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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Asiatische Studien : Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen
Asiengesellschaft = Études asiatiques : revue de la Société
Suisse-Asie**

Band (Jahr): **70 (2016)**

Heft 1

PDF erstellt am: **04.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-696827>

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An Interpretation of the Relationship between Chan-Buddhism and the State with Reference to the Monastic Code at the End of the Yuan Era

DOI 10.1515/asia-2016-0001

Abstract: Based on the monastic code entitled *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* (Imperial Edition of Baizhang's Rule of Purity), this article discusses the relations between Chan-monasteries and the state during the Yuan dynasty. The first chapter shows the state's attitude towards religion and the ranking of the different Buddhist schools as well as the liturgical ceremonies for the emperor and the State and their rewards in form of financial and land donations. The second chapter explores to what extent the state's veto in the elections of an abbot, its financial restrictions, and limited edition of ordination certificates could have been part of a repressive policy towards Buddhism. Conclusively, the inability of the monastic management to cope with their increased social and financial responsibilities impaired the Essential Teaching and further development of Chan-Buddhism.

Keywords: Zen / Chan, monasteries administration, monastic code, state policy and religion, Mongol emperor, Yuan-era, China, 1279–1368.

The relationship between the social group of the Chinese Chan-Buddhists and the Mongolian government in the fourteenth century was complex. On the one hand, as a religious minority, the Buddhist *sengjia* 僧伽 or just *seng* (Skt. *saṃgha*) appears to have had the same religious background as the Mongolian conquerors. On the other, the *saṃgha* had a fixed abode, surrounded by a population that was not entirely Buddhist. Buddhism has always faced limits imposed by ethnicity and language, and this raises several questions about its position vis-à-vis the state. How much did these limits hinder Buddhism? What did the Yuan rulers, themselves foreigners, expect from the Buddhist religious minority in the region south of the Yangtze River *Jiangnan* 江南? Although the

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Mongolian emperors were also Buddhists, albeit with Shamanistic roots and a different culture, language, and agricultural practices than their Chinese subjects, does a closer look at their policies towards the Chinese Buddhist monasteries show whether they were repressive or laissez-faire? Conversely, what were monastic attitudes towards the Yuan rulers?

Our main source of information for answering these questions is the *Imperial Edition of Baizhang's Rule of Purity* (*Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 勅修百丈清規),¹ hereafter referred to as the *Imperial Edition*. The rules in this work were supposed to be followed in all Buddhist monasteries by the end of Yuan times. It supplies us with information about the attitude of the Buddhist religious minority towards the Buddhist, but foreign, Mongolian government. This essay will investigate the extent to which the state interfered in the Buddhist community as well as how far the *Imperial Edition* refers to the various Buddhist monasteries and society at large. It will also demonstrate the enormous impact Buddhism had on the economy, education, and the whole of Chinese society under Mongolian rule.

The Buddhist term for “code” is Rule of Purity (*qinggui* 清規). This suggests rules for the spiritual behavior of the monks rather than imposing administrative rules. In the *Imperial Edition* rules for purifying soul and body are marginal. The main topic of the work is rules for the management of monasteries, intended to meet the demands of dealing with the Yuan state. It has stood the test of time. Indeed, the original *Imperial Edition* has never been revised and has been reprinted twice each in China and Japan.² But their existence did not prevent the edition of new sets of rules and written instructions for Chan monasteries, often tailor-made for their local use and particular circumstances.

Rules always have a normative character. They indicate what is supposed to be. Thus, they are both fictional and static. New rules are either the result of discontent with earlier ones or with some aspect of society that has never been regulated. New rules often herald new ideals or goals to be achieved in the future. Thus, when we compare various rules with the benefit of historical hindsight, the dynamic nature of new rules becomes apparent.

¹ T 2025: 1109c–1160b or XZJ 111: 236–289. The text is also available online at: http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T48/2025_001.htm, accessed 03/01/2016. For an English translation see Shōhei Ichimura's *Baizhang Zen Monastic Regulation* (Dongyang Dehui 2006). Chapter 4 covering the duties of Both Ranks was the topic of my book about the administration of Chan-monasteries. See Fritz 1994.

² They were reprinted in China during Ming dynasty in 1442 and during Qing dynasty in 1871, and in Japan in the years 1356 and 1720.

Rules are intended to legitimize certain types of behavior. They also imply the authority from which they emanate. Rules guarantee both respect for the subject as well as protection of the subject by the rules themselves. They also guarantee respect for the issuing authority and compliance with the rules. The main focus of this essay will not be the individual subject, i. e. a monk of the *samgha* in a monastery under the rules – rather, it will be the social entity of all Buddhist monastic communities, especially those located in the Jianghu region.³ In Yuan times it comprised three provinces: Jiangzhe with the ancient capital Hangzhou, Jiangxi, and Huguang.

The Great Assembly (*dazhong* 大眾)⁴ and its logistical organization and behavior as presented in the rules were accepted because they were written down by an insider well acquainted with their situation. Advocating the *samgha*'s own needs and motivation demanded skill in formulating rules and long years of experience with the legal systems of both Buddhist and lay worlds.⁵ The job furthermore required skill in using diplomatic language. The emperor, not the author, was the supreme guarantor. The religious author could not oppose the imperial will, although he may aspire to improve or enlarge the scope of the rules. The supreme authority, the emperor or his delegate, i. e. the Imperial Preceptor, had to approve the rules and therefore editing new ones was a difficult task. Once the rules had been accepted, the relationship between the authorities and the subject, i. e. the state and the *samgha*, probably became easier.

For our purposes, it is less important to know whether the new rules were fully or only partially applied, than to understand whether or not there was a demand for new rules. It would be interesting to investigate why such a demand arose, but it is enough here to note the nature of the new rules and to identify which elements of them concerned the state. The author of the rules seems to have been lamenting a reality in conflict with Buddhist ideals.

The new rules do not provide a lot of detail into daily life in the *samgha*.⁶ The order in which the chapters were arranged and the elaborate chapter about

3 In T 2025 “*jianghu* 江湖” is largely used as a contraction of the geographical names for the three provinces Jiangzhe, Jiangxi, and Huguang where all Chan-Buddhist monasteries were located at the time. It was then in a larger sense an equivalent among Chan-monks for all the places known or “everywhere”. Additionally, *jianghu* was also used for an assembly or a retreat held at a public monastery which all ordained Buddhist monks, the monks from “everywhere” could attend, regardless their school belonging, see e. g. T 2025: 1123, c18 or 1128, c10.

4 See T 2025, ch. 5 and ch. 6.

5 T 2025:1130c15, 世出世法無不閑習.

6 “The guidelines for Daily Life” *Riyong guize* 日用軌則 (T 2025: 1158, c13) refer to the so-called “Rules of Purity for Daily Life in the Assembly” *Ruzhong riyong qinggui* 入衆日用清規 of Wuliang Zongshou 無量宗壽 in 1209. See XZJ 111: 472a–474b. They were set up in order to

the abbot differ widely from the old *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪院清規⁷ of 1103. The significance of this is explained in Chapter I.

However, the creation of new rules does not in itself prove that old ideals were abandoned for more realistic ones. In other words, we do not know if they reflect the totality of the social reality in the same way as a full historical record would.⁸ Perhaps if we ask the right questions about the *samgha*'s relation to the state however, the text of the rules reveals more than we might expect.

The rules provide us with much information about worldly wealth and the different kinds of people who either belonged to or sought protection from the monasteries. They appear to show that towards the end of the Yuan dynasty, the Han-Chinese, who had once sought refuge in the monasteries in large numbers, no longer felt the need to do so. Instead, crowds of uneducated Buddhist laypeople and non-Buddhists alike were being attracted to the monasteries. Although the size of the *samgha* was no danger to the state, the following emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang of the Ming dynasty, restricted ordination to only once every three years, as it had been before Yuan times, in order to control its size.⁹ (Detailed information about the ordination certificates is presented in Chapter II). Most inhabitants of the monasteries were aged monks. Certainly, some of them were shrewd, experienced, Han-Chinese who assumed a heavy responsibility: they headed institutions with enormous assets of buildings, land, manufactories, and workshops. It was this accumulated wealth of the monasteries that raised concern during the following Ming dynasty.

This essay explores the myth that Buddhists have always been peaceful, state-obedient, diligent, and egalitarian people. This is particularly the case in

regulate the daily life of a monk among the *samgha*. The manual explains the daily routine, from getting up until lying down for sleep. Among others they are integrated in the *Imperial Edition* as “The Guidelines and Criteria for Daily Life” *Riyong guifan* 日用軌範 and form a part of chapter 6 that treats the Great Assembly in general, see T 2025: 1144, b5–1146, b8. Foulk rendered them in English, 1995: 455–472.

⁷ Yifa 2002 translated the *Chanyuan qinggui* (XZJ 111: 438a–471a) into English. In its bibliography, there is a small mistake about its author. In the work of Yuanzhao he is translated as Chanlu instead of Changlu Zongze 長蘆宗蹟, and Ichimura writes Zhang instead of Chang. (Dongyang Dehui 2006: xiv and 380). It is a pity that Yifa's bibliography of “Secondary studies in English, French and German” cites only a single German book and Fritz's work about the Yuan monastic code *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* in German is omitted.

See also for the history of the different Rules of Purity in Foulk 2004: 275–312.

⁸ The tension between ideal religious concepts and social reality is of much interest to the history of religion. See Freiberger 2001: 34.

⁹ In 1384, Zhu Yuanzhang approved the suggestion of the Minister of Rites that monks should be ordained only every three years. For details, see Zhang 2010: 17–21.

Chapter II, which focuses on the wealth of the monasteries and problems rather than the more noble and spiritual aspects of Buddhism.

The Yuan state wanted to maintain monastic holdings in order to ensure the pacification of the land and population, and safeguard the education and welfare which the *saṃgha* provided. The Mongols did not trust the Chinese, but from Qubilai onwards the emperors generally found the Buddhists more trustworthy than their Confucian and Daoist counterparts. The most important indicator of the relationship between the state and religion, the dialogue between the personnel in the offices of the monasteries and the personnel in the public administration, is lost to us. We can only get a general sense of it by taking a closer look at some of the sources of friction between the state and the *saṃgha*, which we will do at the end of Chapter II.

1 Two perspectives: State-Buddhism and the *Saṃgha*-State

1.1 Changing rules in changing times

Secular rulers in China were acutely aware that the rules of religious minorities could potentially weaken imperial laws and power. As a result, emperors had a strong incentive to ensure that religious rules were compatible with imperial needs. To ensure this outcome, emperors naturally wanted to select a sympathetic religious steward to revise and unify the monastic rules. The state benefited from having all monasteries implement a single common code, and having a specialist monk with his monastic expertise forge it meant less work for the imperial administration. The revised rules provided a yardstick which could be dispatched to all places in the realm where monasteries were situated, even to the remotest mountains. At the same time, the code had the advantage of exercising a certain control over the general population.

In 1335, the abbot Dongyang Dehui 東陽德輝 petitioned for a unique reliable code for all Buddhist monasteries. He was called to court and commissioned to revise the monastic rules.¹⁰ The title of the rules, *Imperial Edition*, reveals acutely the relationship between the state and monasteries. Dehui's corrections

¹⁰ T 2025: 1110, c19–20 告係江西道龍興路百丈山大智壽聖禪寺知事僧。元統三年七月十八日。本寺住持德輝長老。欽受御寶。聖旨節該江西龍，and T 2025: 1159, a7 元統三年乙亥秋七月。今上皇帝申前朝之命。

(*xiu* 修) were submitted to the state which released the rules by imperial order (*chi* 勅). Two and a half years after Dehui had been called to court, he stated: “Although the rules’ origin is in the Tang and they have been reformed and altered, they have lasted over generations until today. Thus, rules are unavoidable.”¹¹ Dehui added that the prolegomenon of the rules of 1311 had noted that the *samgha*, like the Neo-Confucians with their *Book of Rites*, had its own body of regulations, the *Rules of Purity*. The rules, like the rites, should be adapted to the changing needs of the times.¹² Dehui admitted that the dispositions he just finished revising were sufficient for one generation,¹³ but would in a little while require transformation again. It is worth noting that Dehui used the term ‘code’ (*dianzhang* 典章) to mean the public collection of laws and administrative regulations of the Great Yuan dynasty, the *Dayuan shengzheng guochao dianzhang* 大元聖政國朝典章, shortly *Yuan Code* 元典章, published by the southern Chinese approximately in 1320 and which is sometimes reduced to the syllable “dian” in its larger edition *Jingshi dadian* 經世大典 in 800 chapters, finished in the year 1332.

As for the name of Baizhang in the title of the rules, it may have served as an encomium for the lineage-antecedent Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (720–814) of the monastic rule “one day not working – one day not eating.”¹⁴ Alternatively, it may have been a toponym for the mountain Baizhang,¹⁵ where Huaihai and Dehui lived and where the so-called rules of Baizhang were said to have been handed down since the Tang dynasty.

In fact, the Song guidelines of 1103 for the Chan-monasteries no longer seemed to be up-to-date with the monasteries’ administrative duties. Some monasteries supplemented them or wrote their own rules during the Yuan regime, when Buddhist reforms and adaptations of all kinds became possible.¹⁶ The rules of 1274,¹⁷ focusing on ceremonies, were more extensive than the ones

11 T 2025: 1159, b28 至元後戊寅春三月東陽比丘德輝謹書, and T 2025: 1159, a27 繇唐迄今歷代沿革不同。禮因時而損益有不免焉。

12 T 2025: 1158, b28 吾氏之有清規猶儒家之有禮經。禮者從宜因時損益。

13 T 2025: 1159, b1 以立一代典章。

14 The Chan-epigraph says: 一日不作 一日不食 (*yi ri bu zuo – yi ri bu shi*), see T 2025: 1119, b2 and footnote 245. For the authenticity of Baizhang’s monastic code, see the discussion in Yifa 2002: 28–35. For the title “of Baizhang’s Rules of Purity”, see T 2025: 1109, c22–23 本寺自唐時佛祖大智懷海禪師垂訓。名曰百丈清規。

15 The Chan-monastery Dazhishousheng was located on Mount Baizhang in the district Longxing, province Jiangxi.

16 The Imperial Preceptor Basiba (Pags-pa) governed all monasteries. When Daoist monasteries became Buddhist, the converted Daoists probably did not always apply pure Buddhist rules.

