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# Bodhisattva Precepts in the Ming Society: Factors behind their Success and Propagation

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# Bodhisattva Precepts in the Ming Society: Factors behind their Success and Propagation

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## **Abstract**

The wide popularization of versions of Bodhisattva precepts that were based on apocrypha coincided with certain medieval developments in technology and social/political developments. All these changes facilitated a much more pervasive “Confucianization” of Chinese society, notably during the Song dynasty (960-1279), and were accentuated in the Ming (1368-1643). Riding on these trends, it was only natural that the apocryphal Bodhisattva precepts that were so much tailored to Confucian ethical norms found a much greater popular basis at the same time. This paper also takes a cultural comparativist perspective and analyzes the propagation of the same apocryphal precepts in Japan, which could also be explained by comparable conditions in political and technological infrastructure.

Apocryphal scriptures played a crucial role in transforming and redefining Buddhism for its Chinese recipients. The attempts to acclimatize Buddhism to the new environment by means of composing and promoting indigenous texts were not just about doctrinal reconfiguration; they were also carried out in earnest to rewrite moral injunctions that would govern both Buddhist individual and institutional life. In other words, the religious crea-

tivity that came to shape Chinese Buddhism was as much about innovations in philosophical theories as it was about the working out of suitable ethical paradigms. Just as the composition of apocrypha served practical as well as theoretical needs, the creation of a viable and culturally delectable body of precepts, which prescribed not the intellectual contents but the everyday moral behavior of Buddhist followers, was among the most compelling reasons these spurious texts were written in the first place.

The sense of urgency to create more precepts amenable to Chinese sensibilities was evidenced by the time during which most of these indigenous texts were written. As soon as Indian *Vinaya* literatures were systematically brought into China in the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-580), they were followed by a flurry of apocryphal activities that almost seemed to have been propelled by a desire to supplement the somewhat socially maladaptive Indian preceptive models.<sup>1</sup> These activities culminated in the production of such texts as the *Fanwang Jing* 梵網經 and the *Pusa Yinglo Jing* 菩薩瓔珞經, which, especially the former, came to be popular partly because of their ethical cognates with Confucian values, and their Mahāyāna appeal to the similarly Mahāyāna-minded Chinese. Since questions about their authenticity arose early in Chinese history,<sup>2</sup> only their tremendous usefulness and allure could explain their eventual acceptance in practically all later scriptural catalogs.<sup>3</sup>

It was conceivably improbable that the Indian monastic codes of discipline could be adopted wholesale and implemented without modifications in the drastically different Chinese cultural clime. Although it is a gross generalization that Indian monasticism was wholly other-worldly and in stark contrast with the Chinese pragmatic penchants, the Indian elements of asceticism, a renunciant ideal, and a fondness for legal technicalities did become easy targets for Chinese detractors of Indian monasticism and were used to bolster caricatured images of Buddhism. Not only was the *Vinaya* a shock culturally, but many also found its instructions over such mundane areas as dress codes, ways to prostrate, and sitting postures during meals and lectures to be discordant with Chinese customs, and found ways to circumvent or modify the rules.<sup>4</sup>

Even relative conservatives, who dreamt of a more faithfully reenacted Indian monastic environment in Chinese society, tended not to be precept lit-

eralists and were highly eclectic and innovative in their interpretations of the *Vinaya* literature, often advocating Confucian proscriptions alongside Buddhists', and Mahāyāna precepts together with Śrāvakayāna ones. Daoxuan (道宣 596-667) and Jianyue (讀體見月 1602-1679) were examples of those who devoted their lives to promulgating the "Hīnayāna" Four Division *Vinaya* (*sifenlü* 四分律), yet widely resorted to the Lotus sūtra and the Flower Garland sūtra, among other Mahāyāna sūtras in their *Vinaya* commentaries, and argued for the "mutual complementarity" of, and the "simultaneous adherence" to, both the Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna precepts.<sup>5</sup>

Composition of apocryphal preceptive scriptures was only one indigenous Buddhist strategy to reconcile the imported moral codes with their feasibility in China. Other strategies included compilation of manuals of "edificatory rules" (*qinggui* 清規), which in many instances served as paramount legal texts in monastic communities. These communities developed elaborate organization and hierarchies by the late Tang, against which the traditional *Vinaya* appeared all the more inadequate and outmoded.<sup>6</sup> The "edificatory rules" and other improvisational books of monastic regulation seemed to have been favored over the traditional *Vinaya* precisely because they were more accommodating to the ecclesiastical realities of the time. The Song Biography of Eminent Monks even attributed the overwhelming success of the Chan School to the edificatory rules.<sup>7</sup> The most notable of these manuals, the Edificatory Rules of Baizhang (*baizhang qinggui* 百丈清規) compiled by Huaihai (百丈懷海 720-814), the famous Chan institutional reformer, described itself to be an attempt to "embody and reconcile" the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna preceptive literatures. It had no qualms admitting that it was in spirit and style "deliberately set outside the confines of the [traditional] *Vinaya*."<sup>8</sup>

It appeared that after the Northern Song, these kinds of discretionary manuals informing monastic discipline and administrative details came to eclipse, though never completely replaced, the *Vinaya*, in the increasingly predominantly Chan monastic environment.<sup>9</sup> Suffering from devastating political persecutions and social chaos in the late Tang, scholastic Buddhism steadily declined, giving way to Chan practitioners to assert their idiosyncratic pedagogy which extolled, at least in rhetoric, spiritual spontaneity and transcendence from stifling ceremonialism. This spiritual assertiveness found expression in Chan adepts' willingness to further test the elasticity and

boundary of Buddhist moral regulations. As the *Vinaya* School (*lüzong* 律宗) ceased to be a continuing, identifiable tradition around the same time, general interest in the minutia of apparently outdated fine lines of the *Vinaya* inexorably waned. Chan patriarchs like Shitou 石頭 (700-790) and Wuxie 五洩 (746-818) braved discussions on doing away with precepts altogether.<sup>10</sup> Other free-spirited monks, not as daring as the iconoclastic masters, envisioned novel moral and disciplinary models that could both cater for the new social conditions, and be compatible with the unique Mahāyāna doctrinal permutation that was in vogue.

The notion that genuine precepts should be spontaneous expressions of the enlightened nature (*xingjie* 性戒), rather than inflexible maxims inscribed in dead letters (*xiangjie* 相戒), was popular and echoed in the writings of influential contemporaneous Buddhists. Zongmi 宗密 (780-841) and Yanshou 延壽 (904-975), though both heralded good conduct and moral foundation as indispensable for the well-being of the Buddhist establishment as well as individual cultivation, talked of an “internal precept” that supersedes the “external rules,” and also of the danger of “attaching to the provisional, Hīnayānist regulations.”<sup>11</sup> Yanshou, for one, was convinced that moral injunctions should first and foremost be based on the innately endowed “precepts of the Buddha-Mind.”<sup>12</sup> These assertions were unmistakably couched in the language of Bodhisattva preceptive sūtras: The *Pusa Yinglo Jing* proclaimed that, “All mundane and transmudane precepts have the Mind as their essence”<sup>13</sup>; the *Fanwang Jing* also affirmed that the specific regulatory articles were merely “expedient,” while the “immaculate Mind Ground of the original self-nature” is the essence underlying external precepts.<sup>14</sup>

The reduction of myriad disciplinary codes to a single, intrinsically moral Mind entity served a dual function. On the one hand, Zongmi and Yanshou were keenly aware of the danger of antinomianism, and much of their reform agenda was not to abandon precepts altogether but in fact to establish them upon more affirmative ontological ground. In their estimation, the positive teaching of the “Buddha-mind” would more imperatively compel moral action than the all-negating discourse of “emptiness” – another important doctrinal theme in the Chinese Mahāyāna tradition. The teaching of the Buddha-mind in this way reaffirms the indispensability of good conduct in the sacrosanct Buddhist scheme of the Tripartite Training, where *śīla* is taken to be the

necessary ingredient for the development of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*. On the other hand, the Buddha Mind was encompassing and pliant enough a concept to subsume, and therefore subvert, whatever regulatory articles that were deemed regressive and cumbersome for the existing Buddhist institution. Impracticable and antiquated rules could be conveniently explained away as superficial, contingent measures in the face of this insuperable, definitive moral scheme – the Mind. The Mind was understood to be the source of all good, and more significantly for our purpose, capable of issuing forth and validating new precepts that are responsive to changing conditions.

