junjirō et al., 100 vols (Tokyo: Daizōkyōkai Shuppan, 1922–33), no.2023, vol.48, p.1096 (references to this work are hereafter abbreviated in the following style: T2023, 48: 1096). For a detailed study of the official monastic system in the Song, see Huang Minzhi, *Songdai Fojiao shehui jingji shilun ji* [Collected essays on the social and economic history of Buddhism in the Song] (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1989). See also T. Griffith Foulk, “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch’an Buddhism,” *Religion and Society in Tang and Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1993), pp.147–208; Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan qinggui* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002); Brook, *Praying for Power*, pp.174–5; and Morten Schlütter, “Vinaya Monasteries, Public Abbacies, and State Control of Buddhism under the Song (960–1279),” *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, ed. William M. Bodiford (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005), pp.136–61.

⁴⁰ Hasebe Yūkei, *Min Shin Bukkyō kyōdanshi kenkyū*, p.293.

⁴¹ The origins of this system, and especially of the emergence of public monasteries, are still not clear. It is generally believed that the

/system was related to the monastic practice of Chan Buddhism in the late Tang and Five Dynasties period and later spread to other monasteries. *Tiantong sizhi* [Monastic Gazetteer of Tiantong Monastery] indicates

⁴² *Qingyuan tiaofa shilei* (reprint, Taipei: Xinwenfeng Chuban Gongsi, 1976), p.476.

⁴³ See Huang Minzhi, *Songdai Fojiao shehui jingjisbi lunji*, p.309.

⁴⁴ Hasebe Yūkei, *Min Shin Bukkyō kyōdan-shi kenkyū*, pp.285–314. During the Republican era, this type of monastic system was formally recognized by the government. In the “Xiuzheng guanli simiao tiaoli” [Revised Regulations for Administering Monasteries and Temples] issued by the government in 1922, three types of Chan monasteries were recognized: *Shifang xuanxian conglin* [Ten-direction monastery (based on) the selection of the worthy], which embodied the spirit of public monasteries as stipulated in the Song; *Tidu conglin* [monastery (based on) tonsure relations], which corresponded to private monasteries; and finally, *Chuanfa conglin* which was for the first time affirmed in a legal document. See Wang Hengyan ed., *Putuoluojia xinzhishi* [New gazetteers of Potalaka] (1931), reprint in *Zhongguo fosi zhi congkan* [Series of Monastic Gazetteers in China], ed. Bai Huawen, Liu Yongming, and Zhang Zhi, 120 vols (Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling Guji Keyinshe, 1996), vol.82, p.510. According to this monastic gazetteer, this document was excerpted from the Presidential Decree (*Dazongtongjiaoling*) no. 12. To my knowledge, an earlier version of this law, “Regulations for Administering Monasteries and Temples” (*Guanli simiao tiaoli*) was first promulgated in October 1917 (Presidential Decree no.66) and in May 1922, upon the request of Cheng Dequan 程德全, and President Xu Shichang 徐世昌 (1855–1939) approved this revised version. See Chenkong, “Minguo Fojiao nianji” [Chronology of Buddhism in the Republican era], in *Minguo Fojiao pian, Xiandai Fojiao xueshu congkan* [Series of current academic studies in Buddhism], ed. Zhang Mantao (Taipei: Dacheng Wenhua Chubanshe, 1977), pp.167–231, especially 178. See also Xie Zhenmin, *Zhonghua Minguo lifa shi* [Legal history of the Republic of China], reprint of original published in 1937 (Beijing: Zhongguo Zhengfa Daxue Chubanshe, 2000), vol.1, pp.522–3. For a brief summary of the modern monastic system, see Lin Ziqing, “Conglin” [Chan groves], in *Zhongguo fojiao* [Chinese Buddhism], no.2, ed. Zhongguo fojiao xiehui, reprint of original published in 1982 (Beijing: Dongfang Chuban Zhongxin,

age and learned, and who are admired and supported by all. Then [the selection] should be verified and reported to the prefect, who decides the appointment after examination. If no one is reported, the authority will elect a candidate from some other area who is admired and widely supported.⁴²

As pointed out in a study by Huang Minzhi 黃敏枝, the benefit of being a ten-direction institution was that a monastery could have a larger pool of candidates for the abbacy, and it was therefore easier to maintain the continuity of religious training. The drawback, however, was that the frequent changes of abbot often led to chaotic management and the loss of monastic property. For this reason, in the late Southern Song, many public monasteries petitioned the government to be allowed to change back to private monastery status.⁴³