17 The Rules of Purity of 1274 were called the *Conglin Jiaoding qinggui zongyao* 叢林校定清規總要 by Jinhua Weimian 金華惟勉 of Houhu 后湖. See XZJ 112: 1a–28a.

written by the National Preceptor Zhongfeng Mingben in 1317¹⁸ for smaller private monasteries. From 1278 onwards, the monk Yixian on Mount Lu had begun to examine many teachers' opinions and manuscripts in order to unify and condense the rules to one rule set. Yixian had used them on approval until 1311 but the state had never enforced them.¹⁹ With the help of the Grandee of the fourteenth class, abbot Xiaoyin Daxin 笑隱大訢 of the monastery *Dalongxiang* 大龍翔寺 in Jiqing,²⁰ Dehui collected the various codes of all the monasteries. Daxin was commissioned as the corrector of the *Imperial Edition* and enlisted expert monks to compare the different rules and delete redundancies.²¹ They probably also consulted other smaller monasteries' codes which no longer exist. We do not know which of the monks' suggestions encountered resistance²² and which found favor because we lack their proposals and manuscripts. However, it seems that numerous conflicts arose between 1338 and 1343. The government officials and official monks were located in the same office which facilitated the correction and edition of the *Pure Rules*. Abbots of big Chan-monasteries, i. e. Dehui and Xiaoyin, were not only entitled "high officials" (*chen* 臣),²³ a term from the governmental administrative nomenclature, but they also shared an office (*fen si* 分司) with the state governmental officials in the *Xuanzhengyuan*.²⁴

18 The Rules of Purity by the National preceptor Puying of the hermitage Huanzhu are the *Puying guoshi huan zhu an qinggui* 普應國師幻住庵清規 by Zhongfeng Mingben 中峰明本 in 1317. See XZJ 111: 486a–506b.

19 The *Chanlin beiyong qinggui* 禪林備用清規 compiled in the autumn of the year 1311 by Donglin Yixian 東林一咸, also written as 東林式咸, known as Yuxian 与咸, or so-called great teacher Zeshan Xian 澤山咸 of the monastery Donglin on Mount Lu, taking reference in T 2025: 1159, a3. For the entire rules, see XZJ 112, 28b–75b. The name of Zeshan Yixian is written in Yifa's bibliography with the character *ge* 戈 instead of *yi* 式. The titles and dates in Foulk 1995: 461 have been corrected in *Standard Observances of the Soto Zen School*, vol. 2, 2010: 16.

20 Jiqing 集慶 is today's Nanjing. In 1329, abbot Daxin was ordered to build the monastery *Dalongxiang* in Jiqing. He was not only a high-ranking government official honored with the title Grandee of the fourteenth class [*taizhong dafu* (see Farquhar 1990: 25), ranked 3B], but also called Chan-teacher of Broad Wisdom and Total Enlightenment *Guangzhi Quanwu* 廣智全悟), and chief of Buddhism *shijiaozong zhu* 釋教宗主. Under the latter name he had to govern the Five Mountains' affairs, see Zhang Xuan 张铉 1978: 3, 1722a. Daxin was also chief corrector of the rules, see T 2025: 1110, b15; see my footnote 25.

21 T 2025: 1110, b16–17 好生校正歸一者。將那各寺裏增減來的不不一的清規。

22 Xingwu Xinzong 省悟心宗 complains in the *Lüyuan shigui* 律苑事規 in 1321 that the Chan-rules do not pay attention to the Vinaya tradition. Therefore, we can deduce that the Vinaya-school was not properly respected, see footnote 89.

23 T 2025: 1113, b16 住持臣僧某. Abbot official monk X.

24 T 2025: 1117, b21. Even though the idea of separating the religious and secular government of the state was pronounced in the theory of the White History (Čaghan teüke), from a hierarchical point of view, the lord of religion was mentioned before the lord of the world. This means that

Despite the discrimination against southern Han-Chinese²⁵ in governmental offices, the Buddhist matter was more important to Dehui. Dehui, southern Han-Chinese himself, was surely affected by discrimination, but he must have been endowed with diplomatic ability, as his new rules were accepted by the state. Perhaps owing to the advice in *Brahmas Net* (*Fanwangjing* 梵網經) he treated “the ruler and the prince as well as the hundred officials like friends.”²⁶

Baizhang’s name was used as a “Chan” attribution. This would seem to imply that the rules applied only to Chan-monasteries, but in fact they were compulsory for all monasteries. As soon as Dehui had completed the new dispositions, they were published and dispatched to all big monasteries (*conglin* 叢林) so that they could observe them.²⁷ The administrators of the monasteries were told to stop using the old shortened or altered rules otherwise: “All monks who did not become acquainted with the new dispositions, or respect the imperial issue, or did not obey the set of new rules would face consequences.”²⁸

Despite the decree of the Imperial preceptor Künga Gyeltsen Pel Sangpo, who granted the dispositions in 1343, the *Imperial Edition* seems not to have

religious men were superior to the worldly officials. See Sagaster 1976: 109. This was in fact the foundation of the supremacy of the spiritual authority over the worldly, designed to allow the spiritual to use the worldly for its own purposes. Those with spiritual responsibilities also held secular titles like Imperial Preceptor *dishi* or National Preceptor *guoshi*. Both Ranks, *liangxu* and *liangban*, see my footnote 140, exhibit a similar dual pattern but it was used only in the monasteries. Dehui complains that the responsibilities have been split in Both Ranks. Did he dream of a circle where the duties were shifted endlessly among the administrators? We wonder whether this was really his dream – for example, the responsibility of keeping the toilet in order also shifted on to him. Extrapolating this cyclic model on a state level would have been even worse! On the one hand, the idea of a single circle and equality among all monks got lost. On the other, the dual order seemed to be much more appropriated and professional. Compare Sagster 1976: 138–139 (worldly ranking), and 1976: 116–117 (religious ranking).

The meshing of clerical and secular power was adopted in the Xia state structure and is attested by the court-sponsored Liangzhou stele inscription of 1094. See Dunnell 1996: 160.

25 Xiaoyin Daxin 笑隱大訢 was a native of Nanchang, province Jiangxi, so a Han-Chinese. Since Dehui moved between Jingshan monastery in Hangzhou and the monastery on Mount Baizhang, which are in the provinces Jiangzhe and Jiangxi, although the place and date of his birth are unknown, we suppose that he was a Han-Chinese of Jiangnan too. Most Japanese works write *su* 訢 instead of *xin* 訢, including Ichimura and the Taishō edition.

26 T 1484: 1006, c16 與國王太子百官以為善友.

27 T 2025: 1109, c24 至元間僧德輝重新編刊遍行天下叢林. *Conglin* 叢林, *verbatim*: truss of bamboo or wood, forest of wood or bamboo, literally: assembly of the same kind of humans, big monasteries; whereas Chanlin 禪林 means Chan-forest or forest of meditation *dhyāna*, and normally refers to big Chan-monasteries.

28 T 2025: 1109, c26 諸山僧人不入清規者. 以法繩之欽此欽遵. Foulk 1987: 15–16; T 2025: 1110b; Fritz 1994: 25.

been applied in all monasteries. This may have been due to political turmoil or the natural disasters of the mid-century. Almost forty years passed under the new Ming dynasty before the decree was reactivated in the second month of 1382. Even then it was not fully effectual. All monasteries should have followed the rules but some failed to do so. The question is, who did not? To accept the rules meant both assuming the duties prescribed in the rules and agreeing to the hierarchy assumed within the title, i. e. that of the Chan-school.

Promulgation of the rules was obviously not an easy task. Later, during the Ming dynasty, the long history of the promulgation in the preamble of the rules edited in 1442 showed that the former Imperial decrees had no impact.²⁹ Four decrees of the Ming government repeated the need to abide by the new rules. The Minister of Rites, Hu Ying conceived the idea of an edition for the emperor's birthday. The printing blocks had long disappeared from the Baizhang monastery³⁰ and therefore Hu Ying recommended to the emperor that he have the rules engraved again.

1.2 The State and Buddhism

The Mongolian Yuan emperors supported a form of Buddhism inspired by Tibetan Buddhism and Shamanistic remnants.³¹ At first, the Qans were tolerant of all religions. However, Emperor Chinggis Qan (temple-named *Taizu* 太祖, r. 1206–1227) was, through personal contact, inclined towards Daoism. Buddhist resentment of imperial preference for the Daoists eventually led the Buddhists to ally with Confucians. A long struggle between Buddhists and Daoists ended in 1281 in favor of Buddhism.³² From the reign of emperor Qubilai (temple-named

²⁹ Under five emperors of the Ming dynasty, the decree to respect and to follow Dehui's dispositions was released in 1382 (T 2025: 1109, c25), in 1412 [!] (T 2025: 1109, c27; the English translation of Ichimura writes 1417 instead, see Dongyang Dehui 2006, xvi), in 1424 (T 2025: 1110, a1), and in 1425 (T 2025: 1110, a3). However, they were never corrected nor were they followed by all monasteries until the last decree when the high official Hu Ying [!] 胡澐 (1375–1463; the English translation writes Hu Yong, see Dongyang Dehui 2006, xvii), Minister of Rites, requested the emperor to reprint them. Some dispositions are incompatible with the Ming government tax system, and therefore would have implied a commentary. But the dispositions were engraved without corrections. Maybe they were more like a 100-year jubilee edition and considered as a reprint, not for use and enforcement. The Hanlin-Academy revised the preamble and finally they were printed as *Imperial Edition* in 1442, T 2025: 1110, a20.

³⁰ T 2025: 1110, a4 近因本寺清規書板年遠無存.

³¹ Dan Zhengqi 單正齊 2010, 11: 1–21.

³² See the *Bianweilu* 辯偽錄 for the arguments of the decisive debate between the two delegations that was headed on one side by the Chan-Buddhist Shaolin Fuyu 少林福裕 and on the other side by the Daoist Zhang Zhijing 張志敬. See Xiang Mai 祥邁 T 2116: 766, b9 ff.

Shizu 世祖, r. 1260–1294) onwards, every Yuan emperor built Buddhist monasteries.³³ Particularly in the new metropolis around the Taiye Lake in the north, in modern Beijing, they built monasteries to impress the population and legitimize Mongolian rule. Having a large vested interest in these temples, the emperors gave them enormous endowments to promote Buddhism throughout China.³⁴ The emperors' grace was said to act like benevolent waves bathing the *samgha*.³⁵ Emperor Wu of the Liang had also been graceful to the *samgha*, but in his case, the *samgha* acted as a counterweight to the influence of scholar-officials and simultaneously limited the religious order's independence from secular power. In contrast, the Mongol emperors, or more precisely their Mongol ministers, most of them Buddhists, adjourned the imperial civil service examinations (*keju* 科舉) for a time.³⁶ This involved a major loss of prestige and discrimination against the Han-Chinese. The religious policies of the Yuan ensured that

33 T 2025: 1114, c22 世祖而下. 咸各建寺...

34 From 1270 to 1354, in the outskirts of Beijing, the following monasteries were built: Shuxiangsi 殊祥寺, Dajuehaisi 大覺海寺, Dashouyuanzhongguosi 大壽元忠國寺, and Dahuguorenwangsi 大護國仁王寺. See Lin Ziqing 林子青 1980: 103.

- In 1270 the Dahuguorenwang-monastery 大護國仁王寺 was built, governmental offices took care of its estates of 693,600 hectares, with 37,000 tenant households, and 140 wine shops and granaries. It had land in Xiangyang and Jianghuai. See Farquhar 1990: 142.
- In 1272, the construction of the Dashengshou[wan]'an[shanfo]si 聖壽[萬]安[山佛]寺 for the emperor's birthday (today's Beijing Western Hill's *Wofosi*) started. In 1328 an imperial grant was given for a new temple. See Farquhar 1990: 145, 150.
- In 1301, Emperor Chengzong approved the building of the monastery (Dawansheng)youguosi (大萬聖)祐國寺 on Mount Wutai. See Lin Ziqing 林子青 1982: 363.
- In 1308, the former Nanzhenguosi 南鎮國寺, the Venerating the Great and Highest Grace monastery (Dachongen) fuyuansi (大崇恩)福元寺 was established and completed in 1312. The extra governmental office for its construction and repair was created in 1328. 6936 hectares of agricultural land was given to it. See Farquhar 1990: 140–141.
- In 1308, the [Dachenghua]puqing[shan]si [大承華]普慶[山]寺, was founded, and over the years it was responsible also for the property of other monasteries. Farquhar 1990: 144, 146. In 1312 it was given 80,000 *mu* of land, and had its outposts in Zhenjiang, Bianliang (Province Henan), and Pingjiang (Suzhou, Province Jiangzhe). See Lin Ziqing 林子青 1980: 103; Farquhar 1990: 144.
- In 1316, the construction of the temple Dayongfusi 大永福寺 started. See Farquhar 1990: 144.
- In 1329, the [Dachengtian]hushengsi [大承天]護聖寺 was built at today's Yiheyuan at the north-west of the Kunming lake outside Beijing. It became enormously wealthy with landholdings amounting to 324,000 *qing* of agricultural land, 162,000 of which was donated in a single grant. The far away Daxinglongpumingsi 大興隆普明寺 on Hainan Island came also under its “tutelage”. See Lin Ziqing 林子青 1980: 103; Farquhar 1990: 147.

35 See T 2025: 1114, c26 而吾徒沐恩波濡聖澤.

36 See Janousch 1999: 149.

Buddhism “would be more equal than other religions.”³⁷ It may not have been a pure hierarchy with Tibetan monks leading the public administration, but it came close to it. The monkish dream of achieving social equality with officials had proved unattainable during the early Song dynasty, as modern scholars have shown,³⁸ but in Yuan times, the dream came closer than ever to becoming reality.