Compared to imported versions of Bodhisattva precepts, such as *Daban Niepan Jing* 大般涅槃經, *Pusa Dichi Jing* 菩薩地持經, and *Youposai Jie Jing* 優婆塞戒經, indigenous versions like *Fanwang Jing* were more congenial to the spirit of this understanding of morality. It was not surprising that the latter group, being specifically tailored to Chinese predilections, dominated the arena of Mahāyāna precepts. As we will see, this versatile interpretation of the precepts – that the enlightened Mind could both create anew suitable precepts and nullify unfashionable ones – and the similarly versatile characteristic of the Bodhisattva precepts would prove favorable to their popularity in an increasingly dynamic Chinese society. Armed with a cardinal doctrine perfectly congruous with the ubiquitous “Buddha-mind” theory, and articles of precepts upholding such generic Confucian ideals like “filial piety” and obeisance to one’s social superiors, the *Fanwang Jing* precepts became important to Buddhist monastics and laity alike. Although Professor Gregory Schopen has convincingly demonstrated that “filial piety” was not a Chinese monopoly and therefore its implicating Confucian influence should be questioned, the relevant jargons used in the *Fanwang Jing* and their semantics would suggest its notion of filial piety is a distinctively Chinese one.<sup>15</sup> For example, the *Fanwang Jing*’s extravagant assurance that “the singular practice of filial piety encompasses the entirety of Buddhist precepts,” and that “precepts are [all] about filial piety” could hardly be an Indian sentiment.<sup>16</sup>

*Fanwang Jing*’s Confucian undertone and social versatility were further accentuated by important social-economic changes. These changes most evidently started to take place in the Song and were in general intensified in the Ming, correlating with the sūtra’s overwhelming success particularly in that later period. Both periods witnessed copious production of preceptive litera-

tures, and the Ming in particular – twenty-six of the twenty-nine precept-related works contained in the *Manji Zoku Zokyo* were written within the latter time frame.<sup>17</sup> Precept exegetes almost seemed impelled into prolificacy to respond to the deepened contradictions between the traditional *Vinaya* and a dramatically transformed society. These exegetical endeavors and wide promotion of Bodhisattva precepts must have been aimed at alleviating the perceived gap between Buddhist monastic ideals and the greatly altered social contingencies of their times.

One of the most important changes Buddhism had to grapple with starting from the Song was an active and systematic government regulation of religious affairs. The greatly centralized state made the implementation of religious regulation possible to an unprecedented extent. Not only were emperors in general becoming absolutist autocrats whose status was infinitely aggrandized in contrast to their administrators, alterations in bureaucratic structure also tended toward centralization of power. The Song consolidation of responsibilities of the tripartite general-administrative organs, consisting of a Secretariat, a Chancellery, and a Department of State Affairs and its six ancillary Ministries, was a first step in this direction.<sup>18</sup> This trend was consummated by the Ming emperors, who abolished the Secretariat's executive posts and made themselves the sole coordinators for the now fragmented Ministries.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, local enforcement of government policies was greatly facilitated by the establishment of an intermediate administrative network that mediated the central and the regional. Wang Anshi's 王安石 (1021-1086) assiduous political and land reforms set the precedent of organizing rural villages under local leaders, designated to "keep order, adjudicate disputes . . . maintain irrigation systems, organize small-scale construction projects, provide local militiamen when needed . . . assess, collect, and deliver taxes, [and perform] police-like mutual surveillance."<sup>20</sup> This practice continued through the Yuan dynasty and was further developed into much more elaborate local administrative schemes in the Ming involving the so-called *lijia* system 立甲制, *fangzhang* system 坊[街廂]長制, *qunzhang* system 群長制, and *baojia* system 保甲制.<sup>21</sup>

These measures that incorporated remote and rural regions into closer government purview made imposition of religious regulatory laws throughout

the entire country a realistic goal. Restriction in temple construction, in number of ordination ceremonies and of ordained clergies allowed within a time period was among the most regulated aspects of institutional Buddhism and Taoism.<sup>22</sup> A whole bureaucracy was created manned by “monk-officials” (*sengguan* 僧官) to administer the Buddhist religion.<sup>23</sup> The school to which a temple was registered, whether a temple was classified and run as “public” or “hereditary,” and its inheritance procedures were all areas under active government supervision, indicating the extent to which religion became a government affair.<sup>24</sup> The government was becoming more aware than ever of the strategic importance of regulating religions. State control of ordination, for example, translated into reasonable management over the amount of social-economic resources the country was diverting to the religious sphere at the cost of potential loss in corvée and other productive labors.

However, such restriction was not just a negative policy that kept social cost in check. Officials in the Song stumbled across an unexpected, positive effect it had in increasing national revenue for the short term – government-issued ordination certificates could be sold and, according to all indications, to an avaricious market, too! Monks and nuns who did not possess the proper certificates, either through the regular channels or through purchase, to verify their clergy status, risked being sent to the capital for severe punishment.<sup>25</sup> Conversely, holders of the certificates enjoyed privileges traditionally accorded to monastics: exemption from tax, conscription, and corvée labor.<sup>26</sup>

The incentive for purchasing these certificates peaked especially in times of economic and agricultural crises and military conscription. Historians talked about some major crises besetting the late Ming which, in my view, could have coincided with the explosion in the monastic population. These included extortion and corruption by tax commissioners, falling revenues due to such inefficient taxation systems coupled with an increased burden on the taxed, widening and disastrous war efforts that caused massive troop desertions,<sup>27</sup> a drop in the copper-to-silver ratio that sent peasants (who had to pay taxes in silver but sold their crops in copper) into dire straits, and the so-called Little Ice Age that devastated harvests everywhere.<sup>28</sup> When all these social-economic troubles combined force and created unbearable stress on the commoners, purchase of ordination certificates became a realistic escape to shirk off at least some obligations to the state.