Dharma transmission monasteries had originally taken shape when the first Chan patriarch was invited to be abbot in a public monastery. After his tenure, the position of abbot was exclusively reserved for his dharma heirs, who either rotated the position of abbot among themselves or subsequently handed it down to their own dharma heirs.⁴⁴

Miyun Yuanwu, Feiyin Tongrong and Yinyuan Longqi, the three masters who had been abbots of Huangbo, were active in building their own dharma transmission monasteries. For example, according to Ishii Shūdō 石井修道, Mount Tiantong at Ningbo, the most famous Chan monastery in China, became a dharma transmission monastery controlled by Miyun Yuanwu’s dharma heirs for almost a hundred years, from 1630 to 1750.⁴⁵ After Miyun Yuanwu’s death in 1642, its abbacy rotated among his dharma heirs:

- 1642–45: Muchen Daomin 木陳道忞 (1596–1674), Miyun’s dharma heir
 1645–48: Feiyin Tongrong, Miyun’s dharma heir
 1648–52: Linye Tongqi 林野通奇 (1595–1652), Miyun’s dharma heir
 1652–54: Muyun Tongmen 牧雲通門 (1599–1671), Miyun’s dharma heir
 1654–57: Fushi Tongxian 浮石通賢 (1593–1667), Miyun’s dharma heir
 1657–59: Muchen Daomin, Miyun’s dharma heir
 1659–71: Yuan’an Benfeng 遠庵本豐 (1622–82), Muchen Daomin’s dharma heir

/1996), pp.321–4. See also Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism 1900–50* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp.129–78.

⁴⁵ See Ishii Shūdō, “Minmatsu shinsho no Ten-

/dōsan to Mitsuun Engo” [Mount Tiantong in the late Ming and early Qing and Miyun Yuanwu], in *Komazawa daigaku Bukkyō gakubu ronshū* [Forum of Buddhist Research, Komazawa University] 6 (1975): 78–96.

- 1672–86: Shanxiao Benxi 山曉本誓 (1620–86), Muchen Daomin's dharma heir
- 1686–88: Baitang Chaojing 柏堂超靜, Shanxiao Benxi's dharma heir
- 1688–96: Weihong Yuansheng 慰弘元盛, Shanxiao Benxi's dharma heir
- 1696–1705: Tianyue Benzhou 天岳本晝 (1621–1705), Muchen Daomin's dharma heir
- 1705–12: Weizai Chaocheng 偉哉超乘 (1651–1724), Tianyue Benzhou's dharma heir⁴⁶

⁴⁶ See *Xinxiu Tiantong sizhi* (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 1997), p.199.

It is clear from this list that Tiantong Monastery was under the firm control of a lineage of dharma transmission. After Miyun Yuanwu's death in 1642, the position of abbot of Tiantong Monastery rotated among several of his most important dharma heirs. After several decades, it became clear that the position belonged to Muchen Daomin's lineage. This institutional change initiated by Miyun Yuanwu was significant in several ways. First, life became centered on a charismatic figure who had certified dharma transmission. Second, succession as abbot was restricted to that master's dharma heirs. Third, because these abbots would most probably be invited to another monastery after their tenure, these monasteries formed unofficial relationships of affiliation bonded by the dharma transmission of their presiding abbots.

The Rationalisation of Dharma Transmission

Huangbo Monastery was built upon the ideal of the dharma transmission monastery. For such a monastery, the central issue is the rationalisation of dharma transmission that governs monastic bureaucracy and organizes the clerical hierarchy among monks, as the abbacy succession hinges upon a clearly defined line of transmission. Therefore the Huangbo masters made every effort to justify, codify and perpetuate the practice of dharma transmission. Their systematic endeavors included the following: regularly updating the genealogy of dharma transmission; regulating the naming practice of dharma heirs and disciples; issuing certificates and credentials of dharma transmission; and monopolising the succession system of the abbacy. The following sections will discuss each of these practices.

Updating the Genealogy of Dharma Transmission

Just like any other lineage organization in Chinese society, a Chan lineage maintains its continuity with the past through constantly updating its records, in this case the records of dharma transmission. Recording the

⁴⁷ Feiyin's book was provocative because the issue of Tianhuang Daowu 天皇道悟 (748–807) and Tianwang Daowu 天王道悟 (738–819) was brought to light. Both monks lived in Jingzhou 荊州 but in different monasteries. Tianwang Daowu was Mazu Daoyi's 馬祖道一 dharma heir and Tianhuang Daowu was Shitou Xiqian's 石頭希遷 (700–90). The debate concerns the lineage affiliation of Longtan Chongxin 龍潭崇信. The official Chan transmission records put him under Tianhuang Daowu, while some contended that he should be the heir of Tianwang Daowu. The change of his lineage according to his master would affect the affiliations of two sub-lineages derived from him, namely Fayen 法眼 and Yunmen 雲門. For this dispute, see my dissertation, "Orthodoxy, Controversy and the Transformation of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-century China", ch.3. See also my book *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-century China* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). The examples set by Miyun and Feiyin greatly influenced Yinyuan and his disciples when their sense of identity started to take shape in Huangbo in China and then later in Japan. In 1657, Feiyin Tongrong's *Wudeng yantong* was reprinted in Japan by Yinyuan Longqi, symbolising the beginning of a stricter dharma transmission practice.