The Imperial Preceptor (*dishi* 帝師), a typically Yuan phenomenon, headed the governmental religious hierarchy.³⁹ According to the *Imperial Edition*, Emperor Qubilai ardently wanted Bahesiba 拔合斯八⁴⁰ (1239–1280), a man from Tibet *Tuboguo* 土波國, as a Dharma teacher. Bahesiba, in today’s Chinese, Basiba 八思巴, had graduated from the Sakya-school, as had all of the fourteen subsequent Imperial Preceptors. He rode to the palace at a gallop, took quarter in the east of the palace, and taught the precepts to the imperial family. Qubilai made him National Preceptor in 1260. In 1270, Basiba was honored with the title of Imperial Preceptor and Dharma Lord of the Great Jewel and was awarded the jade insignia.⁴¹ That made him nearly as powerful as the emperor; in fact as the imperial jade seal holder, he was the delegate of the emperor and entitled to control and to lead all the teaching(s) of Buddha “under heaven”.⁴²

Another factor created a serious problem between the state and religious institutions: the position of the Imperial Preceptor, empowered to govern the *saṃgha*, merged religious and political roles. The *saṃgha* and the state thus shared the same spiritual and political head in the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs. Modern historians and translators incorrectly interpreted this as “dividing the office” (*fen si* 分司) or “separating religious from worldly” affairs.⁴³ Not only in

³⁷ Schalk 2001: 49.

³⁸ Eichhorn 1973: 299.

³⁹ In the *Imperial Edition*, two Imperial Preceptors are mentioned: the current Imperial Preceptor Künga Gyeltsen Pel Sangpo (tib. Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan dpal bzang-po) 公哥兒監藏班藏卜 (1310–1359) active in the capital Shangdu from 1333 to 1358, (see T 2025: 1110, b26) and the first Imperial Preceptor Basiba (see T 2025: 1117, b08–b27). For the latter, see Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 15:4517. For further details regarding the history of imperial preceptorship, its origin in the Tangut kingdom, and its appropriation by the Mongol court, see Dunnell 2011: 472, 474; 1992: 85–111.

⁴⁰ In T 2025, his name is Bahesiba or Basiba. His Tibetan name was Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan or by different writing Pakpa Lodrö Gyeltsen and today normed in Chinese to Basiba 八思巴 (1235/1239–1280). In 1260, he was generally known as a National Preceptor Basiba (Basiba guoshi 八思巴國師) sometimes in secondary literature his name is written as Pags-pa, ‘Phags-pa, or Pakpa, see T 2025: 1117, b8. Or, see in western sources Gray 2011: 455.

⁴¹ T 2025: 1117, a29–c1; for a Tibetan source see Elliot Sperling 1987: 7, 37.

⁴² T 2025: 1117, b20 授以玉印...統領天下釋教.

⁴³ T 2025: 1117, b21 始令僧俗分司. The Tibetan idea of separating religion from the state is blending eyes, see my footnote 24, 48, and 200.

the *Tubo* region, but also in other parts of the Great Yuan territory, governmental lay and religious affairs coexisted in the same office. Government officials and official monks were employed in the same governmental bureau. Large monasteries that had not yet become public during Song times⁴⁴ were incorporated into the state during the Yuan period. This led to unfair business practices between the two institutions due to their unification. The state's intention was to augment its power with religious glory and dignity. Buddhist institutions also helped to administer the country “up to the mountains and down to the valleys.”

Nevertheless, the multicultural society and interaction between Han-Chinese and non-Han-people led to partiality.⁴⁵ The local Confucian officials, the Buddhist Mongols, Tibetans, and the mostly Muslim people of various kinds, *semuren* 色目人, literally “the colored eyed persons”, from Western Asia differed from the monks in the Chan-monasteries of Jiangnan. The latter were southern, mostly Han-Chinese, who had a spiritual goal different from Confucians, Muslims, and Tibetan Buddhist schools' monks which were favored by the Mongol rulers. Only nine Chinese monks were entrusted with the job of National Preceptor during the hundred and sixty-three year reign of the Yuan dynasty, and none became Imperial Preceptor. Such discrimination existed in less important offices as well. The modern scholar Lin Ziqing postulates that the reputation and influence of the Imperial Preceptor and the National Preceptor at the beginning of Ming times were no longer as prominent as they had been during the Great Yuan dynasty.⁴⁶ Only a few Han-Chinese held a high position under the Yuan, and in the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs, they were an absolute minority.

Within the monasteries, on the other hand, wealth bestowed by secular grace opened the floodgates to wheeling and dealing in the administration quarters of the *saṃgha*. The *saṃgha* was no longer as independent or separated from the state as it was supposed to be.⁴⁷ The opposite was now true, as the office of the Imperial Preceptor demonstrates. The Imperial Preceptor served as the personal union of the lay state and the religious *saṃgha*: he symbolized their mutual dependency.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Schlütter 2008: 41, 45.

⁴⁵ Langlois describes Yuan society in modern terms as a multicultural society with great interactions. Indeed, China had never been and would never become more pluralistic than in the Yuan dynasty. But the society and the state had not grown organically, i. e. slowly and normally. The Han-people having been forcibly subdued were always discontented. See Langlois 1981: 13.

⁴⁶ Lin Ziqing 林子青 1982: 363.

⁴⁷ See T 1484: 1006, a25–26 若佛子。自為飲食錢物利養名譽故。親近國王王子大臣百官。特作形勢。

⁴⁸ For more details about the Tibetan theoretical hierocracy and dual order, see Sagaster 1976. For a review and different opinions (Samuel M. Grupper) regarding this study, see Dunnell 1992: 108–110, especially footnote 97, accessed 03/01/2016.

In politically renegaded South China in particular, governmental authority was delegated to Mongols and *semuren*. Both of these groups were intentionally placed in the most important positions. The Confucian “enemies” were no longer appointed to government jobs and lived in retirement.⁴⁹ The institutionalized and non-institutionalized form of control over the *samgha* was, so to speak, in Buddhist hands.

The metropolitan Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs *Xuanzhengyuan* 宣政院⁵⁰ was the highest governmental office for Buddhism throughout the country. After moving to the north, its replica, the so-called Branch Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs *Xing xuanzhengyuan* 行宣政院⁵¹ was located in Hangzhou. Its head was the Imperial Preceptor, and his two deputies were selected from among Buddhist monks. The text of the *Imperial Edition* also mentions the Directorates-General for Buddhist teaching(s) *Guangjiao zongguanfu* 廣教總管府.⁵² For a limited time it was an alternative to the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs, with regional religious headquarters founded in 1331. In both of these offices, all positions under the chief administrator were shared by two people.⁵³ The ranking followed racial delineations: firstly, a Tibetan monk or one of the *semuren*, and then only local Han-Chinese would occupy the other position. All the appointees were selected by the central Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs. The lower officials and employees were recruited among Buddhists and lay people. They were together in the same office. While it may have been admirable to have pluralistic

49 Lao 1981: 110.

50 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 15: 2193–2194; *Xuanzhengyuan* is a term dating from the Tang, see *Zhongwen dacidian* 中文大辭典 1968, 10:7276.100. Franke translates it as “Bureau for the Proclamation of (Imperial) Government” (1981: 299), Hucker names it “Commission for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs” (1985: no. 2654), and P. Ratchnevsky calls it “haute cour pour les affaires bouddhiques et le Tibét” (Song Lian 1985: xxxv) or “Amt für buddhistische Angelegenheiten” (1954: 495). It was autonomous in employing officials and did not have to consult other departments. The Censorate *Yushitai* 御史台 could not make any complaint against it or other Buddhist offices. It communicated directly with the emperor. We choose Farquhar’s term, 1990 § 30. The Bureau employed ten directors in rank 1b, two Associate Directors who were always Buddhist monks, and 30 assistants and service officials, and at least forty sub-officials, resulting in about one hundred people who were engaged in this highest governmental office.

51 The Branch office was a copy of the metropolitan Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs. The first of these Branches was founded in Hangzhou, province Jiangzhe, to supervise the monks of South China. See Farquhar 1990: § 31. In 1329 the two earlier organs, one for the local government in Tibet and one for the Buddhist Affairs Commission were fused in the Branch Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs. See Farquhar 1981: 47.

52 See Farquhar 1981: 33 or 1990: 155.

53 See Endicott-West 1989: 16, 49, 87.

governments,⁵⁴ the ethnic discrimination and conflicts in the office of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs seem to have been very serious. Among the lay Han-Chinese officials, the Buddhists might have been favored more than others. Among the Buddhists, the Mongols were favored more than others, which was definitely a source of bitter altercations in the Han-Chinese southern region. Moreover, they did not speak a common language nor did they have the same writing system. This clearly shows that even though some Chinese Buddhist monks maintained a high position during the Yuan dynasty, they were generally subject to discrimination.

By inciting such discrimination, the Mongols risked alienating loyal Buddhist Han-Chinese. Han-Chinese occupied various local offices to which Imperial decrees concerning Buddhist affairs were distributed. An example of such a decree came from the Imperial Preceptor Künga Gyeltsen Pel Sangpo 公哥兒監藏班藏卜 on the 18th day of the 7th month in the year of the pig, 1333. It went through the proper official channels, showing the governmental hierarchy from the top down to the people. It announced:

All officials of the Branch Central Secretariat (*Xing zhongshusheng* 行中書省),⁵⁵ the Branch Censorate (*Xing yushitai* 行御史臺),⁵⁶ the Branch Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs, all officials and all military officials down to every single soldier of the Pacification Commission (*Xuanweisi* 宣慰司)⁵⁷ and of the Regional Investigation Office (*Lianfangsi* 廉訪司),⁵⁸ all officials and imperial ‘seal impressers’ (*Daluhuachi* 達魯花赤)⁵⁹ downtown, all envoys of the relay stations⁶⁰ and officials, as well as every local official, the common

54 “[T]he interaction between Han-Chinese and non-Han peoples was greater than in times of Han-Chinese rule. In that respect Yuan civilization was pluralistic.” See Langlois 1981: 13.

55 All “xing-”offices were “Branch”-offices of the central office in the capital. See Farquhar 1990: § 32.

56 The Jiangnan zhudao xingyushitai 江南諸道行御臺 was responsible for the south-eastern provinces Jiangzhe, Jiangxi, and Huguang. See Farquhar 1990: § 43. Jiangnan (literally “south of the Yangtze River”) is a relative concept and symbol for Southland in Chinese. See Wang 2015.

57 Six regions had a Pacification Commission. Those relevant to our text are the ones in Jiangzhe and Huguang Province. See Farquhar 1990: § 119.

58 The Regional Investigation Office helped the Censorate to carry out surveillance activities and promote agriculture and water conservation in the region. See Farquhar 1990: § 42. 3.

59 Agents in the local government, see Farquhar 1990: 23, X1. For details about the Darugaci, see Endicott-West 1989.

60 In 1280, the General Office of the Envoys for Meritorious and Virtuous (affairs) ([Du!]gongde shisi [都]功德使司, after Farquhar the General Buddhist Affairs Commission. See 1990: 153) was established and had to inform the emperor about the activities of Buddhist monks. The title may have come from the duty as an ambassador or envoy that Basiba managed for eleven years. He kept the emperor informed about the situation in the mountains, (i. e. the Tibetan plateau), see T 2025: 1117, b26 十一年上復專使召至. The term was changed for local and monastic use, and was called “special [government-appointed] envoy” *zhuanshi*, 專使.

people, and all monks of the *sangha* have to respect and promulgate this Imperial decree. Those who do not acquiesce to this decree will face grave consequences.⁶¹

The first of three offices addressed were on the highest level because they were quasi autonomous. The Pacification Commission and the Regional Investigation Office were on the middle, regional level. The steward- and the abbot-monks in the administration of a public monastery received the title *shi* 使, *chen* 臣 or *zhuanshi* 專使 (special envoy).⁶² For the entitlement of the six stewards (*zhishi* 知事), the names of the selected monks were to be submitted to the local office annually.⁶³ The governmental positions with this title were graded and ranged from 5B to 9B. Some positions were paid and some were honorary titles. If the abbot and the six stewards also belonged to the governmental system, one may assume that they were paid like state officials by the government, which may certainly have cost the state something, but hardly ruined it.

When the rules were conceived, Emperor Toghughan temür (temple-named *Shundi* 順帝, r. 1333–1370) was ruling and the Yuan state was already weakened and dated. Shundi became involved in tantric rituals performed by some lamas, causing problems in the eyes of many Confucians.⁶⁴ As a result, some of the

⁶¹ T 2025: 1110, b25–c2.

⁶² All abbots seem to have been addressed as monk officials (*chenseng* 臣僧). It is not clear whether they were employed as high officials by the government. See T 2025: 1113, b16: 住持臣僧某, “administrative official monk X”, or shortly called “abbot X”. But as the government installed the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs, the official monks and the special [government-appointed] envoys *zhuanshi* 專使 would count as [government-appointed] chief clerks (*zhishi* 知事) belonging to the regular service officials “who supervised the clerical personnel”. See Farquhar 1990: 23. The *Imperial Edition* explains that the special envoy (*zhuanshi* 專使) was to be chosen from among the government-appointed administrators of the monastery, see T 2025: 1123, c18–20, who were the six officers or stewards (*zhishi* 知事) of the East Rank. See T 2025: 1134, a15.

⁶³ In the *Imperial Edition*, *suosi* 所司 is translated as “local office”, see T 2025: 1123, c16, 1130, b12. We do not have clear indications if it was the Pacification Commission or the Regional Investigation Office, see T 2025: 1110, a24–25 or 1110, b25–1110, c5. In the text itself, we cannot locate the full name. The local government, i. e. the Prefectural Buddhist Registrar *senglu* and the Prefectural Buddhist Supervisor *sengpan* were previously local Buddhist offices. These offices were founded in 1265 but abolished in 1317, before being fused in the Branch Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs. See Farquhar 1990: § 30. 9.

After 1332, it was maybe the established Commission for Veneration and Religion or the more content-related office called Office for Religious Teaching(s) *Chongjiaosuo* 崇教所 or Monks’ Legal Office, (see Farquhar 1990: 167), both ending either on the syllable *-suo* 所 or on the syllable *-si* 司. These were local governmental offices and were in any case subordinate to the Branch Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs of the Jiangzhe province.