Although previous dynasties had courted experimentation in comparable practice, it was in the Song when religious regulation was stout and more effectively carried out that the allure of these certificates exponentially increased and they were sold in unprecedented large numbers.<sup>29</sup> This was even more so in the Ming, when the selling was made even more systematic and certificates were officially handled and sold by the Bureau of National Sacrifices of the Ministry of Rites.<sup>30</sup> By 1392, the Central Buddhist Registration (*senglu su* 僧錄司) was charged with preparing national registers listing the name, year of ordination, and certificate number of all known monastics.<sup>31</sup> The Registration would then send the compiled registers to monasteries throughout the country so that local Buddhists could help reveal imposters who carried no proper identification.<sup>32</sup>

Significantly, the monk/nun-aspirants who were willing to purchase their certificates had one obvious advantage over other monastic candidates: they could bypass the sometimes stringent criteria set up by both the government and the Buddhist establishment for joining the clergy order. One example of such criteria decreed in 1391 by the Ming emperor Taizu showed how many qualifications were necessary and how uneasily they were to be met:

[A monk-aspirant] must be over fourteen but under twenty. He must have his parents' permission. After having reported to the magistrate and been recommended by his neighbors, he may go to a monastery to study under a teacher. After five years, when he is well versed in the scriptures, he may go to the Bureau of Buddhist Affairs for examination. If he is proved to be proficient in the scriptures, only then is he given an ordination certificate. If he cannot pass the examination, then he is returned to lay life. If his parents are unwilling, if there is no other son or grandson to serve the parents or grandparents, a person is not allowed to leave household life. If anyone is over thirty or forty years of age, has previously been a monk but later returned to lay life, is an escaped convict, or has been tattooed for committing some crime, he will not be allowed to leave household life.<sup>33</sup>

In contrast to the stringent standards, the Bodhisattva preceptive apocrypha specifically enjoined a non-discriminate attitude when it came to screening the ordained. According to the *Yinglo Jing*, the leader of an ordination ceremony could even be a lay person. Moreover, a man or woman could confer the precepts on his or her spouse.<sup>34</sup> “Deities, demons, lascivious men and women, hermaphrodites, and those without sexual organs” were all permitted by the scripture to receive precepts while, on the other hand, belonging to any of these categories automatically disqualifies one as a potential candidate to receive the *Vinaya* precepts.<sup>35</sup> This comparative tolerance on the part of the Bodhisattva precepts must have been a welcoming gesture to many certificate purchasers, who might have bought their monastic status precisely because of their questionable backgrounds and social standing.

The steep government criteria for ordination were additionally aggravated by governmental limitation in the number of ordination ceremonies and number of monks-to-be-ordained within a given amount of time. The same imperial edict directed at “putting Buddhism and Taoism into better order” (*qingli shidao* 清理釋道) and at stemming the ranks and files of monastics, also reduced performance of ordination ceremony to once every three years, and numbers of individuals to be ordained to 40 per prefecture and 20 per district.<sup>36</sup> Even when these ceremonies were conducted, contemporaneous Buddhists decried that they were often hastily and perfunctorily done, forgoing the traditional requirement for a training period during which the trainees were instructed in the intricacies of monastic discipline and basic etiquette.<sup>37</sup> Other complaints included the fact that these ordination ceremonies were overseen and controlled by Confucian officials unsympathetic to the Buddhist cause, and that corruption and favoritism constantly plagued the system.<sup>38</sup>

Timothy Brook referred to the government selling of ordination certificates as having done “more to weaken the *sangha* than all the conscious attempts by the post-Tang state to limit the power of Buddhism.”<sup>39</sup> The deterioration in the quality of ordination ceremonies and monastic training as a result of the selling was further worsened by the government’s increasing dependence on the same practice. To relieve famines and other national crises, ordination certificates were sold on several occasions for ten *dan* of rice, each time numbering as many as 100,000 within just a matter of years.<sup>40</sup> By Jiajing’s reign (1521-1566), the government seemed to have become addicted

to the lucre of this practice and decided that ordination certificates were to be sold exclusively and never again given out on periodic and qualification bases!<sup>41</sup> Contemporaneous Buddhist monastics deplored that their ranks were awash by pseudo-monks who bought their way into the Order:

Ordination in former times was invariably determined by examination. Those qualified were given certificates and robes and the chance to have their heads shaven. Ordination in these days, as a general rule, is a matter of submitting money [to the government] . . . Now that no authentic verification is available, there is no way to confirm one's monastic status. . . . [In consequence,] there are many who became monks because their previous crimes were exposed, or because they have escaped from prisons, or because they have abused and turned their backs against their parents. Some had fights with their wives, some ran away and leaving their debts derelict, some simply had no other means of livelihood than becoming a monk.<sup>42</sup>

The list goes on enumerating all sorts of appalling abuses of monastic purity that originated with the government's selling of ordination certificates. Hanyue Fazang 漢月法藏 (1573-1635), a Ming monk who devoted his life revitalizing the practice and studying of monastic discipline, also lamented:

After ordination ceremonies were severely restricted [by the government], qualified teachers and virtuous elders closed their books and stopped teaching. Since the Wanli Era, the young novices had not the opportunity to receive precepts or to see the proper procedures by which the precepts were endowed. They in general held the opinion that precepts could not be given . . . until the government approves of the opening of ordination platform again. The Vinayapīṭaka had been rendered unconsulted and useless . . . As a result, thugs and pariahs shaved their heads and hid their depraved, vile existence in monasteries, since there were no regulations nor precepts they need to bother with. Those who were cast out of proper society for whatever trivial reasons took it to themselves to become monks . . . leading to all sorts of filthy and degenerate practices, of which the laity were so used to

seeing, they no longer thought them shocking or extraordinary for Buddhism.<sup>43</sup>

Another consequence of these rigid and deleterious measures aimed at controlling as private a matter as religious life was a swelling of illicit, private ordinations performed ad hoc, often in clandestine and highly informal settings that did not observe the exacting requirements dictated by the *Vinaya*. A Ming memorial reported that,

In recent years, members from military and civilian households alike numbering in tens of thousand, ran away from their corvée and tax duties by pretending to be Buddhist and Taoist clergies. They neither cultivate the land nor engage in textile production, and simply dawdle away while being fed and clothed. Some harbored wives and concubines...and raised children within monastic establishments.<sup>44</sup>

Nor was the selling of ordination certificates conducive to strict adherence to the *Vinaya* in regard to its injunction over ordination procedure. Possession of ordination certificates automatically ensured the holders whatever privileges they set out after. This meant that the certificate-holders no longer needed to study the meaning of individual precepts. Neither did they need to be bothered with the traditional requirement that set numbers of qualified witnesses and preceptors to be present during the ordination ceremony.

Still other governmental policies eroded away the usefulness and sanctity of traditional *Vinaya*. For the purpose of categorizing them in a national register, the Ming emperor Taizu classified Buddhist public temples into three kinds, according to their designated specialization: “meditation” (*chan* 禪), “doctrinal studies and explication” (*jiang* 講), and “ritual performance” (*yu-qie* 瑜伽).<sup>45</sup> One peculiar thing about this arbitration was that, although the first two categories were old ones retained throughout the previous Song and Yuan dynasties, the third, “ritual performance,” was a novel invention replacing the traditional category of “discipline” (*lü* 律). The creation of the new category, according to the emperor himself, was so that Tantric services performed on behalf of the deceased could provide “filial sons and grandsons a means by which to repay the benefaction of their parents and grandparents.”<sup>46</sup>

The implication seemed to be that filial duties superseded other Buddhist virtues outlined in the traditional *Vinaya* studies. The abrogation of “discipline” as a distinct monastic specialization, while replacing it with “ritual performance,” had far-reaching effects for the future development of Buddhism. Some scholars pointed out that the decline in Buddhist monastic discipline, and the commercialization of Buddhism revolving around plenary and penance services that were evident from the Ming onward, were attributable to this religious policy instantiated by Taizu.<sup>47</sup>

Although he might not have intended this, Taizu’s policies turned out to be one-sidedly favorable to monastics specializing in “ritual performance.” He not only forbade clergies of other specializations to make regular contacts with lay people and restricted their activities within monastic premises, he also outlawed alms-rounds (*huayuan* 化緣) completely; all the while “ritual monastics” were given the freedom to roam the cities performing their potentially more lucrative services.<sup>48</sup> Monks and nuns naturally flocked to this less restricted, by comparison the easiest, means of securing livelihood and of possibly becoming wealthy, contributing to the general trend of neglecting monastic discipline in favor of Tantric rituals.<sup>49</sup> It was hardly unexpected, then, that ritual temples constituted the majority of the three kinds of temples in the early Ming.<sup>50</sup> Shi Guodeng pointed out that a related feature about Ming preceptive practices was the wide incorporation of Tantric elements for daily usage.<sup>51</sup> Confession rites permeated with use of mantras, and celebrations of Buddha/Bodhisattvas’ supposed “birthdays” were gradually replacing the implementation of traditional “edificatory rules” as marking the most significant activities inside any monastery.<sup>52</sup>