transmission fulfils two functions that are crucial to the life of a lineage: the production of new heirs is faithfully recorded, and this information is made available to the public. Through these practices a lineage, regardless that each individual member might be separated geographically, is bonded in a textualised relationship.

The production of Chan genealogies was phenomenal during the seventeenth century, when voluminous writings on Chan genealogy were composed and promoted. Monks devoted their energies to historical research in order to clarify obscure transmissions. The Huangbo masters were extremely active in compiling, modifying and publishing new versions of their genealogy, even when their efforts were met with discontent. The first systematic effort was begun when Miyun Yuanwu arrived in Huangbo. A local scholar named Wu Tong 吳侗 presented him with a version of the Chan genealogy that he had composed. Miyun took the project and asked his disciple Muchen Daomin to complete it. The final version, entitled *Generational Genealogy of Chan Lamps* (Chandeng shipu 禪燈世譜), was published in 1632. In this book the Chan genealogy is organized into a chart and the names of Chan masters are listed according to their dharma transmission relationships. The most recent recipients of dharma transmission were updated. Those eminent monks who had no proof of their dharma transmission were relegated to the category "lineage unknown" (*sifa weixiang* 嗣法未詳).

The second major effort was Feiyin Tongrong's genealogical work *Strict Genealogy of the Five Chan Schools* (*Wudeng yantong* 五燈嚴統), published in 1654. Like his master, Feiyin Tongrong maintained a strict definition of dharma transmission. He demanded the authentication of all Chan masters, even those who were widely respected, as proven spiritual leaders. In his work, every line of transmission without exception came under critical and rational scrutiny, and the ideal principle of face-to-face transmission was supposed to be upheld. For him, if a Chan master had not studied with a teacher in person, he was not qualified to claim that teacher's dharma transmission. Feiyin Tongrong even deliberately changed the conventionally accepted genealogy on the basis of newly discovered inscriptions of ancient Chan masters. As a result, this "strict sense" of dharma transmission led to contestation and resentments in the Buddhist world. In 1654, a notorious lawsuit over Feiyin's *Strict Genealogy* broke out and caused turmoil in Chan communities.⁴⁷

The Naming Practice of Dharma Heirs and Disciples

The Huangbo masters' practice of naming newly initiated novices and dharma heirs also reflected the rationalisation of dharma transmission. For example, characters contained in transmission poems were used in

monks' names as markers of a common generation in order to construct a sectarian consciousness. The transmission poems, usually written by the founder of a lineage, provide hierarchical structures for the lineage in that each new member of a given generation will take the same word from the poem (the next word in sequence after the word used by the previous generation) as his generation character (*beizi* 輩字). All members of the same generation will have this identical generation character. As a result, even if a lineage develops into a multi-branched organization, its distant relatives can still identify each other through tracing their positions and ranks according to the transmission poem. In this sense, the significance of a transmission poem is not its literary merit; rather, it is a device for institution building. The key to writing such a poem is that no character can be used more than once; otherwise, members of different generations would have the same character as their identity marker and there would be confusion about their rank in the entire hierarchy. If the lineage develops to the extent that all the characters in the poem are used up, a new poem can be composed to supplement the original one. Although the use of generational names from transmission poems was not unique in the seventeenth century, the Huangbo masters greatly strengthened this practice (as is evident in their extant transmission poems).

Monastic communities in China are prototype lineage organizations based on a system of fictive reproduction that produces multiple layers of master-disciple relationships. At the bottom of this system is the ordination ceremony, which creates what Holmes Welch calls the "tonsure family" (*tidu zongpai* 剃度宗派): under a certain master a disciple's hair is shaved and he is given a name carrying the generation character of the master's tonsure lineage. The novice's monastic identity is thus established as a member of this tonsure family, and he is accordingly woven into the relationship web of an ordination lineage. Beyond this, a fully ordained monk can acquire an additional identity through dharma transmission, whereby he is initiated into a more exclusive fellowship that grants him prestige and qualifies him to hold office in the monastic bureaucracy, even to become the abbot of a monastery.