⁶⁴ Shundi was first brought up in Koryō and later in a monastery in Guanxi. He is said to have succumbed to the influence of a crowd of lamas who dominated his court and involved him in tantric rituals to such an extent that affairs of the state were neglected, accelerating the decline

Confucians became allies of the Daoists.⁶⁵ For the Confucians and the Daoists, it was essential to prevent the state from turning into a Buddhist hierocracy. Since Emperor Shidabala's reign (temple-named *Yingzong* 英宗, r.1321–1323), bloodshed in the imperial families had happened more than once, and corruption in the government had increased along with paper-money inflation.⁶⁶ It seems unlikely that the export of precious metals and the hoarding of money were the fault of the monks alone, or that they were the only causes of the dynasty's decay. A number of first-rate studies on Buddhism and the national economy attempted to answer this question. Lin Ziqing, for example, argues that in the Yuan dynasty the monasteries' commercial and industrial economies flourished, while the doctrine of Buddhism had more or less ceased to develop. The number of nuns and monks was indeed higher than ever before.⁶⁷ A closer look at the numbers shows that it was not so large as to justify the argument that the ruin of the state was due to Buddhism.

The Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs oversaw the nationwide *samgha*, but this great institution was divided into local *samgha*-s. A *samgha* was historically a corporation of three or more men. It was reported to the emperor in 1291 that the census of the total Buddhist monks and nuns totaled 213,148.⁶⁸ In the dubious Chan-monastic system of the “Five Mountains and Ten Temples” (*wushan shicha* 五山十刹),⁶⁹ a contingent of five hundred monks out

of Yuan power. The Chinese sources reported disgustedly – but perhaps unsurprisingly, with relish as well – lustful remarks about Shundi's sexual practices. See Franke 1981: 319.

65 Confucians and Daoists both conspired against the rule of non-Han people. Both had been conquered by the non-Han, were shocked, and felt their culture threatened. For details, see Sun 1981: 213. Certainly, a substantial portion of the Han-Chinese Buddhists felt the same.

66 More than sixty years before the new rules were written, the Yuan government demonetized the cash of the Southern Song in the Jiangnan region, where most of the Chan-monasteries were located, and introduced paper money from 1280. The government stopped issuing copper coins, even though “(metallic) money *qian* 錢” was written on the paper-note. Strikingly however, half of the silver went to the Buddhist monasteries, which issued little paper money. Franke surmised that the monasteries distrusted paper money. Copper coins could at least be melted and changed into Buddha statues. See Franke 1949: 87, 122.

67 Lin Ziqing 林子青 1980: 102. Dan Zhengqi 單正齊 insists three times in both of his articles that by the time of emperor Shundi, the number of monasteries, monks and nuns doubled, but he mentions no source for his claim. See Dan 2010, 11: 24, 45, 199.

68 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 2:354.

69 Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–1381), a high official and author of the court *Yuanshi*, mentioned the inscription on the stele for the abbot Yuanming Dehui 圓明德慧 (1294–1372) of the monastery Jingci 淨慈 in Hangzhou (*Stele of the administrative abbot Guafeng De of the Chan-monastery Jingci* 住持淨慈禪寺孤峯德公銘) where the expression “Five Mountains and Ten Temples” (*wushan shicha* 五山十刹) occurs for the first time. The history of the system is said to have started since the Song-reign Jiading (1208–1224). See Song Lian 宋濂 1965, 7:52b.

of the *saṃgha* attended a funeral service chanting sutra.⁷⁰ The total population of a monastery could be as many as two thousand monks.⁷¹ Extrapolating the total number of monks belonging to the *saṃgha* of the Chan-monasteries,⁷² we estimate a figure of fewer than 100,000 monks. This number corresponds closely to the figure mentioned in the *Imperial Edition*: “Today the community living at big monasteries is about 100,000 monks.”⁷³ This indicates that the remaining half of the monks and nuns of the 1291 census lived either outside the Jianghu region or in private temples. The population of the state was estimated to be 60,491,230 in the same year.⁷⁴ Therefore this would result in one Chan-monk for each 602 people or, in general, one monk or nun per 282 people. Forty years later Dehui complained bitterly that “the *saṃgha*-hall [filled with actively meditating monks] became silent and devoid of humans.”⁷⁵ This statement does not tell us anything about the size of the monkhood. Perhaps the monks did not practice anymore in the *saṃgha*-hall but were doing something else in the monastery. Perhaps Dehui’s own experience with his own monastery on Baizhang Mountain led him to generalize about larger establishments. Perhaps it was an exaggerated complaint of an ambitious monk because he was never satisfied with the number of disciples in his monastery. However, why should he then describe the situation as follows: “Now [in contrast to before] at the various places, big or small, the old Diligent Emeriti are counted in the hundreds and

The Ten Temples stood behind the Five Mountains, which were in the first rank and above all other Chan-monasteries and temples. From a tabular overview after the description in Mujaku Dōchū’s *Zenrin shōkisen* 無著道忠, 禪林象器箋, see Fritz 1994: 317.

There also existed the so-called Five Mountains of the Teaching School *jiaoyuan wushan* 教院五山, i. e. the big Huayan- or Tiantai-monasteries. They were in competition with the Chan-monasteries but probably hierarchically lower graded. However, the Chan-school made an effort during the Yuan to retain the system bearing the famous name of Five Mountains and Ten Temples.

70 At the chanting event, about four hundred practitioners (僧衆約四百員), some seventy-nine guests and other monks participated (在假并暫到. 約七十九人半分), therefore around five hundred were present, and there must have been more monks in the monasteries who did not attend the chanting, see T 2025: 1149, c17. However, we do not know if this was the average for all Chan-monasteries and whether it pertains to the whole Yuan period.

71 Walsh does not mention other sources than the diary of the Japanese monk Dōgen in which the population of a monastery is estimated at some thousand monks. It is relevant to the Song dynasty. See Walsh 2010: 175.

72 This number, however, of the early thirteenth century remains probably the same at the end of the century. See Foulk 1993: 166. In Song times about 2300 temples had a plaque. See Chikusa 2000: 451. Not all “plaqued” monasteries were Chan-monasteries.

73 T 2025: 1136, b28 今夫大方居衆千百.

74 Li Sha 李莎 2012: 41.

75 T 2025: 1134, a13 而僧堂闕無一人, see main text around footnotes 131 and 241.

the servants are a multiple of them.”⁷⁶ In the 39 years since the census, did the monks become fewer and older, were there no longer active Chan-monks or did they become chanting monks, or did servants replace them? If the monks had become fewer, then the argument that the monks brought hardship upon the agricultural masses cannot be believed. If anything, most monks were old, and thus eating even less. In the years between Qubilai’s census and Wenzong’s, the population grew by 4.1%, to an estimated 65 million in 1330.⁷⁷ If the number of monks and nuns grew in proportion to the population, it should have increased to 221,887. In fact, their number seems to have declined. We know that the monasteries got very much engaged in the funeral industry at that time. Perhaps this was the reason for busy chanting at the funerals that left no time for exercising Chan in the *samgha*-hall. And if there were no monks doing Chan, who then were all these people living in the monasteries? And how was this number of total monks distributed throughout the different Buddhist schools and monasteries, and especially, how many were still in Chan-monasteries?

The *Imperial Edition* provides a hint at the distinction and classification among Buddhist schools: the Junior Vice-Councilor Togon Tarqan, ranked 1B, a very powerful and important official in the empire,⁷⁸ reorganized the Buddhist monasteries during the reign of Taiding (1324–1329). He ordered the Branch Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs to divide the monasteries using a ranking system of upper, middle, and lower categories.⁷⁹ A glance at the report

76 T 2025: 1134, a13 近來諸方大小勤舊動至百數。僕役倍之。

77 Li Sha 李莎 2012: 55.

78 The Privy Councilor (ranked 1B) Tuohuan Dalahan 脫歡答刺罕 promoted in 1325 to the Junior Chief-Councilor of Jiangzhe (ranked A1). See Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 3: 653 and my footnote 141.

79 T 2025: 1134, a13–14 泰定間脫歡丞相領行宣政院。分上中下三等寺院。

Walsh enumerates a potpourri of eight different types of monastic institutions. Not all of them were Buddhist. See Walsh 2010: 87. Schlütter and Yifa say that during the Song dynasty there were hereditary and public monasteries. See Schlütter 2008: 36–41; Yifa 2002: 81. Nothing more is said in the *Imperial Edition* about the three categories. It could be the school categories Chan, Teaching, or Vinaya, or the three categories of administrating publicly, independently, or privately. The latter three can be defined by the following criteria: How was the abbacy transmitted? Did it follow a strictly vertical succession from a master to his disciple *jiayi* [jiao] *yuan* 甲乙[教]院 or was it a horizontal transfer among the younger brothers *tudi* 徒弟 of the departed abbot who all had the same master and therefore belonged to the same tonsure generation *dudi* 度弟? If it was a horizontal transfer the family teaching remained the same. If it was a full horizontal public succession (*shifang* [chan]yuan/cha 十方[禪]院/刹), regardless of the family, it could also have changed the way of teaching. Other criteria deal with the main donator and the size of the monastery. According to Foulk or his source, all Chan- and Teaching-monasteries were classified public, and the Vinaya-monasteries, which transmitted only vertically, were therefore private. See Foulk 1993: 163–165; 1995: 456. For the transmission of a Chan-abbacy during the Yuan, see our paragraph “Limited vote of election of an abbot and

of 1291, which lists the number of temples and monasteries at 42,318, shows that more than just Chan-monasteries existed. Modern scholars suggest that this number increased during the Yuan period because the imperial family favored Buddhism.

The *Imperial Edition* shows that Buddhism as practiced in the monasteries in and near the metropolis differed from that in the south. The northern monasteries were called “official monasteries” (*guansi* 官寺),⁸⁰ and were particularly open to the officials to perform the Confucian rites, but also for public prayer in the Buddhist manner. In addition, they were entirely sponsored either by the Imperial family, by high officials, or by public money.⁸¹ Although Chan-Buddhism had traditionally mounted portraits of their spiritual teachers and private sponsors,⁸² Dehui knew that the emperors’ portraits were placed on the Buddha’s altar platforms in the northern monasteries, where services with commemoration sacrifices were held for the public five times a month. Dehui seems to have been mocking these ceremonies when he says, “the offerings and the salutations were performed as if the dead emperors were alive.”⁸³ In reality, the Mongols’ behavior was not much different from that of the Chan-Buddhists. The latter venerated the faded spiritual family members and sometimes, although rarely, the siblings. Maybe it was the frequency of commemorations which bothered Dehui, or the fact that the Mongols venerated their “bloody” ancestors in the Buddhist temples instead of in special family Portrait Halls

limited power of the abbots”. In the Biography 89 of *Yuan History* we find the three categories again: “In 1317 ... considering the monasteries, they all are led – outside and inside – by the Office of Buddhist Affairs, these are namely the Chan, Teaching, and Vinaya. Each of these keeps its property. However, both the White Cloud *Baiyunzong* 白雲宗 and the White Lotus *Bailianzong* 白蓮宗 are inclined to have treacherous interests,” see Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 15: 4524. (These messianic groups of Buddhism emerged already at the end of Song dynasty, spreading hope of political change. They were prohibited in 1322, see Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 2: 538. In the end, they contributed to the overthrow of the Yuan dynasty.) From this record, we can deduce that the three categories were Chan, Teaching, and Vinaya, the corresponding ranking was upper, middle, and lower category. See my footnote 147.

80 T 2025: 1114, c23 在京官寺.

81 Both, Spirit Halls and Image Halls “might as well be called Buddhist”, says Farquhar, “but officials performed the rites in the usual Confucian manner, [...] but for the most part the ceremonies ordered in the halls were Buddhist.” Particularly since emperor Yingzong these temples were extremely well sustained. The great wealth and complexity of the temples’ affairs led to the creation of the Bureau of Imperial Cults. Farquhar 1990: 139.

82 Brinker explained the difference in the portraits of the Chan-lineage antecedents. The direction in which they look indicates if they are alive or dead. See Brinker 1973; Brinker/ Kanazawa, 1993: 231–258. Foulk illustrates the use of the portraits. See Foulk/Sharf 2003: 74–150.

83 T 2025: 1114, c23–24 於是設聖容具佛壇場。月以五祭。設奠展禮如生。

(*yingtang* 影堂)⁸⁴ or the Hall for Imperial Ancestors' Spirits (*shenyudian* 神御殿)⁸⁵. The state temples were often separated although at times, they were built in the compounds of a Buddhist monastery. In 1340, these temples were completely reorganized and placed under the control of the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs. In the *Imperial Edition*, Dehui stated on the 1st of the 3rd lunar month in the 4th year of the later Zhiyuan reign (1338): "Now everywhere, the state is clearing out the [monastic] system and obviously aligning the tangled patchwork to filaments."⁸⁶ It is not clear from the *Imperial Edition* whether Dehui already knew about this clearing and whether it was a southern prelude to the reorganization of the temples of 1340, an aftermath of emperor Wendi's reorganization of 1332,⁸⁷ or yet another one.⁸⁸

When we consider the different categories of monasteries, we can see that the numbers relating to Buddhism in general are doubtful. If there was a religious hierarchy within Buddhist monasteries, then the monasteries in the north, sustained by the Mongols and supported by Tibetans, were at the top. They were followed by the Chan-monasteries in the south. In the third place were the other Buddhist monasteries, such as Tiantai- or Huayan-, better known as the Teaching school *jiao* 教 or *jiang* 講, and the Vinaya-monasteries *lü* 律.⁸⁹ Confucians, Nestorians, Shamanists, and Daoists came last, along with those excluded by outright elimination of their institutions.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, Chan-Buddhists thought of themselves as the top-ranked institution.⁹¹ Although the monasteries in the

84 The term *yingtang* 影堂 has been used in Buddhism since Tang dynasty.

85 *Shenyudian* 神御殿 is a term that appears during the Song. See Tuotuo 脫脫 1977, 8: 2624. For details about the worship-halls, see Xu Zhenghong 許正弘 2012: 449.