Just as the selling of ordination certificates and illicit, shoddy self-induction into monk/nun-hood were carried out in earnest, the legitimate venue through formal ordination was restricted and, eventually, completely shut down by the government. The tension resulted from a growing population of want-to-be-monastics, which, in tandem with the lack of channels to be properly ordained as one, found some alleviation in apocryphal Bodhisattva preceptive texts. The *Fanwang Jing* and *Yinglo Jing* in particular, contained explicit permission for, and instructions on, self-initiation into precepts. Instead of the usual presence of many elders and the elaborate ceremony stipulated by the *Vinaya*, the novice was permitted to use

Buddhas/Bodhisattvas' images and statues as vicarious preceptors. After a prolonged period of performing penitence and invocation rituals, the initiated would wait for "propitious signs" such as being physically basked in lights said to be of divine origin, or having dreams of the elected Buddha/Bodhisattva.<sup>53</sup> The encounter of any number of the appropriate signs was taken to be an indication that one had been purged of unwholesome karmas and was now endowed with the "precept substance" (*jieti* 戒體) directly by the invoked tutelary deities.

The prescribed procedure served a canonically sanctioned way to do away with the then largely unavailable formal ordination ceremonies and their sometimes rigorous qualifying standards.<sup>54</sup> It was a simple alternative to people in a time when government policies and social conditions favored Tantric rituals over *Vinaya* particularities. Conceivably, it was also sought to confer a sense of legitimacy and religious empowerment to ordination certificate purchasers, who in general had not the benefit of public recognition or self-confidence for their cursorily acquired monastic identity. The provisional method must have been the only recourse for countless people, for even monks of patriarchal status resorted to the self-induction procedure out of necessity. Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599-1655), for example, received both his monastic and Bodhisattva precepts before the image of the late Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲祿宏 (1535-1615) who must have been considered by his avid admirer Zhixu a proper Bodhisattva candidate, and whose image could therefore be used as a vicarious preceptor.<sup>55</sup> Not even the founder of the modern day *Vinaya* lineage, Guxin Ruxin (古心如馨 1541-1615), was exempt from this rule.<sup>56</sup> He was said to have received his precepts in just such a propitious dream where the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī conferred upon him the "precept substance."<sup>57</sup> It is indeed both intriguing and ironic to think about what implications this story may have on the legitimacy of modern Chinese monasticism as a whole, which, as the story would have it, was transmitted without the staple requirement but through this alternative, fantastic channel sanctioned only by the apocrypha.

Furthermore, what was true about the ordination ceremony could also be said about the fortnightly confessional assemblies during which monastics are required by the *Vinaya* to repent their infractions.<sup>58</sup> In an atmosphere where Buddhist congregations were looked at by the government with disapproval

and suspicion, and where technical observance of elaborate, traditional ceremonies was in decline, resorting to the same Tantric rituals for confession in a more personal capacity must have been a welcomed alternative. Yunqi Zhuhong spoke of his experiences in utilizing the Bodhisattva precepts in this manner: “[Under] the present government, performing *Vinaya* ceremonies is forbidden. I wish to improve the situation, but I do not want to violate the law. Instead, I have the *Sangha* in my temple read the *Brahma-net Sūtra* [*Fanwang Jing*] and *Bhikṣu Precepts* every two weeks. Monks from near and far join us for this reason.”<sup>59</sup>

The Bodhisattva precepts were indeed understood to be empowered by the Mahāyāna pantheon to eradicate unwholesome karmas in a shorter time and with greater effect than what the Hīnayāna models could only do in laborious procedures. As a commentary put it, Bodhisattva precepts “instantaneously cleanse the repented evil karmas, unlike the Śrāvākayānist precepts which [always] involve fixed steps (*cidi* 次第) at doing things.”<sup>60</sup> The usefulness of Bodhisattva precepts in these regards at least partially explained the production of numerous manuals in the Ming that specified the rituals and ordinances involved in different monastic occasions.<sup>61</sup>

The rise of Bodhisattva precepts to new heights was also stimulated by still another significant development in Chinese history: pervasive Confucianization of the entire country. Although Confucianism was well established as the state ideology as early as the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.-25 C.E.), the thorough Confucianization that percolated through grass root level from that of elites was only made possible by the technological, social-economic, and political changes that marked the Song as a significant turning point in all those respects. It was no accident that the Song provided the examples of dynastic loyalty of the most dramatic kind: officials and generals sacrificing themselves and avowing undying allegiance even long after the dynasty’s demise!<sup>62</sup> I would say that such a dynastic and, for lack of better terms, nationalistic, consciousness was only possible and fueled by the ubiquitous and unifying influence of a state ideology. In other words, Confucianism had lent itself to giving the Chinese a more palpable sense of national identity and of belonging to an identifiable civilization, to the extent that those Song martyrs were most probably consciously choosing to die out of a nationalistic and ideological conviction. In turn, as mentioned previously, the consistency of

Confucianism and its overwhelmingly successful institution in the Song society owed much to the technological advances and economic changes of that period.

The Ming government, even more so, consciously and systematically pushed for social edification programs based on Confucian teachings.<sup>63</sup> The emperor Chengzu (1403-1424), for example, unambiguously proclaimed that, “I rule the world by the Confucian way.”<sup>64</sup> This post-Song Confucianization was a process that engaged and steeped all social levels in Confucian discourse of ethics, etiquette, and world view, to which non-conformity on the part of rival religions would in general spell public and state deprecation, if not censure. By the same token, the largely syncretistic and reconciliatory rhetoric adopted by Confucianism’s chief rivals – Buddhism and Taoism – could also be explained in this light.

Riding on the wave of the time when the government became interested and capable in imposing a more or less uniform orthodox ideology, Confucianism in its retrofitted Neo-Confucian form rose to the Buddhist challenge with a vengeance. A much more influential and assertive Confucianism practically held the initiative in determining much of inter-religious “dialogues” and interactions thereafter until the twentieth century. Significant for our purpose, this conspicuously syncretistic trend in Buddhist religious rhetoric was reflected in its frequent appeal and growing compliance to Confucian ethical norms. Preceptive literatures written in that period equated Buddhist morality and the Confucian cardinal virtues.<sup>65</sup> Though this equation of the two religions was not original and could be traced back to as early as the composition of *Mozi Lihuo Lun*, the post-Song syncretistic endeavors were much more thorough and were resorted to much more extensively than when the religion, almost a millennium ago, was compelled to its first, inchoate *geyi* (“meaning-matching”) practices. The avid revitalization of this old concept was unmistakably indicative of the certain social trend – one that made apocryphal Bodhisattva precepts all the more fashionable, for they, too, owed their creation to appropriated Confucian values in the first place, as previously discussed. In fact, Buddhists in the Ming often ostensibly arrogated applications of Confucian etiquette and moral maxims to their own commentaries on precepts, while throwing away detailed proscriptions in the traditional *Vinaya* they found inconvenient.<sup>66</sup> The reversal of fate between the two religions was



made more ironic considering that, at its inception, Neo-Confucianism also openly borrowed Buddhist ritualized behavior, ethical models, and soteriological techniques. With rising political support, however, Confucianism was by this time able to turn Buddhism largely into the reactive and receiving end in their mutual influence, that is, at least in the public, official domain.

