

***The Late Ming: A Monk's Rules for the Nunnery
Unobstructed in Filiality and Righteousness***

The abbess Zhujin 祿錦 (1548-1614)¹ presided in the final decade of her life over a small community of disciples at the nunnery Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed, located near the market in Hangzhou. The nunnery had been built through the efforts of a few wealthy local families with the help of one of the most prominent late sixteenth-century monks, Lianchi Zhuhong 祿宏 (1535-1615), his monk disciples, and numerous laypersons. The participation of Zhuhong who by then had long been the abbot of Cloud Dwelling Monastery located near the West Lake in Hangzhou was no accident. After all, the abbess was his wife.

When Zhuhong left home to be ordained in 1565, after the death of his parents, his young wife née Tang remained behind. A mere nineteen *sui*, she spent close to three decades attending to his birth mother. Having no sons of her own, his clan persuaded her to adopt a nephew for the purpose of continuing the ancestral rites. At forty-seven *sui*, upon the death of Zhuhong's birth mother, she decided to relinquish all property, take the tonsure, and live the life of a nun. In her fifty-eighth year, the nunnery Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed was finally completed and she was formally installed as the abbess. What little we know of the history of this nunnery, the life of the abbess, and the monastic culture Zhuhong attempted to instill there is found in a remarkable set of documents published under the title *A Record of the Nunnery Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed* (*Xiaoyi wu'ai an lu* 孝義無礙庵錄).²

The seven documents in the record include a stele inscription written to commemorate the opening of the nunnery, two sets of final admonitions, two biographies: one of the nun Zhujin and another of a cherished disciple, communal rules for the nunnery, and a stupa epitaph. Despite its many limitations, finding such a rich

¹ Her biography is found in the eighteenth-century collection *A Record of Pure Land Sages* (*Jingtu shengxian lu* 淨土聖賢錄) compiled by Peng Xisu 彭希涑 (1761-1793).

² The entire *Record* is readily available and was published in at least three places: The Jiaying canon; 雲棲紀事 *Yunqi jishi* 雲棲紀事, in *Zhongguo fosi zhi congkan* 中國佛寺誌叢刊, vol. 76 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2006); Zhuhong, *Lianchi dashi quanji* 蓮池大師全集. reprint of *Yunqi fahui* 雲棲法彙 (Nanjing: Jinling kejing chu, 1897, 4th ed., Taipei: Dongchu chubanshe, 1992). A few sections were also printed in *Yunqi zhi* 雲栖志, edited by Xiang Shiyuan 項士元. In *Zhongguo fosi zhi congkan* 中國佛寺志叢刊, vol. 75 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2006).

trove of documents on a late sixteenth-century nunnery is, unfortunately, quite rare. However, it must be said that much of this material was created in response to heated contestations over familial versus monastic property in consequence of the abbess's adoption of an heir. Most of the seven documents are almost prosecutorial in pre-empting any possible familial claim to monastic property.

Zhuhong's only son by his first wife died in infancy and his marriage to the abbess was childless, thus his clan the locally prominent Shen 沈 family, pushed Zhujin to adopt one of their nephews. When Zhuhong was informed of this turn of events, he became incensed and attempted to annul the process. Unsuccessful in that effort, he made several attempts to thwart the nephew and his clan's claims to a greater share of material assets, most especially, an apparent scheme to take possession of the nunnery and its property once Zhujin passed away. Because this history is intertwined with what we know about the nunnery, it will be addressed in discussions of Zhujin's biography.

Biographies of Zhuhong highlight his reputation for the strict cultivation of monastic precepts and attempts at monastic reform seen most clearly in a number of precept texts he compiled for both monastic and lay communities.³ For the monks at Cloud Dwelling Monastery Zhuhong created both a shorter distillation of the 250 rules for monks and a document outlining rules for communal living. Lists extracting the most salient of the many rules codified in the *Four-Part Vinaya* surely made it easier for monks and nuns to focus on the rules they most needed to master with respect to communal living arrangements and interactions with the public. However, simply extracting rules from translated texts whose injunctions were often considered opaque or irrelevant to the Chinese context proved inadequate. To compensate, many Chinese monasteries further supplemented such translations from Indic sources with a set of in-house rules tailored to the specific institutional needs of their respective monastic communities. Such texts were called rules for communal living (*gongzhu guiyue* 共住規約) or pure rules (*qinggui* 清規). The most well-known of these was the Chan monastic code purportedly written by

³ See Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981; "Ming Buddhism." In *The Cambridge History of China, Volume Eight: The Ming Dynasty, Part Two: 1368-1644*, edited by Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote, 893-952. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; "Chu-hung." in Goodrich L. Carrington, and Chaoying Fang, eds. *Dictionary of Ming Biography 1368-1644*, 2 vols. 322-324. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.

the monk Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (720–814), though the original text is no longer extant and the version frequently cited by Zhuhong and many other monks as *Baizhang's Pure Rules* (Baizhang qinggui 百丈清規) is a much later reconstruction.⁴ *Baizhang's Pure Rules* soon became part of the normative Chan monastic repertoire and as such was pervasively instituted from the fourteenth-century onward at other monasteries. Nonetheless, this did not stop abbots from supplementing this text with their own sets of rules.⁵ As a case in point, Zhuhong not only expected his disciples to know the Baizhang text, he also wrote *Rules for Communal Living at Cloud Dwelling [Monastery]* (*Yunqi gongzhu guiyue* 雲棲共住規約).

Zhuhong further created a parallel set of documents for the nunnery, *Fidelity and Righteousness Unobstructed*, including twenty-eight specific injunctions for communal living under the title *Rules* (*Guiyue* 規約), and the distillation *A Record of Essential Śrāmaṇerī and Bhikṣuṇī Precepts* (*Shamini biqiuni jie luyao* 沙彌尼比丘尼戒錄要) drawn from the 348 rules for nuns with the insertion of brief commentarial clarifications. These two prescriptive texts will be the main focus of this particular case study. *Rules* was written for one particular nunnery under Zhuhong's jurisdiction, and in this respect it offers a concrete image of how Zhuhong attempted to shape the ritual practices and daily routines of a small group of nuns as he envisioned their role *vis à vis* the local religious landscape of Hangzhou in the late Ming. There are several striking features of Zhuhong's vision. First, he severely curtailed the nun's ability to generate income through either funerary ritual practice or the holding of ritual assemblies. Second, he expected them to forego pilgrimage with other women, and live a quiet life of personal cultivation.

In what follows, this paper will first provide some background information on Zhuhong and Zhujin and describe the origins of the nunnery. I will then turn to the rules created for the nunnery and the monastic culture described in prescriptive texts, supplementing this where possible with what little we can glean from other sources on

⁴ The text used in the late Ming was compiled by Dongyang Dehui 東陽德輝 (d.u.) circa 1335 and distributed to Chan monasteries shortly thereafter. For this publication history and a translation see *The Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulations: (Taishō volume 48, number 2025)*, translated from the Chinese by Shohei Ichimura (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2006).