A monk's name mattered, because the Chan dharma transmission closely mirrored the practice of lineage organizations in the secular world. Many secular naming practices were introduced into the Chan world. From the time of Master Dao'an 道安 (314–85), *shi* 釋, the first character of the Chinese transliteration of the name of Śākyamuni, had been accepted as the universal "surname" for all Chinese Buddhist monks.⁴⁸ This name was often used by officials and scholars to identify Buddhist clergy in historical sources. Besides their formal dharma names, monks also have "special names" (*biehao* 別號). According to Buddhist historiography, this tradition

⁴⁸ See *Yichu liutie* [Monk Yichu's six chapters], ed. Makita Tairyō (reprint, Kyoto: Hōyū Shoten, 1991), p.3a.

⁴⁹ See *Sbishi tongjian* [Compendium of Buddhist history], vol.3, in *Wanzi Xuzangjing* [Wan continuation of the Buddhist canon] (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1976), vol.131, p.842.

⁵⁰ These poems can be found in *Huangbo shanzhi*, in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu*, vol.719, p.309. More complete transmission poems can be found in “Zong Jiao Lü zhujia yanpai” [Lineage charts of Chan, Teaching and Vinaya schools] in *Wanzi Xuzangjing*, vol.150, pp.524–41 and also in *Chanmen risong* [Daily liturgy of Chan Buddhism] (Tianning version) (Taipei: Laogu Wenhua Shiye Gongsi, 1986). The following is the transmission poem used by Miyun Yuanwu’s lineage. It was believed to have been initiated by Xuefeng Zuding. See *Chanmen risong*, p.386.

The ancestral Way honors discipline and meditation.

How just, broad, correct, perfect, and all-embracing it is!

Its practice is so superior that it illuminates the ultimate reality.

Its complete understanding will result in the realisation of the meaning of emptiness.

祖道戒定宗/方廣正圓通
行超明實際/了達悟真空

Yinyuan Longqi was Feiyin’s dharma heir, but according to the *Huangbo shan sizhi* he maintained his name from the Huangbo tonsure line, as the following transmission poem suggests:

The ancestral teaching is cherished in mind; its merits and practices are perfect and harmonious.

Its good fruits are bliss and wisdom; the true awakening rises and prevails.

Human nature and the Way are originally pure; they expand as such and penetrate the truth.

Compassion and wisdom are spread; the root is illuminated and the lineage is continued.

One mind can reach its goal by itself; and it can comprehend completely the center of mystery.

Forever must [we] penetrate the supreme teaching, and greatly glorify our ancestors.

祖法志懷/德行圓融/福慧善果/正覺興隆
性道元淨/衍如真通/弘仁廣智/明本紹宗
一心自達/超悟玄中/永徹上乘/大顯祖翁

was started by Huiyue 惠約 (452–535), who named himself “the wise one” (*zhizhe* 智者) in 523.⁴⁹ Therefore, a monk’s conventional name is usually a four-character compound. For Chan masters, later generations began to add titles or the names of monasteries to their names. For example, Huineng was titled “the Sixth Patriarch”; Xiyun was named after Huangbo mountain where he had resided; and the name of the founding father of the Linji 臨濟 school, “Yixuan” 義玄, was supplemented with the name of Linji Monastery. In the Song dynasty, Chan monks also gave themselves courtesy names or style names (*zi* 字) in addition to the dharma names they had received in their ordination ceremonies. For example, the monk Huihong 慧洪 (1071–1128) named himself “Juefan” 覺範 and the monk Keqin 克勤 (1063–1135) called himself “Yuanwu” 圓悟.

The names of Chan monks in the Ming dynasty also followed this tradition, and because of a rising sectarian consciousness monks were inclined to record and publicize their naming practices. A common naming practice can be summarized as follows. First, a dharma name was given when a monk was ordained as a novice. This name was to be permanent, although it could be altered if the monk decided to change his affiliation. The significance of the dharma name, as we have seen, was that it carried a generation character as an identity marker, after the naming practice of secular lineage organizations. Similarly each master had his own transmission poem for his line of ordination, just as a lineage did. For example, Yinyuan Longqi had the style name “Yinyuan” and the dharma name “Longqi”. The first character in his dharma name, *long* 隆, indicates that he was ordained in Huangbo Monastery, as this character is taken from that monastery’s transmission poem. Feiyin Tongrong bore the character *tong*, which indicates that he would have been ordained under Miyun Yuanwu, whose transmission poem designates the next generation character as *tong*.⁵⁰ In many cases, out of respect for the lineage, this character marking the master-disciple relationship was avoided and is simply omitted from official documents or Buddhist historical sources. Thus “Miyun Yuanwu” becomes “Miyun Wu”, “Feiyin Tongrong” becomes “Feiyin Rong”, and “Yinyuan Longqi” becomes “Yinyuan Qi”.