86 T 2025: 1159, b18 方今國家通制昭布森列.

87 Xu Zhenghong 許正弘 argues that after Shizu, all emperors of the Yuan except Ninzong and Shundi supported the construction of monasteries out of their own self-interest. Shizu supported the diversity of worship-halls, and Wenzong tried to streamline their organization (r. 1330–1332) but failed. See Xu Zhenghong 許正弘 2012: 471. Xu neglected to differentiate which school the monasteries belonged to.

88 A nescire ad non esse.

89 In the *Lüyuan shigui*, Xingwu Xinzong complains in 1325 that the Chan-rules do not pay attention to the Vinaya tradition. This might be a sign that the Vinaya-school was probably not properly respected, see my footnote 22.

90 Considering Schalk's statement that "a hierarchy is integrative, but also subordinating" it fits for the hierarchy of religions in China too, and is also true within Buddhist schools. See Schalk 2001: 57.

When the Daoist monasteries had to become Buddhist, and the Daoist monks had to shave their beard and plait, it was a total integration into Buddhism. It is questionable how long such a forced subordination could last. By these actions the state eliminated religious pluralism for the sake of Buddhism.

91 During the Yuan dynasty Chan-Buddhism still considered itself to have been on top of the hierarchical ranking since Song dynasty. We cannot help but notice that Dehui was under

south were well off, Dehui's envious and melancholic undertone indicates that the several newly built and immense monasteries and temples in the capital and on Wutai Mountain had become a Buddhist "concurrence" and the mass of lay people and the missing junior staff in his own monastery were woodworms eating up resources without new spiritual inputs.

Elucidating the statement of a central government official in 1299 that more than 500,000 farmer families were registered as belonging to the monasteries in the Jiangnan region calls for additional research by historians and sinologists. This means that on average 10,000 farmer households situated in the forests and hills of Jiangnan belonged to Chan-monasteries. If this statement is correct, then the state effectively delegated governing jobs to the monasteries and the responsibility rested heavily on the monasteries' administrators. This indicates once more that the state was not separating itself from religion, but on the contrary, that state and religion fused into one.

1.3 *Samgha* and the State

To demonstrate its independence and its respect for worldly authorities, Buddhism refers to the following passage in *Brahma's Net*: "One who leaves the family for Dharma does not prostrate facing the king, nor his parents, nor the siblings, but discerns the teacher's words."⁹² This sentence is antithetical to Confucianism and the obedience taught in Chinese education. If Buddhist believers want to live in harmony with Chinese society, they must explain why they behave differently, i. e. do not prostrate in front of the king. If they are not prostrating, they are guilty of a crime. To get rid of this moral guilt, they have an explanation. The words taught by the teacher are categorized as higher than anything and anybody else. Even the emperor longs for these words and bows to Buddha's teaching.

This guilty feeling is explained in the *Imperial Edition* by turning it firstly into a positive sense of indebtedness: "The emperor endlessly cherishes us with his grace and benefaction like river water flowing over the banks, why should

duress while writing new rules for the successful promulgation of the Chan ideology and mythology. See Foulk 1995: 456.

Dehui tried to redress Chan-school, which seemed to have felt the Tibetan and Teaching-school's concurrence.

⁹² T 1484: 1008, c5-6 出家人法不向國王禮拜. 不向父母禮拜. 六親不敬. 鬼神不禮. 但解師語. Prostrations *libai*, 禮拜 can also be a simple folding of hands for ritual saluting. However, in Chinese imperial cultural context *libai* were prostrations.

we not respond to everything we have got and exchange it?”⁹³ This means that the *saṃgha* received material wealth from the emperor or other benefactors in exchange for spiritual, not material, returns. The *Imperial Edition* explains that rulers had always been looking for people who knew how to give intelligible answers to our existence, as Buddha did. They did not consult Buddhists with regard to worldly matters but for their spiritual interpretation of the Way. In return for the illustrated answers of the monks, the emperor responded generously, ensuring the comfortable accommodation of the *saṃgha*. Most importantly, they exempted the Buddhist community from paying taxes and the corvée. In return, the emperor expected the Buddhist monkhood to put all its energy into awakening the nature of Buddha and doing good.⁹⁴ Dehui responded by including instructions about how to recharge one’s spiritual energy and be ready for good actions. Once recharged and transformed through meditation,⁹⁵ the monks should use the psychic power gained to convince the common people not to be aggressive, and to improve the world in terms of humanity and longevity.⁹⁶ This was, in the emperor’s eyes, the way the *saṃgha* should respond to his kindness. All monks should devote themselves wholeheartedly to blessing the emperor, not only on the imperial birthday, but every day, and pray for his longevity at every meal.⁹⁷

The monks’ congratulations on the emperors’ birthday, the prayers that the imperial wind would eternally blow and the imperial way would be long and prosperous, were all obviously expected.⁹⁸ The emperor was showered with superlatives, typical expressions of syncretistic Yuan Buddhism. He was not only the ridgepole – Dehui used this original Confucian trope – the emperor was also, among all of his assembled minister-pillars, the state’s main pillar, placed right in the middle (of the state). He embodied the Yuan dynasty and was the embodiment of the principle on Earth. He was also like a dragon surrounded by lightning and a heavenly phenomenon – the Dipper in person. Dehui did not hesitate to use this original Daoist metaphor for the emperor. The Yuan dynasty was the greatest and best in the world, leading everyone towards universal harmony, governing benevolently through the Buddhist Way. The monastery wished the emperor ten thousand years of rule, family roots and branches for a

93 T 2025: 1114, c25–27 與佛之教流于無垠。而吾徒沐恩波濡 聖澤。可不知所自而思所報效焉。

94 T 2025: 1112, c20–24 人之所貴在明道。故自古聖君崇吾西方聖人之教。不以世禮待吾徒。尊其道也。欽惟國朝優遇尤至。特蠲賦役使安厥居。而期以悉力于道。聖恩廣博天地莫窮。

95 T 2025: 1112, c25 必也悟明佛性以歸乎至善。發揮妙用以超乎至神。

96 T 2025: 1112, c26 導民於無為之化。躋世於仁壽之域。以是報君。

97 T 2025: 1112, c27–28 斯吾徒所當盡心也。其見諸日用。則朝夕必祝。一飯不忘而存夫軌度焉。

98 T 2025: 1113, c13 皇風永扇帝道遐昌。

hundred generations, and, in Confucian terms, all this with loyalty and love, as well as the three blessings: long life, wealth, and heirs.⁹⁹ On that special birthday the *saṃgha* dedicated the reciting of *dhāraṇīs* to the emperor. When the auspicious day was in a winter month, the monks had to take off their warm caps for bowing and greeting.¹⁰⁰ The monks' assembly called on the attention of the Adamantine Immeasurable Life Buddha and the Medicine Buddha, and thanked among others the Bodhisattva of Humanness for the sake of the emperor. They started to read sutras in shifts for the whole month as a symbolic act to prolong the life of the emperor.¹⁰¹ No monk was allowed to ask for leave. All had to remain in the monastery and participate during that month.¹⁰² If during this time a monk should die, the funeral rites were postponed. No strike with the pestle was allowed.¹⁰³ If high government officials were to visit the monastery in order to transfer merit to the emperor,¹⁰⁴ they were always warmly welcomed and introduced to the monastery.¹⁰⁵ Sacred verses were recited on such occasions. The officials were seated next to the cathedra, but the abbot would not thank them for participating because it was exclusively the day of the emperor and no one else.¹⁰⁶

I have listed here only half of the exaltations to the emperor in the *Imperial Edition*. The most intriguing thing about them is that these constituted the first chapter of the new monastic code.¹⁰⁷

The *Imperial Edition* starts neither with the invocation of Buddha nor with prayers on the occasion of Buddha's birthday, but with congratulations to be given on the emperor's birthday. Memorials of his enthronement day and congratulations on the prince's birthday follow.¹⁰⁸ There was a major Buddhist kowtow *ketou* 磕頭 in front of the emperor. It is harder to imagine a bigger one, and it could be seen as a shameful relegation of the Buddha. Here, Buddha is not the most highly esteemed figure and *Brahma's Net* is ignored. The rules for the incantations at Buddha's birthday, enlightenment, and obit do not appear in the *Imperial Edition* until Chapter III.¹⁰⁹ The new rules thus position the emperor

99 T 2025: 1114, a27–b9.

100 T 2025: 1113, b6 冬月則衆去帽問訊。

101 T 2025: 1113, b28–29.

102 T 2025: 1113, a3 一月日僧行不給假示敬也。

103 T 2025: 1148, b25 聖節內。不可白椎。

104 T 2025: 1113, c7.

105 T 2025: 1115, a10–11 或有官員拈香。恭勤迎送。

106 T 2025: 1113, b18 此日座下雖有官員。亦不得敘謝。蓋尊君也。

107 T 2025: 1112, c29–1114, b9.

108 T 2025: 1112, c19–1114, c17.

109 T 2025: 1115, c17–1117, a20 佛降誕佛成道涅槃。

above the Buddha, seemingly inverting the proper order of things, in which the invocations for the abstractum should come at the head of the rules and the first name mentioned should be that of Buddha. The main reason why a monk or a nun joined the *saṃgha* was presumably a soteriological and not a political one. One would expect that Buddha, rather than the emperor, would be uppermost in the monk's mind.

Dehui premeditated everything. Nothing was left to chance, particularly so societal rankings. Thus, the reversal of traditional order was intentional. Even the prince's birthday was given priority over the three special commemoration days of Buddha's life. The same was true of procedures at national commemoration days for deceased members of the imperial family; supplications in the form of Mantra chanting for natural phenomena like good weather, good harvests, snowfall,¹¹⁰ rain, and dry weather; spell ceremonies against locust infestation,¹¹¹ lightning, darkness,¹¹² fear, all bad phenomena, and bad omens for the nation. These rituals were intended to have a positive impact on the emperor and all his subjects, so were placed before the chapter with the liturgical commemoration of Buddha.

Local populations attended these ceremonies because they were involved in dramatic or tragic events in their region or in their life. If abnormal rains caused a river to flood its banks, endangering the people, the *saṃgha* would use prayer to help the people. The *saṃgha* knew that they could not control the weather, and that only heaven could provide a remedy, but through their prayers, they could comfort people.¹¹³

All these supplications came after the imperial liturgical section and before the chapter "Responding to the Roots (of the Spiritual Family)" (*Bao ben* 報本). Prayers for Buddha and the Buddhist ancestors took a back seat to prayers for good weather, good crops, and the nation as a whole – peasants and tenants, laborers, and serfs. A prayer for an abundant harvest, the rules' lay-out seemed to be saying, had priority because it was useful for the whole nation, not only for Buddha's *saṃgha*.

Dehui ordered the chapters as he did because he knew that the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs would have opposed any other scheme. As a responsible member of the team, he represented the Great Assembly *dazhong*.¹¹⁴

110 T 2025: 1115, a26–115, b8.

111 T 2025: 1115, b10–26.

112 T 2025: 1115, b17. This happened at solar or lunar eclipse.

113 T 2025: 1115, a19–21.

114 In the *Imperial Edition*, the term 'community' or 'assembly' (*zhong* 衆) is defined using the metaphor of Deng's pole: The pole magically turned, with the water out of the Void [i. e. the

With care he had to rank the chapters that would govern the *samgha*. The monks may have left the civic family, but they remained subject to the emperor. Thus, loyalty to the emperor was incumbent upon the *samgha* in general. In the *Imperial Edition*, Dehui states that it may seem like unnecessary and wasted labor to thank the emperor, because everyone enjoys the emperor's grace. This sounds almost heretical, because Dehui expresses the idea of not thanking the emperor for his generosity. However, the moral imperative is the main pillar of the Buddhist existence and is inherent in the system of giving and taking. Dehui continued in the text: to repay the indebtedness, every monk should use his talents to respond limitlessly to the four graces and face the emperor with loyalty, the first of the Four Kindnesses (*si'en* 四恩).¹¹⁵ Was not the emperor the protector of the Three Jewels (*sanbao* 三寶), i. e. Buddha, dharma, and the monks (*fo, fa, seng* 佛法僧)?

The question arises: did Dehui tacitly agree to the civic hierarchy in the arrangement of the chapters or was he influenced by the earlier rules composed by Yixian? The latter's *Chanlin beiyong qinggui* 禪林備用清規 had already changed the arrangement, "Receiving the precepts" and "A new abbot to the monastery" were no longer the opening chapters of the monastic code. Yixian was earlier than Dehui in presenting the "imperial" liturgical chapter as the first chapter and thereby underlined the emperor's and the imperial family's eminence with corresponding liturgical ceremonies. Significantly, Yixian compiled his preparatory rules between 1278 and 1311 under Yuan Emperor Qubilai, who was already sinicized and had become a Buddhist. Through historical and Buddhist insights, he may have concluded that his family accumulated a mountain of bad karma, that the Yuan had become infamous as brutal barbarians during their conquest of

corpse of Deng] into trees and finally became a forest, therefore together, they make an assemblage. (T 2025: 1136, b27 歸虛之水鄧林之木。以聚者衆也。) Thus the soteriological "returning to the Void" is here definitively positively connoted rather than negatively, as assumed under *xu* 虛 (void, nothingness or blankness) in the electronic *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, ed. by Charles Mueller, accessed 03/01/2016. The expression of "Deng's forest" comes from a pre-Buddhist source and refers to the general cultural assets. As a mythological tale of the elder source, i. e. the *Shan hai jing* 山海經, chap. 8, "Hai wai bei jing" 海外北經 (4th century BC) it is told to Chinese children and illustrates that life was not in vain when one dies (*guixu* 歸墟). The magical wonder happens that new life starts and continues. The motif used here in a Buddhist context shows that the administrative task of keeping the monks as an assembly together is not in vain, because if one dies, the assembly continues to live. Thus death, the Void (*xu*) is soteriological, not negatively, connoted. The story occurs also later in various heterogeneous works like the *Liezi* 列子, chap. 5, "Tangwen" 湯問 (4th century CE), or the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, chap. 4, "Zhuixing xun" 墜形訓 (2nd century BCE), and in "Qiming" 七命 of Zhang Jingyang 張景陽 (?–307), chap. 35, Wenxuan 文選.