⁵ See for instance the extensive collection of institution specific rules in, *Lidai chanlin qinggui jicheng* (歷代禪林清規集成), 8 vols. (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2009).

the activities actually carried out there. This study presents a single detailed case study and thus speaks to the particularities of place and time, not an era. Despite this limitation, it is hoped that this will begin to contribute to a broader discussion of the activities of private nunneries about which we still know very little.⁶

A Detailed Consideration of the Stele Record:

Biographical Details

To commemorate the 1606 opening of the nunnery and perhaps more pointedly, to set the record straight on Zhujin's remaining familial obligations, filial and righteous character, and to clarify monetary and moral relations between the Shen clan and the nunnery, Zhuhong's childhood friend, Song Yingchang 應昌 (1536-1606; h. Tonggang 桐岡, *jinshi* 1565) wrote the stele text, "A Record of the Reconstruction of the Nunnery Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed at the Market Bridge (Caishi qiao chongjian Xiaoyi wuai an ji 菜市橋重建孝義無礙庵記)." Carved in stone, stele texts were the ideal genre for both commemorative praise and for establishing the facts.⁷ Song was a decorated local son whose greatest accomplishment was managing the first Ming campaign of the Imjin war from 1592-1593.⁸ Lest others be quick to criticize the construction of the nunnery the long list of impressive titles accrued by Song Yingchang listed at the end of this official sounding stele record would surely have given them pause: Grand Master for Assisting Toward Goodness,⁹ Right Assistant Censor-in-Chief in the

⁶ I have looked briefly at other contemporaneous precept texts that include sections addressed specifically to nuns such as those by Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599-1655) and Yongjue Yuanxian 永覺元賢 (1578-1657). However, I have yet to connect those texts to any particular female monastic audience. Moreover, any correlation to the small nunnery under study here is not clear, requiring future research.

⁷ Stele records like epitaphs could be used to settle accounts or set the record straight for future generations. Add a reference later about this genre. Alexei Ditter . . . et al.

⁸ The only extant writing by Song Yingchang does not include mention of Zhuhong or any personal letters. The work mainly focuses on his military service, memorials, and official correspondence, but does include a career biography (*xingzhuang* 行狀) written by one of Zhuhong's precept-disciples, Huang Ruheng 黃汝亨 (1558-1626), further connecting Song to Zhuhong's Buddhist network. Song Yingchang, *Jinglüe fuguo yaobian* 經略復國要編, in *Zhonghua wenshi congshu* 中華文史叢書 vol. 19 (Nanjing: Guoxue tushuguan, 1930).

⁹ Prestige title for civil officials of rank 2a in Ming China.

Censorate, former Vice Minister of the Left in the Ministry of War,¹⁰ and Conductor of Military Expeditions to Foreign Lands with an Imperially-Bestowed Robe of a Rank-One Official.

The stele record opens with reference to Song's relationship to Zhuhong and then proceeds to give a brief outline of the events leading to Zhuhong's ordination and Zhujin's life assisting his birth mother and adoption of an heir, the third nephew Wenbin 文彬:

When young, Chan Master Lianchi and I were students at the same school. In 1565, I became an official and he became a monk. He had previously set his heart on [being a monk], but because his parents were still alive, he did not dare leave. When in one year after the next he lost both his father and mother, he then gathered the strength to fulfill this desire. However, his wife née Tang was just nineteen *sui*.

Previously, his son had died. In remembering the "rule of Ziyu" [to be filial], he wavered at not having resolved this. At that time, he thought, like a lamp blown out in the wind or a spark ignited by stones, time will not stand still for me. Therefore, he quickly shaved his head and donned [monk's] robes [taking the tonsure]. Tang remained at home, kept the vegetarian precept and recited [at regular intervals] together with his mother. [After] his mother passed away, she lived a completely self-reliant life of widowhood.

蓮池禪師少與予同業鬻較。予登仕。禪師出家為嘉靖乙丑。禪師夙志方外。以二尊人在，不敢離。既先後歲雙失怙恃，將力酬所願。而室人湯氏年才一十有九。前兒傷亡，憶子輿之規，疑未決。已而念風燈石火¹¹，時不我延。遂疾從薙染。湯處室，齋戒禪誦¹²，與其母偕。母尋故，子然孑居。

Zhuhong's natal family was wealthy enough for his father to have a wife and at least one concubine. When Zhuhong or others refer to his father and mother, they mean his father's official wife, not Zhuhong's birth mother. Zhuhong's decision to leave home was opposed by his brothers and uncles, however, his young wife supported his decision, a choice frequently highlighted as a dramatic episode in her biography.¹³ In the stupa epitaph he composed for Zhuhong, Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546-1623) repeats the

¹⁰ "Vice premier of the department of military and chief administrator of military affairs against Japanese force" (兵部右侍郎經略備倭軍務).

¹¹ 石火風燈—比喻為時短暫《萬善同歸集》卷五：“無常迅速，念念遷移，石火風燈，逝波殘照，露華電影，不足為喻。” 4. 永明智覺禪師唯心訣：處恐畏世生五濁時，以肉為身以氣為命。一報之內如石火風燈。逝波殘照瞬息而已。(T2018. 48.997.b24).

¹² 禪誦 seems to be a method of telling time like a water clock (kèlòu 刻漏). Zhuhong, 阿彌陀經疏鈔 X22n0424_p0642b03 約禪誦之期。號曰蓮漏。For a repeat of this definition see also 淨土資糧全集 X61n1162_p0545c10.

¹³ There is a scene wherein the male relatives attempt to block his exit, but his wife interferes on his behalf.

claim that after his first wife and son died, Zhuhong was pushed into a second marriage by his mother. Of the possible choices, Zhuhong agreed to marry Zhujin, a girl from a poor family, only after it became clear they shared the same religious path.

After Zhuhong was ordained, he traveled elsewhere for instruction and was absent from the region when his clan convinced Zhujin to adopt an heir for the purpose of continued offerings to the ancestors, a primary familial concern. This choice created a number of difficulties, most especially one of division of property and rights of inheritance. Song's description of Zhujin's division of property and interactions with Wenbin are presented through the agency of her own voice as though Song were attempting to achieve closure on a legal matter:

[Zhuhong's] clan made [formal] arrangements for her to adopt an heir, his third nephew Wenbin. Before long, Tang further gave up her hair ornaments and earrings to become a nun. She summoned Wenbin and said, 'Now that I no longer have any affairs for which I need an heir, there is no need for you to act as a descendent [and make ancestral offerings on my behalf]. This will certainly bring no harm. That one is born and raised; dies and is draped in funeral garments; encoffined and receives sacrifices, these are worldly methods. I study the Buddha's teachings; the possessions I keep are my robe and bowl. When I die I will be cremated. What else is there to seek?'

She then took all of her fields and houses and distributed them evenly among all the nephews. As for Wenbin he received somewhat more and she further entrusted her house to him. She had already rented a place from a neighbor, [a poor humble abode] with rope hinges and a thatch gate.¹⁴ She lit a lamp at night and incense in the morning [for Buddhist study and recitation] and lived quietly in this way.