Both the Southern Song and the Ming dynasties in particular were founded on a country recovering from foreign invasions and, as such, their xenophobic sentiments were only matched by fervors to assert the centrality of “native” learning. An ethnic-centric consciousness of Chinese tradition arose when Chinese intellectual enterprises were progressively turning inward and introspective. Confucianism came to represent what was quintessentially Chinese and the proper lineage that held together its civilization. To many Chinese, the vulnerability of this civilization was poignantly felt as the country was lost to “barbarian” incursions. People in the Ming, arguably more so than in the Song, saw that indeed there was a distinct possibility that the continuity of the Chinese civilization and the lineage of their proud intellectual and ethical traditions could come to an end, as they were aware of how China was, for the first time, completely subjugated by foreigners. The memories of how the Mongols disruptively disregarded the time-proven Chinese civic government, how they could hardly contain their disdain for the “southern beasts” (“*nanmanzi*” was a term coined by the Mongols for their Han Chinese subjects, deemed the lowest of the four social classes) way of life, and how they scandalously espoused Lamaist Buddhism instead of Confucianism as state religion all made the Ming successors more determined defenders of an ideological orthodoxy. The restoration and sustenance of the proper sagely lineage was therefore conceived of as having direct relations with sound and legitimate governance and statehood. There was therefore a vested governmental interest in preserving and extending the influence of such state ideology. Rulers and ordinary people’s uniform subscription to Confucian ethics and tenets was even given a cosmological significance, being understood as having an impact on meteorological phenomena such as weather patterns and earthquakes as well as on social stability and harmony.

In the case of the Song, the state examination instituted for admitting new officials could be seen as this attempt to promulgate and preserve the tradition of orthodoxy. In this way, the examination system was not just the realization

of a meritocratic ideal, but also of centralized constraint on ordinary people's beliefs and behavior. Although knowledge in official histories and literary skill were also evaluated in the exam, for the most part, the range and contents were nonetheless confined to narrow interpretations of a few selected Neo-Confucians' ideas.<sup>67</sup> For any literati who had their mind set on a political career, the most prestigious way was to immerse and distinguish themselves in the predetermined curriculum, eventually winning a seat through the state examination. Through long years of indoctrination, the elite officials thereby recruited were almost guaranteed to demonstrate, at least in public life, their intellectual and behavioral adherence to Confucian norms.

Not only did the state try to dictate and formalize ideological correctness through the format of the exam, but state-run academies and local schools also sought to propagate Confucian orthodoxy at every level within the society. Charles Hucker described this education system that was initiated in the Song and improved in the Ming:

[Taizu] established premodern China's most extensive system of public education to produce men worthy of official appointment. Far more successfully than his Sung predecessors, he ordered the establishment of a state-supported school in every prefectural city and every county, and he authorized a quota of state-supported students for each school. From these schools a certain number of honor students were summoned to the capital as so-called tribute students (*kung-sheng*). There, as national university students (*chien-sheng*), they continued their studies and worked as apprentice officials. Upon completion of their studies, they were available for direct appointment as regular officials . . . But the state school system of the Ming period, supplemented by private academies that flourished especially in the sixteenth century, greatly expanded the supply of educated men who could be culled for service in the examination and promoted widespread literacy.<sup>68</sup>

To implement this policy, villages were encouraged, and sometimes forced, to establish and maintain regional public schools.<sup>69</sup> The government's control over ideological correctness also extended to the private academies

(*shuyuan* 書苑) that mushroomed throughout the country. In addition to preparing young adults for examination, these private educational centers hosted lectures and philosophical discussions. The Ming government partially subsidized these private schools but also occasionally censured what it considered heterodox and subversive thoughts that might foment within their premises.<sup>70</sup> So in both public and private learning institutes, the centralization of ideas was a priority for the government.

Vast numbers of Chinese families invested in at least one son by cultivating him in such an education system. Considering the astronomical odds of passing the exam especially at intermediate and advanced levels, the releasing of sons from immediately productive labor to long years of education was not always just to have a long shot at officialdom. As the gentry class became more entrenched in local villages, there was more incentive for its members to engage in symbolic investment that might further augment their reputation.<sup>71</sup> Literacy and educated offspring could precisely fulfill this constant desire to ameliorate local status and bring cultural edification to the family. In this way, voluntary immersion in the government-determined curriculum was an important component not just in acquiring one's political status, but also in maintaining and furthering local standing.

More visibly than in the Song, a growing involvement of the Ming gentry class in local beneficent projects like the construction of bridges, orphanages, temples, conservation areas for released animals and fishes was at least partially motivated by the same desire – to bolster one's prestige.<sup>72</sup> The undertaking of these religious and humanitarian ventures reflected an indispensable element of wealth management and investment practice in the Ming. This new trend, perpetuated for whatever personal reasons, was very much in keeping with the spirit of Bodhisattva precepts, which, unlike the Hīnayāna *Vinaya*, encouraged more than just refraining from evil deeds, but active participation in public goods.

Within a social context where one's identity was primarily defined by one's relationship to the family, the propagation of familial values and obedience to state and local laws by the same Bodhisattva sūtras also increased their appeal. The appropriateness of Bodhisattva precepts in a time like this did not elude Ouyi Zhixu, when he exclaimed that the same precepts “function at the mundane as well as transmundane levels. They do not contradict

conventional reality, so that for someone who had been endowed with the Bodhisattva precepts, proper relations between rulers and subjects, fathers and sons, and masters and subordinates are retained.”<sup>73</sup> He even went as far as saying that, in observing the Bodhisattva precepts, those who fail to reverentially nurture and care for their parents incur grave demerits, and their action constitutes a breach of the precepts.<sup>74</sup> Even *Fanwang Jing* itself, in stating the guiding principle for Bodhisattva precepts, started the listing of individual precepts by making the following overarching definition:

At the time, The Buddha Śākyamuni sat under the Bodhi Tree and attained the insuperable Enlightenment. He then set out to formulate the Bodhisattva prātimokṣa, which is composed of filial obeisance to one’s father, mother, teacher, and the Three Gems. Filial piety is the dharma of the ultimate Way. It represents the precepts, which are also known as self-restraint.<sup>75</sup>

The sūtra also had compliance to legal authority and local laws as one of its rules. In these ways, not only did the Mahāyāna precepts not threaten the familial foundation by exalting monastic ideals at the cost of secular relations like the *Vinaya* would, but they also strengthened its integrity and the values for which it stood.

It was not a coincidence that the burgeoning Buddhist lay organizations in the Ming actively participated in the same functions, namely, philanthropic projects and promulgation of familial and syncretistic moral exhortations. Local societies and religious organizations like the Shan Hui 善會, Jinsu She 金粟社, Shenglian She 勝蓮社, Dan She 澹社, and Yue Hui 月會 sponsored periodic meetings to read Confucian texts, moral allegories, Buddhist scriptures, and practice vegetarianism and the release of animals, many boasting learned and elite memberships.<sup>76</sup> It was no surprise then that numerous members of such organizations also happened to be Bodhisattva-precept recipients, whose activities in these communal settings could be seen as the implementation of the Bodhisattva-preceptive ideals.