115 T 2025: 1114, a26–28 知 贊仰之徒勞。欲 補報而無極。惟託鈞陶之內。義重 四恩。

the Southern Song. The Han-Chinese also criticized the Mongols for improper dress, incorrect pronunciation of the Chinese language, and a lax attitude toward incest.¹¹⁶ Conscious of Han-Chinese bias against the alien Mongol culture, Qubilai and subsequent Yuan emperors may have seen a chance to remove the infamy, accrue merit, and overcome their bad karma. The early Yuan emperors in particular sought to legitimize their rule and strengthen the foundations of their empowerment. Thus, they had a big interest in fostering the Buddhist temples. They were extremely generous, building temples and giving them huge endowments. A detailed discussion of exchanging merit for the existence and sustenance of the *saṃgha* is beyond the scope of this paragraph. The subject has already been critically scrutinized.¹¹⁷ In general, the Mongol emperors made donations with intention. They wanted something back from the *saṃgha* in return for the bestowing, e. g. praying for their wellbeing. They also gave a lot of benefits to the southern “Han-Chinese” monasteries.¹¹⁸ For example, Emperor *Zhayadu* 札牙篤 (temple-named *Wendi* 文帝, r. 1330–1333) ordered the construction of the famous monastery Dalongxiang in Nanjing.¹¹⁹ Daxin, who was commissioned as an

116 Farquhar 1990: 9.

117 Walsh 2010.

118 Considering that the Chan-monastery Lingyinsi on the West Lake of Hangzhou was destroyed by fire in 1359 and rebuilt in 1363 (see Walsh 2010: 90), money, either from the monastery’s own savings from its assets or from imperial donations, was available to repair the monastery. We infer from this that monastic construction did not diminish during the Yuan. The land of the Buddhist monasteries in general steadily increased as well. Lin says that according to the *Xu wenxian tongkao* 續文獻通考 approximately 2,279,169 hectares of land [more than about four times the size of Spain!] was given to the monasteries between 1261 and 1347. The big monasteries had agricultural land, paddies, forest etc. in various circuits, see Lin Ziqing 林子青 1980: 103.

119 Walsh assumes that Dalongxiang 大龍翔集慶寺 monastery is graded as a Tiantai-monastery during Yuan times. See Walsh, 2010: 174. Documentary evidence is missing. Maybe he adopted this idea from the book by Huang Minzhi he refers to, but I was unable to consult it. We can say that the monastery Dalongxiang was then in the north of the town Jiqing, today’s Nanjing. It was a Chan-monastery and Daxin was its abbot at that time. Because Xiaoyin Daxin (1284–1344) belonged to the family of Dahui of the Yangqi-lineage, we argue that the monastery was a Chan-monastery when it was built. See under Xiaoyin Daxin in *Zengaku daijiten* 1978: 789d.

The monastery Dalongxiang jiqing belonged to the Five Mountains. It was ranked above them. In 1329 the abbot Xiaoyin was selected from monastery Zhongtianzhu 中天竺寺 in Hangzhou and sent by the decentralized monasteries in the different Circuit and the Five Mountains of Buddhism *shijiaozong* 釋教宗. See Zhang Xuan 张铉 1978, 3: 1583b–1584a, 1722a, 1933a.

In this laic text, “shijiaozong” should not be interpreted as Teaching-school but simply as Buddhist schools or Buddhism. Otherwise the *Five Mountains*, which did not seem to be alike, would all belong to the Teaching school. Moreover the character “jiao” 教 at the passage in T 2025: 1110, b9 is used as a verb meaning “commanded, instructed, ordered” and does not fit as the noun which could be read as Teaching (school).

official monk to compare and correct the dispositions of Dehui for the *Imperial Edition*, was abbot in *Dalongxiang*. It seems unlikely that Emperor Wendi, any more than emperors before and after him, bestowed the additional buildings without expecting a return in the form of liturgical prayers. It sounds unsophisticated to us but at the time there were no electronic methods of communication. A choir of praying monks, chanting, praising the emperor, it was believed, would ensure the continuation of a good situation. Therefore, intercessions for the emperor's long-life were indispensable. To ensure the maximum benefit, the monasteries attracted an audience of local people to listen to the eulogy of the emperor and his dynasty. Announcement of the prayers for the emperor were written on yellow paper, the imperial color, and hung out so as to be visible to everybody coming to the temple. The yellow paper announced the reading of the seven sutras,¹²⁰ the revolving of the Buddhist canon in shifts (*lunzang* 輪藏) by the *saṃgha*, and the performance of tributes to the emperor in the big Buddha-hall. The Buddha-hall was where lay society met with the chanting monks in the morning. People from the surrounding area and beyond encountered the invisible benefactors through chants and prayers. In the same place as government officials,¹²¹ tenants, and farmers visiting the monastery on that day could learn about the sublime emperor and the Great Yuan dynasty. They experienced on a local level and in an accessible way this sensuous observance for the grandeur of the inaccessible, very remote, invisible donor who was the emperor of their country. It was surely a unique spectacle.

120 T 2025: 1114, a. Among the major sutras and dharanis were the *Heroic March spell Lengyanzhou* 楞嚴咒, or Skt. *Śūraṅgama-dhāraṇī* (T 945, 427 phrases out of chapter 7); the *[Dafang guang Fo] huayanjing* [大方廣佛]華嚴經, or Skt. *Buddhāvataṃsaka-mahāvaiṣṭya-sūtra* (T 278); the *Heroic March Da Foding [Rulai miyin xiuzheng liaoyi zhu pusa] wanxing shou lengyanjing* 大佛頂[如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經, or Skt. *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* (T 945); the *Lotus [Dacheng miao]fa [lian]huajing* [大乘妙法]蓮華經 or Skt. *Saddharmapundarīka-sūtra* (T 262); the *Golden Light* ([Dacheng] jinguangmingjing, [大乘]金光明經, or Skt. *Suvarṇa[pra]bhāsottama-sūtra* (T 663 or T 655); the *Dafang guangyuanjue xiuduoluo liaoyijing* (大方廣圓覺修多羅了義經, T 842); the *Diamond* ([Dacheng] jingang [banruopoluomi]jing, [大乘]金剛[般若波羅蜜]經 or Skt. *Prajñāparāmitā-Vajracchedika-sūtra* (T 235); and the *Humane King Protecting the Country* (Darenwang huoguojing, 大仁王護國經) or Skt. *Prajñāparāmitā-sutra* (Renwanghuguo banruopoluomijing 仁王護國般若波羅蜜經) either in the translation of Kumarajiva or of Amoghavajra (T 245 or T 246).

They prayed in the Buddha-hall. The Buddha-hall (*fodian* 佛殿) and the Dharma-hall (*fadian* 法殿) were one space. The most important hall in a Chan-monastery should have been the “meditation-”, also called “*saṃgha-*” or “clouds-hall” (*chan-*, *seng-* or *yuntang* 禪-, 僧-, 雲堂). See Fritz 1994: 192; Yifa 2002: 267.

121 T 2025: 1115, a10–11 或有官員拈香。恭勤迎送。

The Han-Chinese Buddhist leaders were not blind to the advantages they could gain within this system. The *saṃgha* conferred merits on the emperor in exchange for his grace and donations, collecting merits in the midst of the field of happiness (*futian* 福田). Repaying the emperor's benevolence by listing the liturgical ceremonies for him at the beginning of the rules was an easy task. However, the position was more than just thanking a benefactor, and it was not in vain. The arrangement had to be carefully and deliberately thought through, because it had potential future consequences. If this cultural merit, i. e. the conferring of imperial gifts, could remove the bad karma of the past, should it not be possible to accumulate in advance good deeds to balance out the bad ones yet to come? The *saṃgha* thanked the emperor for the present as well as the future by reciting prayers for him. The account of debited and credited merits had to be written down.¹²² Through an unspoken agreement with the *saṃgha*, Dehui put the position of Buddha second to that of the emperor. By placing the imperial ceremonies at the beginning of the *Imperial Edition*, he hoped to gain protection, precious objects, and donations in form of land or grains. It was not a soteriological but a political act. Dehui was not kowtowing to the emperor, because there was no need to do so. He was the appointed administrative official monk, or the so-called abbot (*zhuchi chenseng* 住持臣僧), long before the emperor had chosen him for the task of the revision of the rules. In hindsight, one reason the emperor commissioned Chan-abbots like Dehui and Daxin to revise the rules could have been political, an attempt to gain more support in the south. Surely, the high-ranking abbots also wanted to be on good terms with the emperor in order to benefit the *saṃgha*. The compiling and editing of the rules cemented a mutually beneficial relationship. Dehui ensured the imperial protector's karmic award for longevity and increased social approval of the emperor among the Buddhist Han-Chinese. Dehui did not arrange the chapters for his personal benefit, but rather for the welfare of the *saṃgha*. Therefore ranking the imperial protector at the top of a descending order was justified. In conclusion, the opening chapter of the *Imperial Edition* was the result of a political and economic agreement that benefitted the *saṃgha* during Yuan times.

If Dehui had not deliberately proceeded in organizing the Rule of Purity as he did, then the imperial liturgy would have remained in the final chapter along with a calendar, just as in all former rules. The calendar enumerated in a prosaic way all commemoration days of the year but never contained a paean of praise for the emperor. For the sake of the annual rhythm, Dehui left the calendar in its

¹²² It recalls the salvation economy or the so-called divine economy of any religious institution. For details, especially about the monastery Tiantong, which was a Chan-monastery in Yuan dynasty, see Walsh 2010.

original form where it used to be. For example, the monastic annual calendar shortly refers to the commemoration of the deceased Imperial Preceptor as follows: “On the 22nd day of the 11th lunar month is the Imperial Preceptor’s Commemoration day *dishiji* 帝師忌.”¹²³

Dehui exhorted the Chinese *samgha* to respect the worldly emperor and taught that he was at the apex of everything. In the preamble of the *Ming Imperial Edition*, the Minister of Rite, Hu Ying, repeated that the emperor was the head of all religious schools.¹²⁴ He stated definitively that the duties of the *samgha* included invoking prayers for the emperor’s fortune and longevity. At the same time, Hu Ying urged the Ming emperor to bestow benevolence on the Buddhist school¹²⁵ and to accept the rules the incumbent abbot Zhongzhi of Baizhang monastery had presented as a memorial, asking them to be republished.¹²⁶ By distributing the rules to all monasteries, the emperor would gain respect from big monasteries everywhere in the world,¹²⁷ and make other rules obsolete.¹²⁸ The liturgical ceremonies for the imperial family had not changed and remained at the beginning of the *Imperial Edition*, ensuring the primacy of the Ming emperor and his family over Buddha, and of worldly matters over spiritual ones. At the same time, the rules continued to emphasize the *samgha*’s dependence on the emperor’s grace in conducting their lives according to the Three Refuges. As the Buddha had already faded away, his appearance in the composition of the code was merely historical and metaphysical so he could be listed at a second or third place. But positioning a patron like the emperor in the first chapter was of crucial existential importance in the cultural exchange of praise through money. He was living in the present and not merely a transcendent being.

At the end of Yuan era, the Chinese *samgha* had benefitted so much materially, as a consequence, that the question arises as to what extent the enriched *samgha* was still dependent on the emperor. It was no longer a question of life and death; the *samgha*’s existence was no longer threatened. The *Imperial Edition* indicates that the *samgha* may have become “lazier” or less challenged. Whereas in earlier times, the reading of sutras in shifts was held on the first and the 15th of the lunar month, to produce merit on behalf of the

123 T 2025: 1155, a21.

124 T 2025: 1110, c9 皇帝為教門的上頭。The emperor is the supreme head of the religious schools.

125 T 2025: 1110, a12 聖恩憐憫教門乞敕賜清規。

126 T 2025: 1109, c21 江西南昌府奉新縣百丈山大智壽聖禪寺住持僧忠智奏。

127 T 2025: 1110, a12 頒行天下叢林寺院。住持首僧督衆講習。

128 T 2025: 1110, b.

emperor's long life, it had become reduced to the reading of the imperial eulogy and respectful saluting in front of the imperial seat.¹²⁹ Regular chanting (*nian-song* 念誦), formerly performed six times a month on all days ending with a three and eight was diminished to just three times a month, only on the days ending with an eight.¹³⁰ The monks had halved their work. Furthermore, the *samgha*-hall, where trainees should have been practicing meditation, was empty.¹³¹ This provokes the question: What were the monks doing instead?¹³²

Following the liturgical procedures for the National Day in the second chapter of the *Imperial Edition*, the third chapter *Bao ben* 報本 deals with that for the liturgical procedures on special days within the Buddhist family. The enumeration does not follow the course of the year. Thus the hierarchy within the Buddhist family is unveiled: here, Buddha is at last represented, followed by the Imperial Preceptor. In the fourth chapter, the liturgical procedures for the commemoration days of their own Chan-antecedents are listed. Deference to the Imperial Preceptor, always a Tibetan Buddhist, was no longer purely a question of a charitable donation but took place for reasons of power. The Imperial Preceptor was mentioned in this prominent place because of his high governmental position, not for his ethnic origin or wealthy background. Dehui respected (*jishou* 稽首) the superiority of the Imperial Preceptor. After all, the latter informed the emperor about the different schools of Buddhism and served as superintendent for the Chan-monasteries. He also possessed the jade seal of the emperor. The inclusion and accentuated placement of the Imperial Preceptor demonstrated Dehui's increased respect for that particular official. But how much did their presentation of the hierarchy consolidate the position of Chan-Buddhism in Yuan times? The two abbots were diplomatic and submissive because they needed the cooperation of the Imperial Preceptor. As abbots of monasteries in the south, Dehui and Daxin tried to circumvent southern Han-Chinese opposition to political obstacles – they outlined the hierarchy within the Rule of Purity. The Chan-Buddhists were positioned hierarchically right after him thereby strengthening their leading position among Buddhist schools in China.¹³³

129 T 2025: 1114, b18–19 旦望古來轉藏祝壽。今則必先侵晨登殿。御座前祝讚。於禮為恭。

130 T 2025: 1121, a8–9 念誦 古規初三。十三。二十三。初八。十八。二十八。今止行初八。十八。二十八。

131 See main text around footnotes 75 and 241.

132 See my footnote 262.

133 The Chan-Buddhists or Dehui respected the Tibetan Imperial Preceptor and positioned him in such a prominent place in the rules that all high governmental officials and official monks of other ethnic origin in the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist monks were accepted as superiors, i. e. the hierarchy was preserved. Fostering their own pure power could be a genetic fallacy but promoting the own supreme position gives evidence for a weak Buddhist school going out of date.