This naming system was based on the tonsure relationship formed between master and disciple regardless of dharma transmission. Like a newborn baby, a novice was given a name by his ordination master upon initiation. This name could later be changed according to the monk’s personal wish, especially with the occurrence of dharma transmission, as dharma transmission could be regarded as a second initiation whereby a monk would be incorporated into another religious order in addition to his original tonsure family. When dharma transmission was bestowed upon a monk, he could choose to change his name according to his new master’s transmission poem, or he could keep his original name. He might also decide to continue both his new master’s tonsure transmission and dharma

transmission. Feiyin Tongrong, for example, initially received the dharma name “Mingmi” 明密 from his Caodong teacher. The name was changed to “Tongrong” when he received dharma transmission from Miyun, and almost all of his immediate disciples were given the generation character *xing* in accordance with Miyun’s transmission poem. Another famous example was the conversion of the Japanese monk Ryōkei Shōsen 龍溪宗潛 (1602–70), a Zen master originally from Myōshinji 妙心寺. He was attracted to Yinyuan Longqi’s teaching and changed his name (to Shōsen 性潛) in order to take on Yinyuan’s transmission character. He was eventually rewarded with Yinyuan’s dharma transmission in 1664; however, he was permanently removed from the Myōshinji, his original sectarian affiliation.⁵¹

Usually monks would keep their original names and carry on their own tonsure tradition without interruption. Yinyuan Longqi, for instance, did not change his name upon receiving Feiyin’s transmission. He remained in the Huangbo tonsure tradition, and his disciples in both China and Japan carried the Huangbo generation characters rather than those of his masters (Miyun and Feiyin). It was also possible for a newly initiated master to begin a new transmission line based on a new transmission poem beginning with his own name. Miyun Yuanwu’s dharma heir Muchen Daomin was one such ambitious monk who composed his own transmission poem and thus started a new transmission line.⁵²

In short, for Chinese monks in the seventeenth century, any given name had to be traceable within the large lineage structures. In this way, a sense of “family” was created and reinforced.

The Use of Transmission Certificates

For the Huangbo masters, issuing transmission certificates was the most important practice for certifying dharma heirs and avoiding frauds. Certificates were widely used in Chan communities as a means of proving the authenticity of dharma transmission. Already in the Song dynasty Chan masters were concerned with the authenticity of transmission and introduced certificates; such certificates can in fact be traced back as early as the thirteenth century when Dōgen visited China and observed their use. At that time, the certificate was called a “succession document” (*sisshu* 嗣書). During Dōgen’s visit in China from 1223 to 1227, he saw several documents of succession. One of them was a document belonging to Chuanzangzhu 傳藏主 of the Yangqi 楊岐 branch of the Linji school. According to Dōgen, this document lists all the patriarchs’ names starting from the Seven Buddhas of the past. The line passes through Linji (the 45th patriarch), continues with the names of Linji’s successors, and ends with the last successor before Chuanzangzhu. All these names form a circle.

⁵¹ See Helen Baroni, *Obaku Zen* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000), pp.76, 146.

⁵² Muchen Daomin’s transmission poem is as follows:

The Way came into mysterious existence before Buddhas and patriarchs.

It illuminates as the bright sun shines in the middle of the sky.

Its numinous origin nourishes all and the wind of compassion reaches everywhere.

It is the true lamp that illumines the world and will be upheld forever.

道本玄成佛祖先/明如日麗中天
靈源廣潤慈風溥/炤世真燈萬古懸

See his “Fapai shuo” [On the lineage of dharma transmission] in his *Busbuitai ji* [Collections of Bushui Pavilion], *Zhonghua dazang jing di er ji* [The great Chinese canon, second series] (Taipei: Xiuding Zhonghua Dazang Jinghui, 1962), vol.102, p.42597. Note that the third character in the poem, “xuan” 玄 was later changed to “yuan” 元 in order to avoid the taboo covering the Kangxi 康熙 Emperor’s personal name “Xuanye” 玄燁. Because Shouzun Yuanzhao 壽尊源昭 (1647–1729), a dharma heir of Muchen Daomin’s disciple Kuang-yuan Benkao 圓本稿, transmitted the Linji lineage to Vietnam in 1665 and founded the Nguyễn-Thiều (Chin: Yuanzhao) school within the Lâm-Tê (Chin: Linji) tradition, this transmission poem was also used in Vietnamese Thiên (Chin: Chan) Buddhism. However, the third character “xuan” in the first line was changed to “yuan” 源; the third character “gao” 杲 in the second line to “hong” 紅, and the first character “zhao” 炤 in the fourth line to “zhao” 照. See Thich Thien-An, “Nguyễn-Thieu Zen School: A Sect of Lin-chi Tradition Contemporary with Japanese Ōbaku Zen”, in his *Buddhism and Zen in Vietnam: In Relation to the Development of Buddhism in Asia*, edited, annotated and developed by Carol Smith (Rutland and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1975), pp.148–61.