宗人議後以三姪文彬。無何，湯亦脫簪珥為尼僧。召文彬謂曰：「茲無所事後，不後我固無害。彼生而養，死而服。而殯，而祭，世法也。吾學佛，存資鉢衲，歿歸闍維耳。夫何求哉？」

因舉所有田廬普給群姪。於文彬低昂之，而別以居屬文彬。己從鄰儻舍，繩樞蓬門。夕燈晨香，闐如也。

This section of the stele record portrays a fair division of property and rescinding of any filial obligation Wenbin might have incurred. Zhujin is depicted living a spartan existence in reduced circumstances, suggesting that she did not hold back in her

¹⁴ David Hawkes and Stephen Owen translate this wicker gate. Burton Watson uses thatch. Owen, Stephen *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). Du Fu poem: *A Guest Comes*, translates this wicker gate. Burton Watson, *The Selected Poems of Du Fu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). David Hawkes, *A Little Primer of Tu Fu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

distribution of property. Unfortunately, the matter was far from resolved and other documents either deny that Wenbin was ever adopted or warn him and the Shen clan that the property was reasonably divided and there would be no further allocations, most especially with respect to the nunnery itself or the communal property in its possession at her death.

Construction of the Nunnery

The stele attributes the initial impetus to build the nunnery to an elite local family whose patriarch was an accomplished official, a project endorsed, but apparently not initiated by Zhuhong. Song Yingchang also joined in fundraising efforts. What precisely Zhuhong's legal or social obligations were to his wife once he took the tonsure is unclear. Since Zhujin remained with his birth mother and made offerings to his ancestor's she was not sent away and probably did not receive a letter of severance equivalent in the late Ming to what we might think of as a "divorce."¹⁵ If nothing else, he likely had a religious obligation to demonstrate some compassion toward her as she grew more frail and elderly, especially since she had given up any accumulated wealth. The resulting gossip from this alone could eventually tarnish his own reputation, not to mention the difficulties brought on by the presence of the adopted nephew who was now also Zhuhong's problem. However, Zhuhong, by virtue of the precepts he had vowed to uphold was not in a position to use money donated either to him personally or to Cloud Dwelling Monastery to build a nunnery for her or care for a family member.¹⁶ [need the rule]. One could speculate that questions over how to finance the nunnery account for the ten-year gap between Zhujin's divestiture of property and its completion.

Unlike the woodblock print images that typically accompany a gazetteer publication focused on a particular monastery such as the woodblock illustrations of Cloud Dwelling Monastery featured in the *Cloud Dwelling Gazetteer* (*Yunqi zhi* 雲栖志), there is no accompanying image of the nunnery Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed in that publication or even in another gazetteer publication, *A Record of Events at Cloud Dwelling* (*Yunqi jishi* 雲棲紀事) which published in full *A Record of the Nunnery*

¹⁵ Add reference for this.

¹⁶ See 尼薩耆波逸提 18-23. She was "ordained" so . . . Need more research on this.

Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed.¹⁷ What can be learned about the actual physical structure comes from the following description and from the *Rules*. The stele text notes that two houses were purchased to create the nunnery. *The Rules* forbid opening of the main gate for anything other than urgent business and dictate that the Yuanguang door 圓光門 should be locked at all times, presumably a reference to the entrance to the nun's living quarters as opposed the main gate to the courtyard in front of the Chan hall. *The Rules* also state that the back gate should be opened only when someone needed to go out to relieve themselves, suggesting that the area for washing up (bi 溷) did not include such facilities:¹⁸

The Honorable Zhu Zhongchun of Jiahe, in accordance with the final wishes of his father, Mr. [Zhu] Yufeng of the Silver Pavilion [Office of Transmission], first undertook to build a nunnery. And so, I along with the present-day officials, laymen, monks and others immediately joined him in this effort. We collected a hundred *jin* to buy Mr. Zhao's former residence. The residence was narrow and confined, [thus] Education Instructor Shui donated the adjacent building [of ___ dimension], increasing its' size.¹⁹ However, after so many years it was almost entirely in ruins.

People donated the building materials. Monks skilled in carpentry, bricklaying, and mud plaster joined as laborers in the construction efforts. In the center was the Chan hall. A well was dug to the left of the corridor. The rest consisted of a low wall, small room, kitchen, and washing area and that was about it. I think because the Chan Master had no sons, did not retain any wealth, and had no outsiders he could depend on, he relied on longtime intimate friends.

From the time of her young married years, Tang did all the housework herself. In suffering this hardship alone, many years passed as though a single day. When she distributed her fields and divided residences this came from her own heart, yet created hardship. A number of extraordinarily virtuous persons took pity and built a nunnery for her as an act of charity. Since [the nunnery] was built through charity, it then became an undertaking of the entire [practitioner] community.

¹⁷ See *Yunqi jishi* 雲棲紀事, in *Zhongguo fosi zhi congkan* 中國佛寺誌叢刊, vol. 76 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2006). There is an illustration showing the location of Zhujin's stupa in *Yunqi zhi* 雲栖志, edited by Xiang Shiyuan 項士元. In *Zhongguo fosi zhi congkan* 中國佛寺志叢刊, vol. 75 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2006).

¹⁸ The first three rules address these issues. The third rule states: 後門除出淨外

¹⁹ Zhuhong's "Parting Instructions (Yizhi 遺囑)" describes this as an adjacent or nearby two-story building for which the nunnery possesses the contract of legal transference (又傍樓一間，水文學深甫買徐九德者，併以施庵，捨契存照). This point of legal transference and contractual verification is also stressed with respect to the main building. Most of this particular text documents the names of donors and rejects the idea that any Shen clan money was ever used for the construction.

嘉禾朱公子衷純，追厥先大夫銀臺虞葑先生遺意，首事構庵。而予與一時宰官居士比丘某某從與焉。累百金，買趙氏故宅。宅苦隘，水文學施傍屋一楹²⁰，附益之。又歲久，頹圯幾盡。眾相與施材。緇侶之能匠石，朽壤畚插者相與施工施力。中為禪堂。鑿井於左廡。餘垣軒廚湑，略備而已。予惟禪師無子，無留貲，無素所可憑依故舊親戚僚友。

湯以年少婦獨御家政。伶仃苦辛。多歷年所如一朝，及其分田割廬，皆出本懷，亦難矣。諸上善人憐而庵之義舉也。舉於義，則十方常住業也。

The stele gives Zhuhong a minor role in the construction and does not list him as a fundraiser. Known for his frugality, he is depicted here as bereft of the financial means to build the nunnery and without a son to look after his wife. Song Yingchang alludes to Zhuhong's need to rely on friends, presumably prominent officials and wealthy donors. Whether Zhuhong had a hand in raising the funds or actively encouraged his most prominent donors to do so is not stated.