In the Ming, this preoccupation with preserving and promoting familial reputation was reinforced by heightened clan consciousness. The aforementioned *baojia* and *lijia* networks that were designed to organize and bring order to local villages also strengthened the connections between clan members. Individual non-conformity to ethical and intellectual norms was all the more conspicuous and castigated within the tightly knit familial units under the su-

pervision of local leaders and elders. By the same token, individual achievements also brought prestige and pride to all members within the larger group. The stereotypical Chinese aversion to bringing shame to family was largely the vestige of this traditional loyalty to one's clan and extended families, which was arguably one of the most powerful instruments at instilling Confucian values and a sense of belonging to familial lineages even among members of the peasantry. The relationship between this extensive network of familial units and the Confucianization is so clearly reiterated by Hucker, I will quote him at length:

The Ming and Ch'ing li-chia systems of sub-county organization were especially notable as devices for informing the peasantry about the laws and indoctrinating it with the Confucian value system espoused by the state. Members of each village community had regular monthly assemblies during which they were lectured to, usually by retired officials or low-ranking degree-holders, about Confucian values illustrated in historical anecdotes or listened to the recitation of imperial decrees exhorting them to be filial and obedient to parents, to be respectful to superiors, to be harmonious with neighbors, to educate sons and brothers, to be content each in his lot, and not to do evil. The system was effective enough that early modern European visitors to Ming and Ch'ing China commented in astonishment at the orderliness of life among the countless masses despite the scarcity of policemen and other representatives of state authority.<sup>77</sup>

The Chinese society since the Song was not only transformed organizationally through the establishment of the *lijia* systems and the like, it was also changed structurally through rapid urbanization and commercialization. In the Song, increase in commerce led to rapid development of large metropolises, whereas in the Ming and Qing the blossoming of intermediate-sized market towns throughout China overtook the growth rate of bigger cities.<sup>78</sup> Administrative organs, pleasure resorts, artistic shops, manufacturing and trading posts sprung forth in the many densely populated cities and towns.<sup>79</sup> As the commercial sector was increasingly gaining on the agricultural sector, those traditional religious values founded and perpetuated on the basis of an agrarian society were at stake. The creative vigor infused into writing and explaining precepts customized for lay people in different professions must have

been motivated by this need to address new social situations.<sup>80</sup> The first preceptive book compiled exclusively for the laity was in fact written in the Ming.<sup>81</sup> I propose that the new city culture and multifaceted professions were in fact also an important factor for the dominant syncretistic trends found in religions in the late imperial era – syncretism was the natural conclusion of the increased dynamic interactions between rival religions and people’s urbanite attitude toward the host of spiritual options available to them in city environment; though that is a subject beyond our present study.

Social transformations in the Ming had brought about fundamental changes in people’s attitudes towards romantic relationships, economic behavior, and just general attitude toward life.<sup>82</sup> In both doctrines and practices, the natural course of development for Buddhism in such urban culture would be toward a broader, more flexible and cosmopolitan spirituality tailored to, and targeting, these new values. The Bodhisattva precepts again, in this regard, fulfilled the role of a socially adaptive ethical model. As opposed to other imported Mahāyāna preceptive scriptures like the *Yoposai Jiejing*, which spelled out mostly moral persuasions for the monastics, the indigenous *Yinglo Jing* and *Fanwang Jing* contained counsels on virtuous lay livelihood and pertinent situations in which a city dweller might find himself.<sup>83</sup>

The apocryphal texts were also conveniently vague compared to, say, the *Yuqie Pusa Jieben* 瑜伽菩薩戒本, on issues of “precept-suspension in special occasions,” (*kaifa* 開[遮]法) allowing for greater margin of reinterpretations and modification in complex city culture. These designated “special occasions” were mitigating circumstances in which the sūtra would allow for temporary suspension of observance of certain precepts, and since imported Bodhisattva preceptive literatures often spelled out the specific conditions in painstaking detail, there was less room for negotiation. The apocryphal preceptive literatures, on the other hand, were traditionally understood to emphasize the inherent purity of the Mind rather than the strict observance of unbending rules.<sup>84</sup> In a spirit that was compatible with the indigenous Bodhisattva-preceptive texts, all the so-called Four Eminent Monks of the late Ming separated the highest guiding principle of preserving this purity and acting compassionately from blindly following the expedient regulations.<sup>85</sup> This remarkable unanimity on not being needlessly bogged down by legal technicalities, but focusing on the spontaneously compassionate and virtuous

functioning of the immaculate Mind, was indicative of the more liberal attitude toward precepts in urban culture.

Yet at the same time, the Ming was also marked by a deep Buddhist self-consciousness that theirs was a time of moral degeneracy and spiritual inadequacy, a feeling evinced by virtually all contemporaneous writings depicting current affairs and conditions within the religious institution. Therefore, even though adaptive and broad-minded interpretations of precepts might be suitable for new social conditions, this sort of guilt-complex prevented unqualified abandonment of all disciplinary rules. Bodhisattva precepts, or at least the peculiar presentation of them in the Ming, struck that delicate balance where importance and encouragement of morality was maintained, but the details of actual proscriptions were left vague and open-ended to accommodate for new social conditions.

The role of technological progress, too, could not be overlooked in the dissemination of Confucian ideas and leveling of society. Already in 953, Confucian classics with commentaries in 130 volumes altogether were among the first printed works in world history.<sup>86</sup> The printing industry flourished in the Song, when the movable type was developed using pottery, tin, and wood-blocks. By the Ming, abundant supplies of paper and ink as well as advances in binding technology made books affordable and the effective, accurate transmission of ideas over huge tracts of land a reality.<sup>87</sup> The publication of religious, agricultural, technological treatises, and encyclopedia and colloquial literatures in large numbers had rendered a remarkable proportion of the Chinese population literate in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing times.<sup>88</sup> Even people of meager financial means and in rural regions could therefore more easily come under the sway of Confucian edification.

From mid-Ming thereon the state examinations had become so rigidly formatted in range of topics and rhetorical form that commercial answer books were written for prep exam candidates as the questions and writing style became ever more standardized and predictable.<sup>89</sup> Advances in printing technology would have made these books widely accessible, universally inculcating the populace with government-regimented ideas. Even if for the majority of commoners, abstract exam questions and Confucian metaphysics might not be their daily concern, the same printing technology nonetheless had flooded the market with books on general moral exhortation, making

Confucian ethics a ubiquitous influence in people's life. The outpouring in the Ming of the so-called "morality books" (including such categories as *Shanshu* 善書, *Baojuan* 寶卷, and *Gongguo Ge* 功過格) with popular ethical themes and colloquial style, aided this edifying influence tremendously and was only possible with the printing industry of the time. The unprecedented literacy level in the Ming therefore coincided with the socially binding Confucianization that defined the cultural ethos for the later dynasties. It is certainly not an exaggeration when Yü Chün-fang straightforwardly characterized Ming China as a "Confucian society."<sup>90</sup>

The unique socio-economic developments in the Ming that gave rise to the prominent characteristics of Ming preceptive exegeses were not singular phenomena in China. Remarkably, parallel features could all be found in Tokugawa Japan (1603-1868) which was roughly contemporaneous (with the later part of the Ming) and undergoing comparable social changes. Centralization of the Bakufu government, intense urbanization and commercialization, effective and pervasive government control over religious activities, and the orthodox status accorded to Neo-Confucianism were all identifiable and analogous developments to the Chinese counterparts. As expected, the previously outlined Chinese developments in preceptive model, such as the incorporation of Tantric elements, the reduction of myriad proscriptions to a single principle such as the "Mind" or the enlightenment experience, the conformity to Confucian values, and the flexibility in interpretation, without exception found expression in Tokugawa Buddhism. Concrete examples abound, including Kaibara Ekken's (1630-1714) Confucianized precepts,<sup>91</sup> Jiun Sonja's (1718-1804) "Vinaya of the True Dharma" that subsumed specific precepts under the category of the "Mind,"<sup>92</sup> and Kokan Shiren's (1278-1346) invocation of Buddhas/Bodhisattvas in his "Zen Precept Procedures."<sup>93</sup>

The connection between the identified social factors and the unfolding of certain preceptive features is further verified, now that their correlation could be found in a different social context with similar social characteristics. That the Bodhisattva precepts played a predominant role in Ming Buddhism was already well-established by scholars.<sup>94</sup> Although Ming Buddhism has been described by scholars to be a "living religion" that "penetrated more deeply than ever into the fibre of Chinese society and culture," few delved into what the religion's adaptive ethical models and its successful co-option of popular



and Confucian ethos had to do with the Ming society's socio-economic structure.<sup>95</sup> Only by looking into these issues will the "how" and "why," in addition to the "what" questions, of Buddhism's "deep social penetration" in the Ming be answered more satisfactorily.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Paul Groner. "The *Fan-wang ching* and Monastic Discipline in Japanese Tendai: A Study of Annen's *Futsū jubosatsukai kōshaku*." In *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, p. 254-255.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 254.