⁵³ See Takashi James Kodera, *Dogen's Formative Years in China: A Historical Study and Annotated Translation of the Hōkyō-ki* (Boulder: Prajna Press, 1980), p.43.

⁵⁴ For a photocopy of Dōgen's certificate, see Okubo Dōshū, ed., *Kobon kōtei Shobōgenzō* [A collated edition of ancient manuscripts of *Shobōgenzō*] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1971), p.343.

⁵⁵ Although Buddhists at that time believed that the name of the document came from Linji himself, there is no evidence to support this claim.

⁵⁶ Hasebe Yūkei, *Min Shin Bukkyō kyōdanshi kenkyū*, p.362.

Dōgen also described in some detail the Linji master Wuji Liaopai's 無際了派 document of succession, which he saw in 1224:

The lineage of the buddhas and patriarchs was written on a white silk scroll with a front cover made of red brocade and a roller made of jade. It was nine *ts'un* wide [approximately ten inches] and seven *ch'ih* long [approximately seven feet].⁵³

This scroll was conferred upon Wuji Liaopai by Dahui Zonggao's disciple Fozhao Deguang 佛照德光 (1121–1203). Dōgen recorded its format as follows:

Tripitaka Master Liaopai, a native of Wuwei, is now my son [disciple]. [Fozhao] Deguang served Master [Zong]gao of Mount Jingshan, Jingshan [Zonggao] was an heir of Jiashan [Kel]qing; [Kel]qing was an heir of Yangqi [Falyan...].⁵⁴

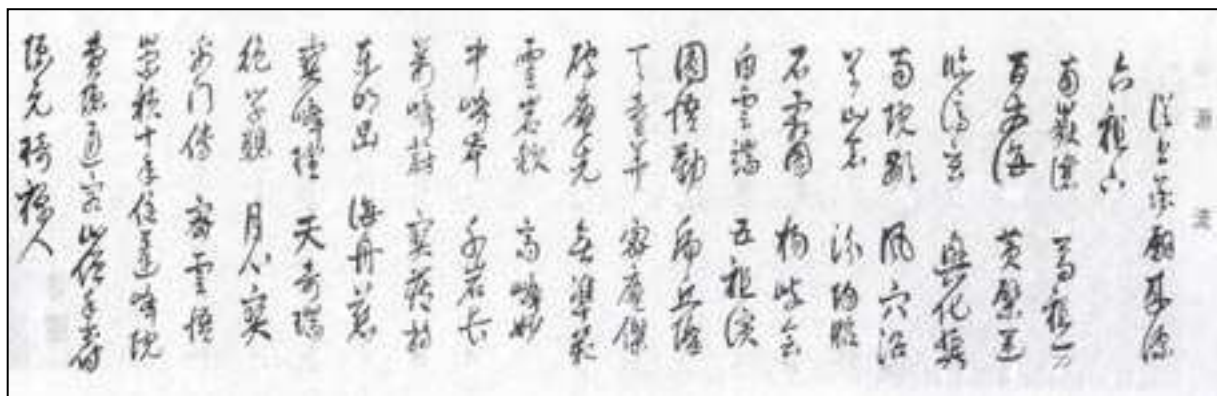
The text goes on until it traces the origin of transmission back to Linji.

During the seventeenth century, rather than being called *sisbu*, transmission certificates were generally referred to as *yuanliu* 源流 (origins and streams).⁵⁵ The earliest record of the use of *yuanliu*, as Hasebe points out, indicates that Miyun Yuanwu's master Huanyou Zhengchuan first received such a certificate from his master Xiaoyan Debao 笑巖德寶 (1512–81).⁵⁶ Miyun Yuanwu continued this tradition, and through him and his disciples *yuanliu* were promoted and widely accepted as credentials for certified dharma transmission.