Nonetheless, most of the wealthier donors knew Zhuhong personally and some were his precept-disciples. Some of these persons are listed in Zhuhong's "Parting Instructions (Yizhu 遺囑)" written on Zhujin's behalf and in defense of the nunnery. This text documents the source of donations for the nunnery and claims the nunnery holds the contracts for the transferral of property. The final lines of the text rebuff the Shen family claims to any of the property, and again reiterate that Zhujin had already given them all the remaining family property. A short additional record lists two valuable gifts.²¹ Zhuhong's precept-disciple the Provincial Surveillance Commission, Senior Executive Official of the Censorate, the Honorable Grandfather Wu Yongxian 吳用先 (b. 1564, *jinshi* 1592) donated a statue of Śākyamuni and a portion of his salary, both recorded on a tablet, "[I] donated my salary of three taels to the Old Nunnery Unobstructed for the carving of one Śākyamuni statue, offered in perpetuity (古無礙庵施金三兩，刻釋迦像一尊，永遠供奉)." Zhuhong further adds that the contract for this exists. In 1609, another decorated official and Zhuhong correspondent, Guo Zizhang 郭子章 (1543-1618), donated a tablet carved with "Liberated from this [Dusty] World (*chao chen* 超

²⁰ 楹 yíng 1. 量詞，古代計算房屋的單位。，一說一列為一楹；一說一間為一楹。

²¹ Titled, "Further Record (Xuji 續記)," it is not clear whether these were carved in wood or stone. They do not seem to be fully part of the stele record.

塵).”²² Whether there was another hall besides the Meditation Hall 禪堂 for housing the statue is unclear, however, one of the precepts added to *A Record of Essential Śrāmaṇerī and Bhikṣuṇī Precepts* states that in multi-story buildings, buddha images must be housed in the upper hall and the living quarters relegated to a lower floor, not the other way around, suggesting that this directive was inserted to contravene any misconception that might occur at this two-story nunnery.²³

The Name and Location of the Nunnery

In returning once again to the stele text, we learn that many female practitioners came to worship at the nunnery where they might also contemplate the path of filial piety. This short reference is the only remark in any of the sources concerning lay practitioners. Both Zhuhong and Zhujin are mentioned as the leaders of the nunnery, again highlighting Zhuhong’s involvement, this time as spiritual leader. The second section offers a detailed explanation of the location of the nunnery and its previous history.²⁴

Subsequently, female practitioners came in continuous succession to burn incense at this nunnery. Over time, it became the splendid reward-land of the two venerables [Zhuhong and Zhujin]²⁵ and also the path of filial contemplation.

According to the prefectural gazetteer, by the open market to the west of the bridge there was an old nunnery called Unobstructed. In later times it gradually disappeared, entering into a family household. They migrated, moving north. An old peasant in the area told me that this place was exactly the location of that nunnery. These years of neglect followed by a sudden revival is likely due to heaven’s will not human effort. Moreover, righteousness in the service of filiality is not immaterial; filiality in the service of righteousness is not destructive. When these two are mutually joined and do not mutually obstruct then the lessons of the past can inform the present. These ideas were combined so that the placard above the gate says: The Nunnery of Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed.

²² That these papers were in order probably reflects Zhuhong’s leadership. Deqing claims that Zhuhong kept meticulous financial records for Cloud Dwelling Monastery, documenting all donations and expenses. For the above reference, see Further Record 續記. For extended discussion of Wu Yongxian and Guo Zizhang, see Jennifer Eichman, *A Late Sixteenth-Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship: Spiritual Ambitions, Intellectual Debates, and Epistolary Connections* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

²³ Essential Record.

²⁴ This reference is not the only one to small nunneries or monasteries changing hands. The rise and decline of such establishments may have been an accepted part of the cultural landscape. In other sources Zhuhong discusses this issue and makes the general claim that if one’s house had previously been a monastery then it should be returned to the *sangha*. See Jennifer Eichman, *Chinese Buddhist Fellowship*, p. 74n16. Zhou Mengxiu turned the family residence into a temple, because it had come to light that the place was a temple before it had become a home.

²⁵ I see this as a play on venerable and parent. They were like father and mother.

The sons and grandsons of the Shen family, may they remember this place and protect it, so that they never forget filial piety and righteousness. May it forever be a field of merit for humans and devas, a never-ending source of blessings. In the future certainly this will bring prosperity and honor to their door.

後清信女展轉相續，焚修於此庵。遠為二尊人莊嚴報土，又孝思之道也。

按府志，菜市橋西。有古無礙庵。其後漸沒入於民家。徙而北。里之耆氓告予以此地。正庵之舊址。久湮忽興。殆天意。非人力。而義以孝不虛。孝以義不泯。若交相成而不相悖。乃沿古證今。合而顏之曰：孝義無礙庵。沈氏子孫，尚其念之、護之，以無忘孝義。永為人天福田，流慶淵淵。後必有昌大其門閭者。

The Shen family is mentioned here, not as donors, but as protectors who should never forget filial piety and righteousness, presumably set by Zhujin's example within their own household.

Dharma Names

We know little about Zhujin's educational background and there are no extant writings attributed to her. However, all sources are in agreement that at the time Zhuhong took the tonsure under the monk Xingtian Wénlǐ 性天文理,²⁶ she formally received the five lay precepts, becoming an *upāsikā*, which accounts for the similarity in their dharma names both of which begin with the character *zhu* 祿:

Tang's dharma name was Zhujin. She had the same teacher as the Chan Master, the Shaanxi, Southern Wutai monk Xingtian. Since the Chan Master left home to become a monk, more than forty years have passed. When she was fifty-nine *sui*, the nunnery was completed.

湯法諱祿錦。暨禪師同師關中南五臺性天和尚。溯禪師出家。逾四十稔。蓋行年五十九而庵成。

The stele draws a vivid picture of the community relations and efforts of local officials to build the nunnery. It gives some background on the relationship between Zhuhong and Zhujin, the location and layout of the nunnery, and the practitioners who

²⁶ This monk was originally from Shaanxi, Southern Wutai 南五臺, a place located south of Xi'an and not to be confused with Mount Wutai. Xingtian lived near Hangzhou, at the Yellow Dragon Abode on Mt. West 西山黃龍庵 for a time, before eventually returning to Southern Wutai. 明僧。字性天。初隱陝西南五臺無門洞，後住杭州西山黃龍庵。蓮池大師（1535-1615）在俗時，即與夫人湯氏皈依座下，繼則依其披剃出家。後返長安。

benefited from its construction. How often such places were built for specific women and how long they lasted once the first abbess died is an open question beyond the scope of this project. However, it seems likely that such places had a more precarious financial existence than the monasteries, most especially if they relied on a monk's donor networks to sustain themselves.

Communal Rules and The Essential Precepts Drawn from the *Four-Part Vinaya*:

During the late Ming many would-be monks and nuns were thwarted in their attempts to gain full ordination. Zhuhong was ordained in 1565, but the following year the Jiajing Emperor (1521-1567) closed the ordination platform. Attempts to re-open the platform only occurred during the succeeding Wanli reign period (1572-1620), but were sporadic and did not result in a wholesale relaxation. For instance, the Empress Dowager attempted to re-open the platform in 1579, but this plan was never implemented. During this period, Zhuhong certainly performed precept ceremonies for novices and conferred both the five lay precepts and bodhisattva precepts on lay adherents. There are some hints that he may have also performed private ordination ceremonies for some monks. The closing of the ordination platform may have further spurred a number of monks to claim conferral through dream visions of Manjusri or through private ceremonies carried out in front of an image of an ordained monk, such as Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599-1655) did in front of an image of Zhuhong.²⁷

Zhujin apparently received full ordination in 1593. Whether Zhujin was officially ordained during a government-sponsored ceremony is an open question as is the status of the women who came to live with her. Were they novices or fully ordained nuns? In Zhujin's biography written in 1614, the year she died, Zhuhong clearly states that she was a nun, "her years in this world totaled sixty-seven; vegetarian years, fifty-two; and