<sup>3</sup> Examples abound in which recognized apocryphal texts eventually had their names cleared in later bibliographical catalogs. This process showed the relative nature of the criteria used in judging "scriptural authenticity," and how much these criteria were influenced by polemical and sectarian agendas. See Kyoko Tokuno, "The Evaluation of Indigenous Scriptures in Chinese Buddhist Bibliographical Catalogues." In *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, p. 31-74.

<sup>4</sup> For discussion of conflicts between the *Vinaya* and Chinese customs, see Tan Shibao, "Cong fojiao ruhua yu zhongguo chuantong lisu wenhua zhi xianghu yingxiang bianhuashi kan weilai," p. 263-282.

<sup>5</sup> Shi Guodeng, 265-266. For discussion of Daoxuan's Mahāyāna-based *panjiao* system and strategy of incorporating Mahāyāna ideals and moral injunctions into the Four Division *Vinaya*, see also Yang Huinan, especially 379-382. Sheng-Yen, too, attributed the success of Daoxuan's preceptive lineage to his peculiar Vijñānavāda approach, which was favored by Chinese Mahāyānists. See "The Renaissance of *Vinaya* Thought During the Late Ming Dynasty of China," in *Buddhist Ethics and Modern Society*, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed account of the evolution of “edificatory rules” and the Chan monastic communities, see Satō Tatsugen, p. 479-554.

<sup>7</sup> T 50.771a.

<sup>8</sup> T 50.770c.

<sup>9</sup> For reasons on why a monastic preceptive tradition based solely on the bodhisattva precepts as that founded by Saicho developed in Japan and not in China, see Fu Weixun’s article, “Daxiao jianshoujie danshou pusajie yu wujie zhi jie – zhongri fojiaojielüguan de pingjiao kaocha.”

<sup>10</sup> *Zutang Ji*, p. 1711c and p. 1641c. Quoted by Ran Yunhua, p. 250.

<sup>11</sup> T85.675c.

<sup>12</sup> *Xuzang Jing* 105.8d.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted by Ran Yunhua, p. 259.

<sup>14</sup> *Fanwang Jing Zhijie*, p. 520.

<sup>15</sup> See Schopen, “Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of ‘Sinicization’ Viewed from the Other Side.” In *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, p. 56-71.

<sup>16</sup> *Fanwang Jing Zhijie*, p. 537-539.

<sup>17</sup> The close to one thousand year span of works collected in the canon, starting with the Six Dynasties and ending with the late Ming dynasty, thirteen of the twenty-one authors of precept-related exegeses were produced toward the very last 150 years the Ming. In fact, an additional twenty-one preceptive manuals were known to have been written in that same period but not included in the canon. See Sheng-Yen, “The Renaissance of *Vinaya* Thought During the Late Ming Dynasty of China,” p. 42.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Hucker, p. 307.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 308-309. That the Ming rulers took a further step in taking their government to an even stronger central direction was observed by several historians ascribing it to various causes. Conrad Schirokauer, for example, thought that the Yuan dynasty as a transitional period between the Song and the Ming set the precedent for

flouting the more civic, benign ruling patterns of the past. As a result, the Ming picked up the Yuan's much more authoritarian political pathos and further deepened a centralization trend that was only in its nascent stage in the Song. See Schirokauer, p. 172-173.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Hucker, p. 310.

<sup>21</sup> Mao Peiqi, p. 398-407.

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion on the Ming policies of restricting temple construction, see Yü, p. 145-153. For a detailed description of important religious policies implemented in the Ming, see Fan Jialin, p. 37-47.

<sup>23</sup> *Zhongguo Fojiao Shi*, p. 366.

<sup>24</sup> See Professor Morten Schlutter's unpublished draft, "Vinaya Monasteries, Public Abbacies, and State Control of Buddhism Under the Song Dynasty (960-1279)."

<sup>25</sup> Yü, p. 158.

<sup>26</sup> Although the tax exemption was gradually reduced to corvée exemption only over time, "the purchase of monks' certificates [was still] attractive to nonclergy." Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power*, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> See *Mingshi*, 78.1901 & 305.7805 for examples of the crushing military expenditures and war efforts. Cited in and analyzed in Fan Jialin, p. 18-20.

<sup>28</sup> Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, p. 7 & p. 20-21.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Hucker stated that the Song set the first precedent of selling ordination certificates (*China's Imperial Past*, p. 360). However, Hucker's account is, to my knowledge, false, as previous dynasties like the Tang, for example, also sold certificates during the An Lushan rebellion.

<sup>30</sup> Yü, p. 155.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>33</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, p. 158-159.

<sup>34</sup> This practice “was adopted in a number of commentaries, including those by Chi-tsang and I-chi.” Paul Groner, p. 256.

<sup>35</sup> Preceptors are forbidden to exclude any of the listed beings on the basis of their belonging to such categories, as indicated by the fortieth minor rule. Cited in *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>37</sup> *Chuanjie Zhengfan*, in *Manji Zoku Zokyo*, 107.22a.

<sup>38</sup> *Mingshilu: Yingzong shilu*. Cited in Zhang Zhiqiang, p. 359.

<sup>39</sup> *Praying for Power*, p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> Fan Jialing, p. 46. The first major sales of certificates in the Ming took place in 1451, 1453, and 1454 with the per certificate price of 5 piculs of rice and having it transported to Guizhou. The price steadily increased over time, reaching 10 ounces of silver by 1540. Yü, p. 160-161.

<sup>41</sup> Fan Jialin, p. 46. For a more detailed account on how strict payment replaced all government qualifications for becoming monastics, see Yü, p. 161-162. *Kaigu Lu* mentioned the effect of the closing down of all official ordination ceremonies and the proscription against Buddhist congregations for more than 50 years between the Jia-jing and the Wanli Eras in favor of money-for-certificate policy, that people could not tell monastics and lay people apart because of the monastics’ lack of defining etiquette and precepts. *Manji Zoku Zokyo* 114.728-729.

<sup>42</sup> *Kaigu Lu*. *Manji Zoku Zokyo* 114.729-732.

<sup>43</sup> *Manji Zoku Zokyo*, 106.1040.

<sup>44</sup> *Ming Yingzong Shilu*, fascicle 4. Cited in Fan Jialin, p. 46. Yü also noted that in a single swoop in 1407, 1,800 people from the coastal regions were arrested for having secretly ordained themselves in order to, in all likelihood, dodge draft. The number of people involved in this single incident, according to Yü, was indicative of the scale of the problem of illicit ordination everywhere else. See *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*, p. 158.