Fortunately, one such transmission certificate survives from the seventeenth century. The certificate belonging to Yinyuan Longqi, issued to

Figure 6

Yinyuan Longqi's Certificate of Dharma Transmission. Hayashi Yukimitsu (ed.), Ōbaku bunka [Ōbaku culture] (Uji: Manpukuji, 1972), p.32, no.20



him by Feiyin Tongrong in the tenth year of the Chongzhen 崇禎 reign (1637), was preserved in Manpukuji⁵⁷ (Figure 6). As noted above, according to Yinyuan Longqi's chronological biography, Feiyin had already left Huangbo for Lianfeng 蓮峰 cloister in Jianyang 建陽. In that year Yinyuan was living in solitude in one of Huangbo Monastery's sub-temples; later, when he received this document from Feiyin's messenger, he accepted the invitation to be abbot at Huangbo Monastery.

The certificate takes the form of a long scroll, with all the patriarchs' names listed as follows:

From above *laiyuan* 來源 [origination] is inherited:

Under the Sixth Patriarch

Nanyue [Huai]rang: the first generation

Mazu [Daolyi]: the second generation

Baizhang [Huai]hai: the third generation

Huangbo [Xilyun]: the fourth generation

Linji [Yi]xuan: the fifth generation

.....

Yuanwu [Ke]qin: the fifteenth generation

Huqiu [Shao]long: the sixteenth generation

.....

Yuxin [De]bao: the thirty-second generation

Huangyou [Zheng]chuan: the thirty-three generation

Miyun [Yuan]wu: the thirty-fourth generation

In the tenth year of the Chongzhen reign, Feiyin Tongrong of Lianfeng Cloister writes by hand and confers [it] upon the Chan person Yinyuan [Long]qi.⁵⁸

Although the name of this document and the actual wording of its contents are different from those of its earlier counterpart, the function of these credentials is the same: authenticating the transmission of the Buddhist dharma. In association with the issuing of a transmission certificate, the recipient is supposed to compose a eulogy to laud his predecessors. This genre of composition, often titled "Eulogy of the Origins and Streams" (*Yuanliu song* 源流頌), usually consists of brief biographies of all previous masters with the new recipient's own encomium attached after each biography. These were often published and widely circulated as a public notice of the conferral and acceptance of dharma transmission.⁵⁹

Selecting a New Abbot

During the seventeenth century, when the dharma transmission system was taking shape, certain conventions regarding the abbot's succession were followed. For example, after Miyun Yuanwu took over a monastery, the next abbot would be selected from among his certified dharma heirs,

⁵⁷ Holmes Welch interviewed Japanese monks in Manpukuji about the issuing of dharma transmission, but they did not comment on the modern form of the certificate he presented. See Holmes Welch, "Dharma Scrolls and the Succession of Abbots in Chinese Monasteries," *Young Pao* 50 (1963): 143, at n.136.

⁵⁸ See Hayashi Yukimitsu, ed., *Ōbaku bunka* [Ōbaku culture] (Uji: Manpukuji, 1972), p.32, number 20.

⁵⁹ For details, see Hasebe Yūkei, *Min Shin Bukkyō kyōdanshi kenkyū*, pp.362–6.

⁶⁰ Feiyin Tongrong, “Shuo Muchen qi Tiantong laoheshang” [On Muchen’s cheating of Master Tiantong (Miyun Yuanwu)], in *Feiyin chanshi bieji* [Separate collection of Chan master Feiyin], vol.15, p.7. This is a rare manuscript preserved in Komazawa University Library. I wish to thank Harvard-Yenching Library for obtaining this rare source from Japan.

⁶¹ *Ōbaku shingi*, T2607, 82: 780–1. Translated by Helen Baroni. See her *Obaku Zen*, p.92.

⁶² *Ibid.*, T 82: 781. My translation.

who rotated the position among themselves by drawing lots. Feiyin Tongrong, in a dispute with his dharma brother Muchen Daomin about the succession in Tiantong Monastery, described this practice as follows:

Our deceased great master [Miyun Yuanwu] had been abbot in six great monasteries during his lifetime. Every time he retired from the position and was about to propose a successor, he practised divination at the Weitou 韋陀 [Vitāsoka] hall and also drew lots before patrons and eminent monks. Later, in Tiantong Monastery, he often used this method in particular.⁶⁰

The same practice was followed in Huangbo Monastery. After Yinyuan Longqi’s long residence, the abbacy went to his dharma heirs and rotated among them. However, this unwritten convention was not codified until 1673, when the Ōbaku Pure Rules (*Ōbaku shingi* 黃檗清規) were compiled in Japan. At the end of this version of monastic codes, Yinyuan’s will (*Rōjin fushokugo* 老人附囑語) was appended as part of the codified rules for all Ōbaku monasteries. It stipulates the procedure of abbot succession in Manpukuji, which had been developed in China:

Select the third abbot and so on from among my Dharma heirs according to their rank. After they have served in turn, go on to the next generation of disciples [literally, Dharma grandchildren]. By all means select virtuous monks already deserving of esteem who will successfully promote the Dharma style⁶¹