²⁷ For a brief overview of this history see Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-century China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 28-31. A number of other scholars have already discussed this history, but often without providing clear dates as to when and where the official ordination platform was open and how many persons were ordained. Hanyue Fazang was fully ordained in 1609 under Guxin Ruxin, thus at least one platform was open then. See also, Fan Jialing 范佳玲, *Mingmo Caodong dianjun: Yongjue Yuanxian chanshi yanjiu* 明末曹洞殿軍：永覺元賢禪師研究 (Taipei: Huamulan wenhua, 2009), pp. 210-215. William Chu, "Bodhisattva Precepts in the Ming Society: Factors behind their Success and Propagation," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 13 (2006): 1-26. There are also articles by Chen Yongge, Sheng-yen, and others.

monastic years (*fǎlà* 法臘), twenty-one.” The only extant list of her disciples includes ten dharma names, but there is no indication as to which persons were lay followers, novices, or fully ordained nuns. Many share in the same dharma names as Zhuhong’s other disciples, again raising questions as to whether they were his precept-disciples or whether her disciples were subsumed under the same lineage designations to create a larger “family.”²⁸ Most surprisingly, the adopted nephew Wenbin became one of Zhujin’s lay disciples, taking the dharma name Guangzhan. The only female disciple biography is that of a daughter of a minor local official who was given the dharma name Guangjue 廣覺.²⁹ The biography, written by Zhuhong, refers to her as a *śrāmaṇerī* (*shamini* 沙彌尼). When Guangjue became ill and was near death, Zhuhong’s biography states that he complied with her request that he cut the final lock of hair (*zhouluo* 周羅) left from ordination.³⁰ His biography states she had left home (*chujia* 出家) six years previously.^{31,32}

Yet despite the uncertainty of full ordination, Zhuhong clearly expected the “nuns” at the nunnery Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed to know his compilation *A Record of Essential Śrāmaṇerī and Bhikṣuṇī Precepts* and to follow the rules for communal living written specifically for this nunnery.³³

Life at the Nunnery:

The list of twenty-nine communal rules Zhuhong compiled for the nunnery Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed offers the most intimate portrait we have of the rhythms of daily life for those who resided there. *The Rules* are prescriptive and do not tell us how life was actually experienced by those who attempted to adhere to them, but they do give

²⁸ One text cited below alludes to the idea that Zhujin’s disciples had disciples of their own. The reference is brief and worth further investigation. This idea of families of disciples instead of a single abbot or abbess with all monastic disciples in a single lineage is seen in other late Ming places.

²⁹ This suggests that the nunnery attracted girls from good families.

³⁰ 周羅 (Skt. *cūḍā*) A topknot left on the head of an ordinand when receiving the precepts; the locks are later shaved off by a teacher as a sign of complete devotion.

³¹ So does this mean she was a novice for six years?

³² Both biographies are re-published in a collection entitled *Rulai xiang* 如來香 (D52n8951.5) where Zhujin is identified as a nun and Guangjue as a novice. In later sources like the eighteenth-century collection *A Record of Pure Land Sages* (*Jingtu shengxian lu* 淨土聖賢錄) compiled by Peng Xisu 彭希涑 (1761-1793) Zhujin’s biography simply appears under the section headed “Reborn Nuns (往生比丘尼).”

³³ Neither text comments on ordination. The *RESB* is attributed to the bodhisattva precept-disciple, the Cloud Dwelling Monastery *śramaṇ* Zhuhong (菩薩戒弟子雲棲寺沙門祿宏). Using bodhisattva precept-disciple may have been a safer attribution in unsettled times?

a general sense of how the day was ordered and what Zhuhong envisioned as the ideal forms of ritual practice for the abbess and those who worshipped with her. The communal rules reinforce and often reiterate many of the injunctions in *A Record of Essential Śrāmaṇerī and Bhikṣuṇī Precepts* (hereafter *RESB*). Zhuhong divided the *RESB* into three sections: a list of ten precepts for novices, eleven rules of conduct (*weiyi* 威儀) for novices, twenty-six precepts drawn from the 348 precepts for nuns, and a supplementary section of fifty-three rules. This latter section is mainly drawn from the *Four-part Vinaya*, yet the interlinear notes and choice of rules tends to reinforce Zhuhong's rejection of a number of late Ming monastic practices, most particularly the types of liturgical and funeral expertise acquired by monks or nuns who relied on these practices for the maintenance of their livelihood. Because the need for such services was unpredictable, those who offered these services were commonly known as "on call" (*yingfu* 應赴).³⁴ Zhuhong was especially adamant that the nunnery not rely on such practices or even develop the expertise to do so.

The nunnery's residents included the Abbess, at least one novice, and perhaps other novices and fully ordained nuns, but also female visitors (*nike* 女客) and perhaps female lay practitioners who functioned as support staff. Because the personnel in residence is not clearly spelled out, for expediency I will simply infer that the communal rules apply to anyone who resided at the nunnery. There is one unusual feature of Zhuhong's lists of communal rules for both the nunnery and monastery: punishment for violations was given in the form of monetary fines, not confession before superiors or through extra work assignments. There are also telling differences between the communal rules prescribed for the monks residing at Cloud Dwelling Monastery and the nuns at this institution, which I hope to touch on briefly.³⁵

Ritual Cultivation

³⁴ See the extended explanation of *yingfu* clergy who practiced funerary rites (44n9) in Vincent Goossaert. "Counting the Monks. The 1736-1739 Census of the Chinese Clergy," *Late Imperial China*, 2000, 21 (2), pp.40-85. 禪宗記曰：「禪僧衣褐，講僧衣紅，瑜伽僧衣蔥白。瑜伽者，今應赴僧也。」 Those who answer calls for religious services at homes or temples. They often supported themselves with these fees.

³⁵ In brief, with respect to educational differences Zhuhong lists the genres monks were not to read, but with respect to nuns this does not become a topic, suggesting such texts were not even in question. There is much more to be said, will need to think more about this and add later.

Those living at the nunnery were expected to participate in morning and evening recitation. When roll call was taken, anyone not there would be fined one-hundredth of a tael. Other recitation practice consisted of a daily recitation of one fascicle, presumably of a scriptural text, to take place at the row of sutra tables and three (unspecified) intervals of time 三時 for recitation of the name Amitābha Buddha.³⁶ When roll call was taken, anyone not there would be fined two-hundredths of a tael.³⁷ Every fortnight there was to be a recitation of the ten heavy and forty-eight light precepts, a reference to the bodhisattva precepts. No mention is made of reciting the *prātimokṣa*, perhaps because most of those residing at the nunnery were not fully ordained. This may have been to accommodate novices and laywomen who could participate in the recitation of bodhisattva precepts, but not nun's precepts.