In other words, Dehui's writing was a rhetorical trick. It aimed to glorify the Chan-legacy in personalities like Bodhidharma or Baizhang, and to promote the school he belonged to.¹³⁴ No other Buddhist teachers from other Buddhist schools are mentioned in the list and yet the code was mandatory for all Buddhist monasteries. The abbots' rhetorical gimmickry worked to advance the alleged glory of Chan-Buddhism during the Yuan dynasty and has lasted to this day.

2 Limits to and of the monasteries

2.1 Limit to the number of monasteries

The *Imperial Edition* does not explicitly state the number of the imperially subsidized Yuan Buddhist monasteries, or whether the amount remained the same during the Yuan dynasty. In earlier times, the emperors bestowed a plaque (*e* 額) upon the monasteries, like the above mentioned naming of the monastery on Baizhang Mountain. The name on the plaque of the monastery contained the phrase “eternal life to the emperor” (*shousheng* 壽聖) which reveals that the monastery was praying for long life to the emperor who gave in exchange not only imperial protection but also money to sustain the monastery.¹³⁵ This may provide evidence that the Baizhang Mountain monastery belonged to a quota *e* 額 of imperially subsidized monasteries. During the Tang dynasty only a few big monasteries were included in the quota system of the imperially bestowed *ci* 賜 monasteries. In the Song dynasty the imperial sponsoring of a monastery depended on its size. A monastery could ask for a plaque, *ci'e* 賜額, literally an “imperially bestowed *ci* 賜 plaque *e* 額”, when it had at least one hundred bays

134 The listing of the Chan-antecedents to be commemorated does not give a true picture of the Buddhist hierarchy because the antecedents of other Buddhist schools are missing. Therefore, to comply with the rules meant that only Chan-Buddhist “saints” existed and were to be venerated. In this manner, Chan-Buddhists, and in this instance Dehui, created a mythology about the Chan-school by presenting a choice of non-equal alternatives, thus a false dilemma. This informal fallacy of unreasonable assertion pretended that Chan-Buddhism was the only Buddhist authority; therefore, the real situation is incompletely described.

135 The full name of the Baizhang monastery was Baizhangshan dazhi shousheng chansi 百丈山大智壽聖禪寺.

T 2025: 1157, b4 寺以壽聖名則故額也。Therefore the monastery took the name “long life to the emperor” on (its) plaque.

(the space between two pillars of a monastery). Later this restriction was relaxed to only thirty bays. This predisposed smaller monasteries to creative measures. When the monks prayed for the long life of the Song emperor Yingzong 英宗 (1067), who was sick and believed in Buddhism, the emperor reciprocated with grace and the quota of sponsored monasteries of “eternal life to the emperor” subsequently increased. These sponsored monasteries received plaques to place above their main porch (*shanmen* 山門). The place where the plaque was mounted suggests the secondary association of *e* 額 as used for forehead, demonstrating to the public the imperial recognition. The plaque (*e*) above the mountain gate (*shanmen*) of the temple was exactly displayed as on the human body, the diamond pearl above the mouth on the forehead (*e*), right in the center between the brows to indicate the Buddha-nature. For special events, further plaques were distributed. All monasteries sought a plaque because it meant an increase in government protection, subsidies, wealth, and prestige. By the time of the Southern Song, however, this system was being abused and its status had lost its original meaning.¹³⁶

In the Ming dynastic preamble to the *Imperial Edition*, Hu Ying, the Minister of Rites, remarked that the monks “were perfuming by burning incense fires, and praying for the long life of the emperor.” Astonishingly, he also spoke in laudatory terms and “with all respect to the Mongol emperors who extended their grace like a flood on the universal scale to the monks and disciples”, while simultaneously admitting that the latter “were still living in the monasteries and cloisters with the original plaques (*e* 額).”¹³⁷ To write this preamble, Hu Ying acknowledged that he had consulted the dynastic history. Therefore, it is not incidental that he spoke of the original, imperially granted, and “limited” plaques. The idea of reducing and limiting the number of monasteries and cloisters with their enormous latifundia was back on the agenda at the beginning of the Ming. We can infer from this that during Yuan times, the earlier Song’s limited “official” monasteries were still known as such and kept their names. The source does not, however, provide the categories or names of the Yuan sponsored monasteries.

During the middle period of the Yuan dynasty at the latest, the government stopped forcing institutions to convert from one religion to another. The conversion of Daoist towers into Buddhist monasteries, initiated by the lama Sangge 桑哥 (tib. *Sengge* རེང་གེ), was continued between 1285 and 1288 by Yanglian Zhenjia 楊璉真加. He appropriated tenants’ households to the registers of the Buddhist monasteries and forced Daoists to abandon the Way *dao* 道, and

¹³⁶ See Chikusa 2000: 451–452; Schlütter 2008: 34–36.

¹³⁷ T 2025: 1110, a5–6 欽蒙皇上洪恩普度天下僧行。仍住原額寺院熏修香火。祝延聖壽。

become monks.¹³⁸ In the Provisions of Punishments (*xingfa* 刑法) from the reign of Renzong (1312), converting Daoist towers into Buddhist monasteries, and vice versa, was prohibited.¹³⁹

2.2 Limit to the number of official monks

The character for quota, *e* 額, appears in the rules of the *Imperial Edition* in the context of the rate for the official monks of Both Ranks (*liangban* 兩班), Eastern (*dongxu* 東序) and Western (*xixu* 西序).¹⁴⁰ In the monastery administration, the Western Rank was charged with the spiritual and social affairs of the *samgha*. The Eastern Rank managed all practical and administrative affairs and the assets of the *samgha*. The state declared a certain quota for officials, which was not to be transgressed. Under emperor Yesün Temür (temple-named *Taiding* 泰定, r. 1324–mid 1328), the Junior Chief-Councilor Togon Tarqan *Tuohuan Dalahan* 脫歡答刺罕¹⁴¹ of the Jiangzhe Branch Office, established this quota. The official *Yuanshi* 元史 (hereafter referred to as *Yuan History*) provides no evidence in the form of a corresponding figure or comment on the procedures. During the Yuan dynasty, monastic institutions had to annually request the number of stewards and had to accept the government's quota (*e* 額).¹⁴² A passage indicates that the government approved of officials of Both Ranks. When a special envoy was sent to accompany the newly appointed abbot, he was chosen from among the approved Both Ranks.¹⁴³

138 Yanglian Zhenjia's name is also written 楊璉真珈, 楊璉真伽, 楊輦真珈 or 楊璉真加. See Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 2: 428. In Buddhist scriptures like the *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載 by Nianchang 念常, it is written 楊璉真佳 or 楊輦真迦. See T 2036: 710, b7.

139 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 9:2682.

140 T 2025: 1134, a14–15 泰定間脫歡丞相領行宣政院.分上中下三等寺院.額定歲請知事員數正為此也. See my footnote 142.

The system of Both Ranks (*liangban* 兩班) is said to go back to the Tang court, where in the audience hall from the perspective of the south-facing emperor, the left side was to the east and the right side to the west. The military officials (*wu* 武) were to his right (lesser) and the civilian officials (*wen* 文) to his left (higher) side. See Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 1975, 4: 1236–1237. The names of “Eastern Rank” (*dongxu* 東序) for the affairs' managers or stewards *zhishi* 知事, and “Western Rank” (*xixu* 西序) for the chiefs or prefects (*toushou* 頭首), were both new terms in Dehui's new rules, see my footnote 200.

141 Tarqan was a Mongolian of high rank, but maybe “tarqan” was just a part of the title or rank of Togon and not a part of his name. See my footnotes 78, 147.

142 T 2025: 1134, a14–15 泰定間脫歡丞相領行宣政院...額定歲請知事員數...宜遵行之.

143 T 2025: 1123, c19–20 所請專使或上首知事. 或勤舊或西堂首座. 或以次頭首充之.

The required special (government-appointed monastic) envoy may either be the head of all stewards, or the head of all officers emeriti, or the chief seat of the west-hall, i. e. the former abbot of another monastery who retired to this monastery, or a prefect who would be second-best to accomplish (this duty).

According to Dehui, monks in the Both Ranks system competed heavily during the Yuan dynasty, which does not mean that they had not competed previously. Monks quarreled about dignity and humiliated each other, trying to abase each other's position and ranking. The fighting often went so far as to result in disassociation.¹⁴⁴ The Eastern Rank had to be the more proficient of the two in the worldly rules and laws and was therefore more exposed to corruption.¹⁴⁵

Dehui looked at history to explain why things became this way. He praised the system that he believed had worked splendidly before. In the big monasteries the abbot's administrative duties became so onerous that they needed to be distributed among Both Ranks in order for everything to work perfectly.¹⁴⁶ Under the previous rules the main administrative duties were assigned to the different positions among Both Ranks. The number of the positions did not increase very much. Only a few new positions were added, such as the steward of pawned villages (*zhuangzhu* 莊主). However, the number of personnel in the same position and same degree could vary according to the size of the monastery. For this reason, each monastery had to submit the names of the officials separately. It is most likely that the number depended not only on the size of each monastery but also on the three categories of schools.¹⁴⁷ In the *Imperial Edition*, the number of the high-ranking personnel staff of Both Ranks varied only slightly. Their number was slightly more than thirty. Not all employees in the administration were official monks. Some had honorary titles, like the two acolytes of the abbot, the Wise Monk's acolyte (*shizhe* 聖僧侍者), and the robe-and-bowl acolyte (*yibo shizhe* 衣鉢侍者). There were also sub-officials like the assistants or postulants, *hangzhe* 行者, literally "being in the line or in the guild of", (not to be mistaken for the same Chinese writing but different meaning of the practitioners *xingzhe* 行者), the hall monitors (*zhitang* 直堂), or the fire guards (*huoke* 火客). The ones who had neither an honorary title nor a ranking were said to be "doing their duty" (*banshi* 辦事). A full exposition of what the

144 T 2025: 1130, c17–18 古猶東西易位而交職之。不以班資崇卑為謙。今岐而二之非也。甚而黨鬥。強弱異勢至不相容者有矣。

145 T 2025: 1130, c14–15 黼黻宗猷。至若司帑庾歷庶務。世出世法無不閑習。

146 T 2025: 1119, a28–b1 設兩序以分其職。而制度粲然矣。

147 Ichimura assumes that the three categories existed within the Chan-system. However, it is not evident in the text. Togon Tarqan was not just the head of the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist affairs (as Ichimura's translation renders it) nor was he just any official. He was the eminent Junior Chief-Councilor (see my footnotes 78 and 141), and it is therefore difficult to understand why he personally should have been charged with the internal reorganization of the Chan-school rather than with the three main Buddhist schools, Chan, Teaching, and Vinaya. See my footnote 79.

functions of the different administrative offices entailed goes well beyond the scope of this study and has already been investigated several times.¹⁴⁸

In contrast to the Both Ranks, the passage with reference to the official administrative monk (*zhuchi chenseng* 住持臣僧) of the highest rank, namely that of the abbot (*fangzhang* 方丈), was largely extended in the *Imperial Edition* according to the additional duties he had to fulfill.

2.3 Limited vote of election of an abbot and limited power of the abbots

In the previous rules, the chapter about the abbot was not especially important. The *Imperial Edition* placed the abbot at the top of the *samgha*'s hierarchy. It thus made sense for Dehui to structure the rules as he did. In fact, his structure is diametrically opposed from that in the earlier rules. In the old rules, the section concerning the *samgha* came first, followed by the enumeration of the responsibilities of Both Ranks. The abbot appeared everywhere in the background as a spiritual leader but not as the very important administrative head. The last chapter in the earlier rules was dedicated to the role, the retirement, and the funeral of the abbot. In particular the Prior or General Superintendent (*dujiansi* 都監寺) was charged with most worldly duties. In contrast, the *Imperial Edition* gives priority and space to the abbot's duties, assignments, and retirement.¹⁴⁹ His position seems to have become more significant to the outside world as well. To manage everything by himself would have been impossible. Therefore, five personal acolytes assisted him.¹⁵⁰ He was the

148 T 2025: 1130, c12–1136, b25 Both Ranks in the *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 勅修百丈清規 and the corresponding discussion about its hierarchical structure are addressed in my book. See Fritz 1994. For the Japanese Chan-system, see Collcutt 1981.

149 T 2025: 1119, a21–1130, c2.

150 All assistants of the abbot or postulants to become an abbot (*shizhe* 侍者) had very classified jobs. The acolyte, namely the “incense burning”-acolyte (*shaoxiang* 燒香) assisted in all ceremonies at which the abbot officiated. The secretary (*shuzhuang* 書狀侍者) was responsible for the drafts of the correspondence and other secretarial work of the abbot. The “inviting guest”-acolyte (*qingke* 請客) hosted the personal guests of the abbot. These three all had a rank, see T 2025: 1131, c9 ff. Foulk says rightly that it “was a boost to the career of a young monk [to be an acolyte] because it meant that he had been singled out as having the potential to become a dharma heir and was being groomed for high monastic office.” See *Standard Observances of the Soto Zen School*, Volume 2, 2010: 56. The robe-and-bowl acolyte (*yibo shizhe* 衣鉢侍者) was not responsible for clothes and food as the name would suggest but, as a representative of the abbot, he was an elderly man who attended meetings outside the monastery, see T 2025: 1131, c22 ff. The hotwater-and-medicine acolyte (*tangyao shizhe* 湯藥侍者)

prominent representative of the inside to the outside, of the monastic to the lay society. It was his responsibility to insure a harmonious situation within the monastery with respect to worldly and religious affairs. As the person most exposed to the public, he became easily involved in external affairs. He received and issued invitations pertaining to high officials and important donors.¹⁵¹ With the only seal of the temple (*si yin yi ke* 寺印一顆) in his possession, the insignia of his power was highly visible.¹⁵²

As the guarantor for peace inside the monastery, the abbot requested the monks to keep the precepts. As a role model of the ideal Chan-Buddhist monk, he inspired the community to behave like him. A more stringent solution was to refer fighting delinquents to the mediating rector.¹⁵³ The *Imperial Edition* lists many criteria for electing the right abbot among candidates with a good “name and virtue”.