Other parts of Yinyuan’s will articulate the same exclusiveness of his lineage and the intention to monopolise a monastic network. For example, Yinyuan stipulated that “only dharma heirs under the Ōbaku lineage can be included in the Hall of Conjoining Lamps (*Liandeng tang* 聯燈堂). If not in receipt of transmission, even those who are virtuous and eminent may not be intermingled”.⁶² These statements set clear rules for selecting abbots: the candidate pool was limited to Yinyuan’s own certified dharma heirs. The abbot’s succession in a dharma transmission monastery was thus formally institutionalised. Later the codification of this system was achieved in Japan, but it had already been widely accepted and practised in Huangbo and other monasteries in China.

Conclusion

This paper focusses on a Buddhist institution that was revived by a group of Chan monks in the seventeenth century. I have demonstrated how the three Chan masters took control of Huangbo Monastery, a local

institution, and turned it into a dharma transmission monastery, which was to become a popular form of Buddhist institution in seventeenth-century China. By way of a series of efforts to institutionalise the changes centering on the practice of dharma transmission, Huangbo Monastery became a model Chan institution, embodying the Chan ideal cherished by Buddhist clergy and laity at that time. From the perspective of this process of institution building, it becomes clear that the practice of dharma transmission was essential in a monastery dominated by Chan monks.

When we discuss the issue of dharma transmission, we must situate it in the wider history of Chan Buddhism. Certainly, the concept and practice of dharma transmission had appeared in early Chan Buddhism and was further developed in the Song and Yuan as many studies show. It is clear from these studies that Chan dharma transmissions, though these were very often fabricated, served as a rhetorical tool for implementing Chan ideology.⁶³ However, it is not enough simply to point to its rhetorical nature. The discourse of dharma transmission had profound social and institutional functions within Chan communities. As documented in this study, for Chan monks in the seventeenth century, dharma transmission was more than mere rhetoric. It had all kinds of implications in real monastic life.

As a result of the emergence of the dharma transmission monastic system, an institutional network took shape and connected once disparate and localised Buddhist institutions. Within this monastic world, dharma transmission became a powerful tool to extend an institutional network that covered most prominent Buddhist centers in China, and became the core organizational principle of monasteries like Huangbo. Even in the early-twentieth century, dharma transmission still influenced the Buddhist world. Holmes Welch, based on his study of Chinese Buddhism in the Republican era, correctly points out the role of dharma transmission in the construction of a national Buddhist network. Welch notes that dharma scrolls (*fajuan* 法卷), a modern form of transmission certificate, “were alike in contributing a network of connection that covered most of the Chinese Sangha”.⁶⁴ For him, in many respects, a Chan lineage is analogous to a natural family relationship in China. Although the networks bonded by dharma transmission were sometimes weak, “[t]hey were links that might grow stronger if circumstances were favorable”. Welch’s conclusion is significant for us in understanding the constructive role of dharma transmission:

All these networks of affiliation were superimposed one upon the other, loosely and haphazardly binding together in different combinations the hundreds of big monasteries and tens of thousands of small temples in

⁶³ For some of the studies along these lines, see Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); T. Griffith Foulk, “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Song Ch’an Buddhism,” in *Religion and Society in Tang and Sung China*, pp.147–208; John McRae, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

⁶⁴ Certificates are still used in modern Chinese Buddhism, as Holmes Welch has observed. He notes that dharma transmission was still being practised in the early twentieth century within Chinese monasticism. As he documents through interviews, at the beginning of the twentieth century there existed a document called the “dharma scroll”, sometimes also called a “table of succession” (*chuanchengbiao* 傳承表), distributed among eminent monks, especially those who held the post of abbot. Basically, this document, as a genealogy of patriarchs, serves as an attestation (*yinke* 印可) given by his master to a disciple’s accomplishment. See Holmes Welch, “Dharma Scrolls and the Succession of Abbots in Chinese Monasteries,” p.144.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.146.

China. Despite their haphazardness they were a more genuine cement, I think, than the various Buddhist associations that sprang up after the revolution of 1911. Even when these associations were national in scope, their main function was to serve as intermediaries in dealing with the government.⁶⁵

Here Welch refers to dharma transmission as forming the fundamental network that connected all Chinese monasteries. The role of dharma transmission was considerably weakened in the Republican era, and the various Buddhist associations emerging in modern China, including those that have undergone “reform” by the Chinese government, are only superficially connected in comparison to the dharma transmission system. However, as I have shown, in the seventeenth century when the social and cultural circumstances were favorable to Chan Buddhism, dharma transmission became the essential practice for reviving Buddhist institutions.

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