Despite the allowances for this schedule of daily group recitation, Zhuhong forbid the nunnery from attracting outside groups of women for liturgical services during the important lunar calendric days: the fifteenth of the first month, Yuanxiao Festival; the nineteenth of the second month, Guanyin's Birthday; the eighth day of the fourth month, Śākyamuni's birthday, the fifteenth of the seventh month, the conclusion of the rain's retreat and Zhongyuan Festival; the eighth day of the twelfth month, Śākyamuni's nirvana. Zhuhong also forbid them from holding liturgical services outside the monastic compound or to go on pilgrimage:

Rules: On the fifteenth of the first month, nineteenth of the second month, eight of the fourth month, fifteenth of the seventh month, eight of the twelfth month, tightly close the gate, the holding of assemblies is not permissible. If one does not comply, the fine is five-tenths of a tael of silver.

正月半。二月十九。四月八。七月半。臘月八等，緊緊閉門，不可做會。不依，罰銀五錢。

RESB: Do not congregate groups of women and girls to hold assemblies.

不得招集眾婦女做會³⁸。

RESB: Comment: For instance, on the fifteenth day of the first month, the nineteenth day of the second month, the eighth day of the fourth month, and the eighth day of the twelfth

³⁶ Do not keep tea, fruit, or medicine on the sutra table.

[0595a26] 不得經案上包藏茶果藥物。[0595a27] 不得向閱經人案前當案走過。

³⁷ Zhuhong's interlinear notes to the *RESB* further lists three specific texts that should be considered apocryphal and thus avoided: 受生經 – 講受生債的經典有很多，比如《太上老君說五斗金章受生經》，血盆經 – probably 大藏正教血盆經 (X01n0023.1). *Fo shuo Jingang jing zuan* 佛說金剛經纂 (W.1n.12.1).

³⁸ [0594c24]

month, holding ritual assemblies, reciting the buddha's name and such activities are forbidden. Only quiet observance is fine/acceptable.

[註] 如正月十五。二月十九。四月八。臘月八。做會、念佛等事，俱不可作。只靜守為妙。³⁹

Rules: If at Putuo, Tiantai, and other places of distant excursion or even in a boat on a lake where women congregate, one holds assemblies the penalty is five-tenths of a tael.

普陀、天台、等遠遊，及湖船聚集婦女處入會，罰銀五錢

RESB: It is not permissible to lead groups to worship at Putuo, Tiantai and other places nor to gather groups of women and girls on a boat on a lake or at other places to hold assemblies.

不得普陀、天台、等處，領眾燒香，及聚集婦女，湖船等處做會。⁴⁰

RESB: With respect to a nun's chastity, she must be twice as cautious as laywomen. When traveling to far off places, I fear this invites ridicule and slander. Creating groups for liturgical assemblies or fomenting disturbances, this must be curtailed.

[註] 尼僧守身，當比在家女人加倍謹慎。遠出他方，恐招譏謗，成群做會，或起風波，不可不戒。⁴¹

In some respects, Zhuhong's sever curtailment of large liturgical assemblies on the most important days of the Buddhist calendar seems counterintuitive both in terms of the financial health of the nunnery, and also in terms of what one might consider the nun's ritual obligation to the large community of lay practitioners. Zhuhong did not encourage lay women to accompany their husbands on trips to Cloud Dwelling Monastery and as seen here, does not support the idea that nun's should accompany other women on pilgrimage and most especially ruin their reputations through the performance any kind of liturgical service outside the nunnery. The reference to assemblies on boats may simply indicate a common mode of travel and the need to refrain from overt Buddhist activities when in transit; it may also allude to the popular practice around the West Lake in Hangzhou of releasing-life societies whose male-only membership congregated on boats traveling across the West Lake to release fish at various releasing-life ponds.⁴²

Monastic Education

Zhuhong's vision of the nunnery as a segregated community intent on maintaining the ritual recitation program outlined above is equally apparent in his instructions on

³⁹ [0594c25]

⁴⁰ [0595c06]

⁴¹ [0595c08]

⁴² See Jennifer Eichman, *A Late Sixteenth-Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship: Spiritual Ambitions, Intellectual Debates, and Epistolary Connections* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

education. Zhuhong not only discouraged the nunnery from holding large liturgical rituals, he further forbid their acquisition of the skills needed to preside at funerary rites. The first Ming emperor promoted the training of monastic liturgical specialists at monasteries he called “tantric” institutions 瑜伽院.⁴³ By the late Ming, the reputation of *yingfu* monks many of whom acquired their ritual skills at such monasteries had already generated controversial views both within larger more respected monastic institutions such as Cloud Dwelling and within the broader community. Zhuhong allowed that male novices could study such texts for the sake of knowing what was in them, but he did not want the nuns to acquire this set of liturgical skills:

Rules: If one studies [music instruments that require] beating or blowing, bell ringing, mallet tapping to accompany mantra recitation, and so forth, the penalty is one tael.

學吹打、搖鈴、杵念真言等，罰銀一兩。

RESB: It is not permissible to study on-call institutions, such as [their methods of] reciting scripture, holding repentance rites, submitting prayers and petitions, drumming to musical accompaniment, and so forth.

不得習學、應院⁴⁴、誦經、拜懺⁴⁵、宣疏⁴⁶、鼓樂等⁴⁷。

Comment: If this is not prohibited, nuns will gradually respond to ritual requests. Nuns habitually, “responding to ritual requests,” is seriously unacceptable.

[註] 如不禁，漸成赴應。女尼習赴應，大不宜也。⁴⁸

The communal rules simply states, one might add vaguely, that there will be penalties for studying musical instruments that keep time during recitation. This would seem contrary to the earlier dictates to hold morning and evening recitation. However, no mention is made here of the wooden fish (*muyu* 木魚), suggesting that some sound for keeping time must have been acceptable. The nuns were not to leave the compound to perform funerary rites at others’ homes. This does not mean they abstained from funerals altogether. The nuns heal ritual recitation during Pure Land deathbed rituals for their

⁴³ Chün-fang Yü translates the first Ming emperor’s newly created monastic division of ritual or tantric monasteries *yujia yuan* 瑜伽院 which are also sometimes designated *jiao* 教 “teaching schools.” The more literal translation, yoga does not shed any light on this usage. Some scholars now prefer to simply use tantric or ritual, which makes more sense in English. Chün-fang Yü, “Ming Buddhism,” In *The Cambridge History of China, Volume Eight: The Ming Dynasty, Part Two: 1368-1644*, edited by Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote, 893-952 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 907.

⁴⁴ A colloquial reference to a 瑜伽院? Not to learn the ritual arts taught at this type of institution.

⁴⁵ 拜懺一釋氏禮佛為人懺悔。俗謂之拜懺... 今所傳梁王懺是也。

⁴⁶ 宣唱疏文 –Buddhist terms. To send prayers, petitions 祈求.

⁴⁷ [0594c22]

⁴⁸ [0594c23]

own nuns and novices as is attested in the case of the novice Guangjue and the abbess, herself. We also know that Zhuhong offered instructions on how to conduct the abbess's funeral. In addition, Zhuhong documents his own arrival at the nunnery in 1611 to make offerings upon the fiftieth anniversary of his father's death.⁴⁹

Zhuhong forbid the nuns from engaging in or hiring anyone who knew the arts of prognostication and divination and he further discouraged the traditionally female arts of embroidery, sewing, matchmaking, and so forth. These techniques were not merely part of the menu of religious expression some monastic communities rejected and others accepted on religious grounds, these very techniques were often a crucial source of revenue for keeping an institution afloat.⁵⁰

Rules: If one seeks out or interacts with fortune-tellers, physiognomists, soul recallers and other such women, the penalty is one-tenth of a tael.