<sup>45</sup> *Shishi jigulue xuji. Xuzang Jing*, 16.2. Cited in Zhang Zhiqiang, p. 357.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Yü, for one, was convinced of such a correlation. See Yü, p. 178-179.

<sup>48</sup> Yü, p. 150-151.

<sup>49</sup> The famous Republican Buddhist reformer Taixu 太虛 (1890-1947), described the corruptions found in the Buddhism of his time as largely the vestiges of this old, inveterate fixation on commercial rituals. *Taixu dashi quanshu*, vol. 18, p. 604-605. Yinshun 印順 (1906- ), too, thought that Taixu's rigid classification of temples and the greater emphasis on ritual performance over studies of monastic discipline in the Ming persisted into modern Chinese Buddhism, and were responsible for the generally poor quality of monastics and their narrow specialization. See *Fojiao Shidi Kaolun*, p. 86.

<sup>50</sup> Ryūchi Kiyoshi, cited in Yü, p. 149.

<sup>51</sup> Shi Guodeng, p. 189.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 270. Even for someone like Jianyue, intent on reviving the “orthodox” studies of Nanshan *Vinaya*, could not help but conform to such a compelling trend, and included many Tantric and penitent ritual elements in the version of Nanshan *Vinaya* he promoted. Ibid, p. 281. Sheng-yen also referred to the “mantra recitation [being] introduced as a daily practice” and “fusing [of] the exoteric and esoteric traditions” as a major development in the Ming *Vinaya* scholarship. “The Renaissance of *Vinaya* Thought During the Late Ming Dynasty of China,” p. 41-42.

<sup>53</sup> The reliance on “propitious signs” for penitent, divinatory, and spiritual-validation purposes was widespread by the Ming. Popularity of texts like the *Jancha Shan-e Yebao Jing* 占察善惡業報經, which provided instructions on divinatory practices, reflected this trend well. See Chō Kyogen, *Mingmatsu chūgoku bukkyō no kenkyū*, p. 246-247, and Whalen Lai, “The *Chan-ch'a ching*: Religion and Magic in Medieval China,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, p. 175-206.

<sup>54</sup> For a discussion on traditional ordination requirements and procedures stipulated by the *Vinaya*, see Sheng-Yen, p. 47-49.

<sup>55</sup> Zhixu related these accounts in his autobiography. *Ouyi dashi quanji*, vol. vi, p. 1007-1008. One of the most detailed discussions of Zhixu's connection with the *Fanwang Jing* and his personal view on penitence and purging of karmas can be found in *Mingmatsu chūgoku bukkyō no kenkyū*, especially p. 192-282.

<sup>56</sup> The “two lineages” in the Ming were founded by Ruxin and Zhuhong. Ruxin's system was the only one that survived and is considered to be the source of modern Chinese monastic tradition. See Sheng-Yen, p. 46.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Shi Shengyan discussed the Bodhisattva preceptive practice of confessing and repenting before images of the Buddha as substitutes for the traditional requirement of qualified seniors. See “*Cong sanju jingjie lun pusajie de shikong xiaoying*,” p. 20.

<sup>59</sup> *Lianchi Dashi Quanji*. Cited in Sheng-Yen, p. 46.

<sup>60</sup> *Fanwangjing zhijie*, p. 549.

<sup>61</sup> Examples included Zhixu's “easy to read and enact” *Chongding shoupusa jiefa*, Hanyue Fazang's *Hongjie Fayi*, and Jianyue Duti's *Chuanshou Pusajie Zhengfan*, which remained the most popularly adopted version in modern Chinese Buddhism. Cited in Chen Yongge, p. 156.

<sup>62</sup> Schirokauer, p. 145.

<sup>63</sup> These programs are specified in Mao Peiqi, *Zhongguo Shehui Tongshi*, p. 432-444. See also Du Jiwen, Du Jiyu, et al., *Fojiao Shi*, p. 519-523.

<sup>64</sup> Cited without reference in *ibid*, p. 521.

<sup>65</sup> Sheng-Yen, p. 44.

<sup>66</sup> Shi Shengyan, cited in Shi Guodeng, p. 268-269.

<sup>67</sup> The approved classics and their commentaries for, as well as the style of, the state examination are elaborated in *Mingshi*, 70.1693-1694. Cited in Fan Jialin, p. 24, footnote #48.

<sup>68</sup> *China's Imperial Past*, p. 317-318.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 335.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Timothy Brook, p. 19-21.

<sup>72</sup> Schirokauer mentioned the same tendencies in the Southern Song. *A Brief History of Chinese Civilization*, p. 134.

<sup>73</sup> *Fanwang Hezhu*, cited in Chen Yongge, p. 180. Chen also noted a special feature of preceptive exegeses in the late Ming: frequent allusions to canonical sources that might serve to substantiate the compatibility between Buddhist precepts and filial piety. See *ibid*, p. 181-182.

<sup>74</sup> Cited in *ibid*, p. 180.

<sup>75</sup> T 24.1004a.

<sup>76</sup> *Zhongguo Shehui Tongshi*, p. 246.

<sup>77</sup> Hucker also observed that the *lijia* system was responsible for bringing Confucianism to peasantry in the Ming and Qing times. *China's Imperial Past*, p. 310.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p. 333. Hucker detailed these urbanization trends in *ibid*, p. 331-334.

<sup>79</sup> The major cities and populations in different areas were listed in *ibid*, p. 331-332.

<sup>80</sup> Chen, p. 157.

<sup>81</sup> It was entitled *Essential precepts for Lay Buddhists*, by Ouyi Zhixu. Sheng-Yen, p. 44.

<sup>82</sup> Xu Hong, “*Mingdai fengqi de zhuanbian*,” cited in Fan Jialin, p. 17.

<sup>83</sup> Shi Shengyan argued that the *Fanwang Jing*'s appeal to the lay communities and its social adaptability were responsible for its lopsided popularity in China compared to the *Yoposai Jiejing*. “*Cong sanju jingjie . . .*” p. 24-25.

<sup>84</sup> *Fanwang jing zhijie*, p. 520 & 522.

<sup>85</sup> For a saying by Hanshan Deqing (name year) on this distinction, see *Mengyou Ji*, p. 554-555. For one by Zibo Zhenke, see *Manji Zoku Zokyo*, 126.668. Ouyi Zhixu's elaborate discussion of this topic could be found in his *Fanwang Hezhu*, cited

in Chen, p. 163, footnote #4 and 5. Yunqi Zhuhong's similar argument could be found in his *Jieshu Fayin*, 2.177-178, and 5.620, cited in *ibid*, p. 186-187.

<sup>86</sup> Hucker, p. 336.

<sup>87</sup> Fan Jialin, p. 12.

<sup>88</sup> Hucker, p. 337.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, p. 321.

<sup>90</sup> Yü, p. 182.

<sup>91</sup> For more on Ekken's redefinition of Buddhist precepts, see Mary Evelyn Tucker, "Kaibara Ekken's Precepts on the Family," in *Religions of Japan in Practice*, p. 38-52.

<sup>92</sup> See Paul B. Watt, "Shingon's Jiun Sonja and His 'Vinaya of the True Dharma' Movement," in *ibid*, p. 71-77.

<sup>93</sup> For a discussion on Shiren and his Procedures, see Professor William M. Bodiford's "Kokan Shiren's Zen Precept Procedures," in *ibid*, p. 98-108.

<sup>94</sup> "The Buddhist preoccupation with perceptive issues in the late Ming was centrally focused on bodhisattva precepts and their implications. Primarily, it took the form of promulgating the ideals of bodhisattva precepts." Chen, p. 77.

<sup>95</sup> This observation was made in Sung-Pen Hsü's *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ch'ing*, p. 42-43.

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