招接算命、相面、收驚等，諸婆者，罰銀一錢。

RESB: It is not permissible to accommodate matchmakers, madams, tortoise shell prognosticators, physiognomists, soul recallers, water pan users, subduers of the *yin* spirit, channelers of gods or ghosts and various other spirit mediums. If they come, do not meet with them; do not interact with them.

不得容納媒婆、賣婆⁵¹、烏龜算命婆、相命、收驚⁵²、打水碗、伏陰、見神、見鬼、諸婆等。有來者，莫與相見，莫與往來。⁵³

Financial Survival

In taking a step back from Zhuhong's particular point of view, we should be careful not to think fees paid in exchange for liturgical rites are *prima facie* a denigration of the Buddhist tradition or a sign of corruption. All religious institutions need some form of monetary support to survive. On the face of it, Zhuhong's view appears to be quite extreme. He expected the nunnery to survive solely on small donations, yet he did not offer a clear avenue for their procurement. The nunnery was left to rely on the goodness

⁴⁹ Zhuhong, "Additional Instructions (Zhuyu 囑餘)," in *Xiaoyi wu'ai an lu* 孝義無礙庵錄.

⁵⁰ The use of various forms of divination is very much part of some contemporary monastic practices.

⁵¹ 賣婆 *màipó* 代人售賣或買取物品的年老婦女。有時也指鴿母一類的女人。

⁵² There are various methods. One explanation, when a child or person is frightened or falls ill and there is a ritual attempt to bring back the soul. Yonghua Liu, *Confucian Rituals and Chinese Villagers: Ritual Change and Social Transformation in a Southeastern Chinese Community, 1368-1949* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 65.

⁵³ I am still researching some of these methods. They seem to be the various techniques used by spirit mediums 神婆 or 靈媒. 伏陰—降伏陰靈 subdue the *yin* spirit? [0595b21]

of those who just so happened to visit despite the lack of public assemblies. Nonetheless here must have been donors, since the communal rules stipulates three conditions:

Rules: Causing injury to a donor, results in a penalty of _____.

侵剋信施者，一罰十。

Rules: Unreasonable attempts to solicit donations, warrants a penalty of one-tenth.

非理募化者，一罰十。

Rules: If wandering monks ask for donations, completely ignore them.

方僧化緣，一例卻之。

RESB: It is not permissible to distribute leaflets to solicit donations.

不得出緣簿募化。⁵⁴

Comment: Broad and extensive solicitation of donations, leaflets for large-scale projects, originally these were the purview of monks, it is not a suitable endeavor for nuns.

[註] 廣行募化，興大緣事，自有男僧為之，非尼僧所宜也。

RESB: It is not permissible to buy fields for the purpose of collecting a rice tax, or to purchase living quarters for the purpose of collecting room rent. It is not permissible to join others in spinning, making cloth shoes, weaving, embroidering buttons, and so forth.

不得置田討租米，不得置屋討房錢，不得與人家絡絲、襪紙、紡績、扣繡等。

⁵⁵

Comment: Fields and property are nothing other than the material distractions of the world; they cause anxiety and cause neglect of one's work, and invite trouble. If one is poor, then one should just keep the Buddhist rule, [take one's begging bowl] and beg for food in order to sustain one's life.

[註] 田地房產，乃至人間雜務，悉皆累心廢業，招難惹非。如其貧乏，只守佛制，托鉢乞食，以支身命。

Should the nunnery find itself lacking the means to sustain the community, Zhuhong leaves open only the possibility of going on begging rounds. Yet it is difficult to imagine how the nuns in this nunnery might have carried this out. Even though they resided near an open market, should they have gone there to beg, would this not have affected their reputation, something he had already warned them required special vigilance? That only monks should be tasked with raising funds for larger projects, again, limits their ability to fundraise for a major expansion, new hall, or other building projects, which apparently would have been the prerogative of their male counterparts. This level of control contrasts sharply with the freedom the abbesses at nunneries described in Beata Grant's work experienced a mere fifty years later.

⁵⁴ 緣簿 yuánbù leaflets used to solicit donations 簿募化 mùhuà 僧尼等求人布施財物。[0595b29]

⁵⁵ 襪紙 bèizhǐ—same as 襪襪 gēbei pasting layers of cloth together to make shoes. [0595b25]

The rejection of traditional female roles in spinning, weaving and so forth is especially noteworthy. First, such a clear division of labor would help to establish nuns as religious professionals, not just women who shifted their duties from one domain to another. And yet, there are some records from the Ming and Qing dynasties of nuns embroidering Buddhist images⁵⁶ and of laywomen who create embroidered images of Guanyin using their own hair.⁵⁷ Would this activity have been permissible? What role might creative expression have played at this nunnery?

The rules strongly suggest that Zhuhong wanted the Abbess and her charges to remain focused on religious cultivation, not financial matters. Zhuhong may well have assumed that donations would be forthcoming and there is some evidence to support this case. Zhuhong's "Parting Instructions (Yizhu 遺囑)" of 1606, already mentioned above, offers some indication that donations were not difficult to come by. Zhuhong's text reiterates the same points made in Song Yingchang's stele text:

Now, this Nunnery of Filiality and Righteousness was started by the Education Instructor, Zhu Maozheng (Zhongchun), overseen by the Vice Prefect Song Tonggang and Censor Hong Xianggao⁵⁸ and assisted by numerous officials, laymen, monks, and many others, altogether 500 or so persons who each contributed their own funds for its construction. In addition the District Magistrate Wu, father and mother [to the people]⁵⁹ in particular, gave three taels of his official salary. A written account of these funds was preserved. Moreover, the purchase of the adjacent building by the Education Instructor Shui Shenfu from Xu Jiude along with Shui's further donation of it to the nunnery is attested to in the surrendering contract receipt. These are the reasons why the nunnery exists as it does.

As for this nunnery, every last bit came into being through the almsgiving of *dānapati*. Outside this, not the tiniest fraction had anything to do with the Shen

⁵⁶ The late-seventeenth-century Chan master, the nun Ziyong Chengru 子雍成如 (b. 1648-1649) embroidered Buddhist images. She first entered the order in 1691. [0819c03] 師於康熙三十年歲次辛未佛成道日進院。Beata Grant, *Eminent Nuns: Women Chan Masters of Seventeenth-Century China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), p. 167.

⁵⁷ For the devotional art of embroidery, see "Communicating with Guanyin through Hair: Hair Embroidery in Late Imperial China," special issue on Chinese embroidery by the *Journal of East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine*, co-edited by Dorothy Ko and Francesca Bray, 36 (2012):139-174. "Sensory Devotions: Hair Embroidery and Gendered Corporeal Practice in Chinese Buddhism," in Sally M. Prome ed. *Sensational Religion* (Yale University Press, 2014).

⁵⁸ According to Hucker, by the Ming, the Remonstrance Bureau functions were shifted to the Censorate. This should be a fairly low-level position rank 7a. This text does not give left or right and is rather unspecific. Hucker, Charles O. *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

⁵⁹ The District Magistrate was often referred to as the father and mother of the people under his jurisdiction. The idea of officials or emperors serving in this role dates back at least to Mencius. See *Mencius* 1A.4.

family. Later generations did not know these particulars. In the event that they develop aberrant views and recklessly plunder this wealth then this is to insult the self, insult the benefactors of the ten directions, insult the District Magistrate, and insult me, and my deceased parent's ancestors. What more Tang's disciples, their disciples, and her longtime monastic companions. Even if Tang's disciple-companions were to diminish greatly in numbers, still there must be a search elsewhere for an experienced, dedicated nun-abbot who will forever uphold the name of Filiality and Righteousness among the lay community. If this is not possible, then I fear that as the years progress [the nunnery] will fall into neglect. [For this reason,] I have written this and had it carved on woodblocks. These admonitions will serve as evidence. Submitted in hope that those who are wise will heed this clear warning.

今此孝義庵居。肇端於朱文學懋正。主宰於宋司馬桐岡。洪司諫湘皋。夾輔於眾，宰官，居士，比丘，某某等。約共五百人有奇。各捐己資以建。而縣尊吳父母⁶⁰特施俸金三兩。帖額存照。又傍樓一間。水文學深甫買徐九德者。併以施庵。捨契存照。所以然者。

此庵蓋秋毫皆檀越信施所成也。外無隻木寸地與沈門相涉。後人不知其詳。儻生異念。橫相侵漁。則為欺自心。欺十方檀信。欺縣父母。欺我。及我考妣宗祖。況湯有徒有孫。有久伴道友。就令湯之徒伴漸滅逮盡。亦當別求老成篤行尼僧住持。以永存孝義之名在俗家。不得而有。恐歲久湮沒。書而鏤之梓。遺以為據。伏希高明朗鑒。

We learn from Zhuhong's passionate plea that more than 500 persons donated to the construction of the nunnery. This considerable base included the local magistrate, suggesting the nunnery and its *raison d'être* had received support from the highest levels of the local community. This surely made the continued receipt of donations far easier and strongly suggests that the nuns had a reputation to uphold. Apparently, the nunnery had enough wealth to suggest it needed to be protected from "plunder" most particularly by the Shen clan who are chastised here. We also learn that Zhuhong envisioned the continuation of this nunnery long after the death of the abbess and that he took pains to preserve it for her disciples and their disciples as they searched for another abbess.

Cause for Expulsion

Thus far, I have discussed the daily ritual program, education, and financial endeavors of the nunnery Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed. There are many other rules, some of them less controversial, such as no matchmaking; and some a little more puzzling, do not allow nuns from afar to spend the night. Such precepts as do not talk loudly, walk

60

quickly, or fight with other nuns either verbally or physically are not controversial and will not be discussed further here. I would like to end this presentation by noting a few actions that could get one expelled from the nunnery. The *RESB* does not list punishments for infractions and thus will not be cited here. However, the *Rules* clearly lists a few infractions that would warrant expulsion, mainly attempting to marry off a nun or interference in the duties of the abbess:

Rules: To send off in marriage a girl at the nunnery who has a dharma name [because she was tonsured] warrants a fine of five taels of silver and expulsion.

在庵嫁送有法名女子者，罰銀五兩，出院。

Rules: To deceive the abbess and not let her carry out her duties warrants expulsion.

欺滅當家，不容作主行事者，出院。

Rules: If the abbess makes mistakes in her handling of affairs, to flatter and not remonstrate warrants three-tenths of a tael of silver.

當家行事差錯，阿諛不諫者，罰銀三錢。

Although interfering with the abbess's ability to fulfill her duties was cause for expulsion, her disciples were not to simply offer flattery or ignore her mistakes, they were expected to remonstrate. The *RESB* lists a number of other rules, especially in its supplementary section. However, most of the communal rules have been discussed here, most especially those that define the culture of the nunnery and its relations to the external community. The remaining communal rules prohibit travel outside the nunnery without a specific purpose, staying overnight at people's houses if one is still young, traveling alone, allowing boys over the age of fifteen to reside at the nunnery, and so forth.

In Conclusion:

The picture painted here by Zhuhong's communal rules, the *RESB*, and Song Yingchang's stele text is one of affection for the abbess, praise for her filial and righteous behavior, and community participation in the building of the nunnery. Despite the lacunae in the historical record of descriptive texts describing life at the nunnery *Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed*, Zhuhong's rules for communal living and his annotated *RESB* allow us to imagine both his vision for the nunnery and the daily rhythms of life there. Zhuhong envisioned the nunnery as a place of individual religious cultivation

punctuated by morning and evening recitation, recitation of the name Amitabha Buddha, and sutra recitation. He did not endorse the incorporation of divinatory arts, domestic arts, or the holding of large liturgical assemblies on important days in the Buddhist ritual calendar. The limitations he placed on the nuns' movement outside the monastic compound whether for pilgrimage, performance of funerary rites, or further study and the curtailing of their ability to solicit large donations contrasts greatly with the lives of mid-seventeenth-century nuns discussed in Beata Grant's important study of seven late seventeenth-century nuns.⁶¹ It has often been remarked that at the end of the Ming dynasty women had greater freedom of movement and better educational opportunities, something that faded once the Qing dynasty had stabilized its rule. Zhuhong's vision of the ideal role for religious women echoes the views Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664) expressed in the criticism he leveled at women who dared to become Chan masters and aspire to sit on the dais:

This is not the way to be a nun [who should] flee the marketplace and distance herself from vulgar people and should not broadcast her karmic affinity for traveling to visit [religious teachers (*canfang*)] or [claim to be the eminent] successor in the lineage of an eminent monk. [Rather] she, with every single sound of the Buddha's name, [devotes] ten thoughts to [his compassion, thus ensuring that she will appear] on the list of those destined for rebirth [in the Pure Land.]⁶²

Zhuhong would certainly concur with this description of the ideal life of a nun. The abbess, Zhujin, certainly came close to living this cloistered ideal. If the prescriptive texts can be trusted, the nuns and their disciples at the nunnery Filiality and Righteousness Unobstructed adhered to a vision of female cultivation that set them apart from the community; one that perhaps echoed the lives of women in the inner quarters, but with a separate mission accompanied by its appropriate set of practices and the possibility of receiving visitors who wished to worship individually at their altars, if not in assemblies for liturgical rites.⁶³

⁶¹ The seven nuns Beat Grant discusses went on pilgrimage, studied at various monasteries, raised funds for their nunneries, wrote Chan discourse records full of poetry and gongan style interactions worthy of any Chan master, such as they were recognized to be. See Beat Grant, *Eminent Nuns*.

⁶² Qian Qianyi as cited in Beata Grant, *Eminent Nuns*, p. 21.

⁶³ I am quite tempted to see this nunnery as mirroring the 齋堂 tradition. The nuns are not living in a temple controlled by a single powerful, wealthy family kept within the compound or in a garden, much as one sees

depicted in *Dream of the Red Chamber*. And yet, one wonders if Zhuhong would have encouraged the building of the nunnery and Zhujin's liberation from his family's clutches if they had not pressed the adoption issue or been so greedy in wanting monastic property.