The abbot thus had special status and power within the monastic hierarchy. His honorary title was “elder” (*zhanglao* 長老). Dehui claims that everything was better in earlier days, when abbots full of integrity were chosen because they were “devoured by virtues and honored all through”.¹⁵⁴ During the Yuan dynasty, the demand for a different kind of quality had increased. Now, an abbot needed to have a Chan-school-trained discerning eye, excellent virtues, and to be a senior monk. He was expected to behave cleanly and honestly, to be incorruptible, and to be able to endure the burdens of serving the community.¹⁵⁵

Dehui claimed that the selection system was better in the past as well. The abbot was elected by the assembly and subsequently confirmed by a governmental notification from the emperor, naming him an official (*guan* 官).¹⁵⁶ The emperor had the last word on appointing the new abbot.¹⁵⁷ A work of the Song era, however, suggests that the dangers of selecting a less than upright abbot

was in fact the abbot’s personal chef, see T 2025: 1131, c28 ff. The acolyte for the sculpture of the Wise Monk (*shengseng shizhe* 聖僧侍者) took care of the statue relative to the hall, see T 2025: 1132, a3 ff. The three latter acolytes did not have a rank.

151 T 2025: 11235, a5–8 施主請陞座齋僧 施主到門。知容接見引上方丈。獻茶湯。送安下處。若官貴大施主。當鳴鐘集衆門迎。送安下處定。施主卻請知事商議。同上方丈。炷香拜請。

152 T 2025: 1125, c3–4 行者進卓筆硯知事具狀(式見後)備幘袂捧呈寺印。新命看封付知事開封。新命視篆。訖就狀上先僉押。次題日子; T 2025: 1125, c14 當寺庫司比丘某甲寺印一顆。

153 T 2025: 1132, b5 衆有爭競遺失。為辨析和會。The state delegated the legal decisions to the abbot, the last instance of jurisdiction within the monastery, but it was the rector’s (*weina* 維那) daily job to act as a mediator and to attune the quarrelling parties.

154 T 2025: 1119, a28 以齒德俱尊也。

155 T 2025: 1130, b11 須擇宗眼明白德劭年高。行止廉潔堪服衆望者。

156 T 2025: 1119, b3 故始由衆所推。既而命之官。

157 For the appointment of abbots at imperially regulated temples during Song times, especially the one of Dahui to Jingshan monastery, see Levering 1978. About his abbacy at Ayushan after his exile, see Levering 2002: 115–116, accessed 03/01/2016.

had already existed before Dehui's time, namely in the *Turtle Mirror* (*Guijingwen* 龜鏡文),¹⁵⁸ which is included in the *Imperial Edition*, where Chan-teacher Cijue, author of the *Chanyuan qinggui*, remarks: "If a monastery is not governed and the Dharma wheel is not rotating, then someone else than an abbot was chosen."¹⁵⁹

In theory, the election of a Buddhist abbot was fairly democratic, but not very Chinese. For Chinese, the right of rebellion was the only democratic way to change rulers. It was justified by the mandate of heaven (*tian ming* 天命).^{160,161} Electing an abbot was a long procedure in which all the different opinions were taken into consideration. The first proposition of a name appeared in the assembly convoked by the head of the administrative quarter. The local advisory board, consisting of incumbent Both Ranks members and the Diligent Emeriti of Both Ranks, evaluated and named candidates. During these proceedings, various monasteries were consulted, and the most well-known and victorious candidates of the provinces Jiangxi, Jiangzhe, and Huguang were selected to participate in the proceedings. Once this was done, an extended panel that included the great monks' assembly and public representation discussed the definitive nomination.¹⁶² An eventual nominal correction might be made in the list of preferred candidates, however, the administration of the monastery in question had to re-convene with the various monasteries to scrutinize the person elected. Only after that was the monastery able to announce the name of the new abbot. The unanimous vote¹⁶³ was to be retained and submitted to the local governmental office¹⁶⁴ with the demand to engage him.¹⁶⁵ The letter with the

158 It literally means "Essay on setting a good example."

159 T 2025: 1146, c16–17 若或叢林不治法輪不轉。非長老所以為衆也。

160 If the emperor who got the mandate from heaven would rule justly, he would not lose the right to be the ruler. If he did not rule well, someone who would rule better, could overthrow him. See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 1984: 186.

161 Mayer 2000: 99–100, accessed 03/01/2016.

162 T 2025: 1130, b8–1130, b10 議舉住持。兩序勤舊就庫司會茶。議請補處住持。仍請江湖名勝。大眾公同選舉。

163 Interestingly, the character is the same as for the listing of the candidates who passed the examination at the Confucian Hanlin-Academy.

164 Before 1332, it was the Office of Envoys with Merits and Virtues (*gongde shisi* 功德使司), see Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 3: 44. Or, it was the local Commission, one of the ten Commissions (*si*) of the General Buddhist Affairs that had existed before 1332 and finally, in 1335 it merged with the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs. At times, it was the Commission of Veneration and Religion (*chongjiaosuo* 崇教所), established in 1342.

165 T 2025: 1130, b12 又當合諸山輿論。然後列名僉狀。保申所司請之。

name of the appointee was signed by all participants and sent to their own as well as to all other monasteries.¹⁶⁶

In describing the ideal method of election, Dehui expressed what he hoped would be the outcome: “When the elected man was installed, the reputation of the Dharma and the monastery in question would brightly shine again.”¹⁶⁷ Dehui understood that in practice the electoral procedure did not always accord with the theory. The government could ignore the results of the election, veto it, and reject the appointee. When the designated abbot had been discharged from his engagement, he could not attend to his duties and position. Indeed the government’s practice often violated theory by selling the position (but not assuming the duties) at a high price. The government would let a “noble snatch the position as if they were cornering the market with a connoisseur’s commodity.”¹⁶⁸ Dehui expressed himself very clearly, attacking the nobles and heroes of the time. In the same passage, he lambasted in a homonymous pun: “Damned crows [of abbots], who possess mountains of granaries that enrich them and with servants who make them live peacefully!”¹⁶⁹ Naturally, if the new abbot was not their man, the monastery should depose him and make a clean sweep.¹⁷⁰ Dehui ignores the impact of a single abbot’s venality on the monastery’s existence and eventual decline.

During the appointee’s probationary period the new abbot would either be declared fit for the position or not. If appointed by the government and disliked by the *samgha* and the administrating monks, he would ultimately be ignored. And indeed, the Censorate handed in a decree on the 13th day of the 1st lunar month of 1313 that approved a probation period for a new abbot.¹⁷¹ When he passed this last obstacle the government would give its final decision as to whether an abbot had to resign or to continue. Taking this into account, the government sold this position more than once and played a lucrative game with the nobles!

166 T 2025: 1123, c14–18 請新住持。發專使凡十方寺院住持虛席。必聞於所司。伺公命下。庫司會兩序勤舊茶。議發專使修書(頭首知事勤舊蒙堂前資僧衆)製疏(山門諸山江湖)。When Dehui wrote the rules, it was the office with its last syllable “-si”, therefore one of the ten Commissions. See Farquhar 1990: 153–156 § 30 and 30.9. Concerning the word *jianghu*, see my footnote 3.

167 T 2025: 1130, b13 若住持得人。法道尊重寺門有光。

168 T 2025: 1119, b4 而猶辭聘不赴者。後則貴鬻豪奪。視若奇貨。

169 T 2025: 1119, b3 烏有庾廩之富與僕之安哉。The sentence could also be read in a harmless manner: “It never happened (before) that mountains of granaries enriched (the abbots and) ...” An elliptic sentence and euphemistic way to say: but now, it happens!

170 T 2025: 1119, b5 然苟非其人。一寺廢蕩。

171 *Da Yuan shengzheng guochao dianzhang* 大元聖政國朝典章, 1964: 467b.

Most of the time the abbot was the guarantor for the enforcement of the rules and the system. Sometimes, however, precisely the contrary was true. If a noble was only at the head of a monastery for half a year, Dehui's negative comments about abbots were not surprising. Some abbots acted maliciously and fraudulently, and broke the rules with impunity. Corruption soared especially after the position of the yield comptrollers of permanent assets was created in the previous generation. Some abbots were so crooked and partial that they personally employed bandits.¹⁷² In view of the fact that only about fifty big Chan-monasteries existed, it seems that corruption and fraud were alarmingly frequent. But wherever granaries and large landholdings existed, "rats, crows, and nobles" gathered. As early as the thirteenth century the largest landholders were traditionally the Five Mountains.¹⁷³ Thus, these monasteries were a very attractive prospect for speculators and artificers of fraud.

Dehui enumerated three reasons for corruption in the monasteries. The first concerned the abbots. At various places aspirants disputed and quarreled about the administration of the permanent assets. This could easily provoke a grudge against the abbot and disharmony among low and high officials.¹⁷⁴ If an abbot was partial in selecting aspirants and did not comply with the *saṃgha*'s needs, then the rejected aspirants' grudge against the abbot was inevitable and could represent a threat for an abbot at some indefinite future date.

The abbot guaranteed the rules, protecting the *saṃgha*. As the head of the institution, he defended the principles, moralities, and hierarchy of the rules. The interdependency of the rule and the guarantor was of great significance. Without rules, the *saṃgha* would be in a chaotic state and the quiescence Chan-Buddhism required would be impossible.

A good abbot wanted everyone to do an excellent job. He could not look after everything himself, but had to delegate some duties. Choosing who would fill which job in the monastery was one of his most crucial duties. He had to select the qualified appointee according to their duties with great skill.¹⁷⁵ By installing reliable finance stewards, who used double-entry bookkeeping, he could prevent fraud and corruption. A trustworthy general superintendent would relieve him of many troubles. However, to secure the welfare of the *saṃgha*, the abbot regularly made spot checks of the accounts of crops and wealth.¹⁷⁶

172 T 2025: 1133, b23–24 此名一立其弊百出。為住持私任匪人者有之。因利曲徇者有之。

173 See Walsh 2010: 87.

174 T 2025: 1133, b5–6 略舉其三。諸方通害初爭莊職。安能遍及。構怨住持上下不睦一也。

175 T 2025: 1130, c19 必慎擇所任。

176 T 2025: 1127, a6–7; 1132, a12; 1132 c1–5; 1132, c9.

Dehui feared that the monasteries would be thoroughly corrupted, i. e. verbatim “to get in predicaments and mire in damnability.” Too few abbots and Diligent Emeriti, he believed, were brave and concerned enough about the monasteries’ destiny and welfare.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, he warned new abbots via the rules, and admonished them to be cautious. He wove several warnings about the old retired and current Both Ranks into the *Imperial Edition*. He seems to have viewed the cliques of the Diligent Emeriti as the worst problem. They were no longer fit for work and had a lot of time for intrigue and establishing cliques, and they became especially active when an abbot died. Dehui was bothered by the fact that these cliques could have a negative influence for decades.¹⁷⁸ It could easily happen that a new abbot would end up as the puppet of these intriguers. The Diligent Emeriti were also eager to get the office of the yield comptrollers of the permanent assets. They tried to obtain that position by favoritism and then occupy it for many years.¹⁷⁹ Once assigned this position, they were “fishermen” in the permanent assets. If the abbot caught them in flagrante and punished them, they were infuriated. The ones who had longed for but never been given the assignment were resentful and constituted a dangerous source of infamous lies.¹⁸⁰ Favoritism, bribery, and conspiracy were their common practices. What a task for a new abbot to put an end to these bad habits!¹⁸¹ It is no surprise that, when a Diligent Emeriti died, he left behind luxurious commodities such as paddies, land, rice, grain, houses, farmer huts, beds and couches, abodes, and orange trees.¹⁸²

Because the Diligent Emeriti had so many private possessions, Dehui insisted that all these personal commodities had to be returned to the assets of the monasteries when they died.¹⁸³ Ultimately, the monasteries would not lose their assets and plurality of benefits. That would have been the crucial moment for the state to interfere if there had been an inheritance tax, transfer, or donation tax, but none of these existed at that time. The monasteries, as well as the monks, did not pay taxes. Dehui and some of the honest Diligent Emeriti were nonetheless very anxious about the future of the monasteries. They wanted to restore the *samgha*’s wealth and to reduce excessive costs and the prevalence

177 T 2025: 1133, b19 住持勤舊能恤念寺門。

178 T 2025: 1119, b5–6 又遺黨於後。至數十年蔓不可圖。

179 T 2025: 1133, b25 為勤舊執事人連年佔充者有之。托勢求充者有之。

180 T 2025: 1127, c11–13 近時風俗薄惡。僧輩求充莊庫執事不得。或盜竊常住。住持依公擯罰。惡徒不責己過。惟懷憤恨。一聞遷化。若快其志。惡言罵詈甚至。

181 T 2025: 1130, b15–16 惟從賄賂致有樹黨徇私。互相攙奪寺院廢蕩。職此之由。切宜慎之。切宜慎之。

182 T 2025: 1149, c17.

183 T 2025: 1150, a10 或勤舊有田地米穀房舍床榻卓橙當盡歸常住。

of unnecessary commercial transactions and to prevent corruption. Dehui lamented the monasteries' decline, which seems to approximate to a family becoming extinct – people flee them due to these evils.¹⁸⁴

If a donor came to the monastery to deliver money for the monks who assisted or sang at funerals, the money was given to the abbot. However, he was not allowed to retain this money for himself, or for sustaining the community in general, but had to hand it over to the monks' own disposal.¹⁸⁵

The extent of monastic wealth is displayed in the *Imperial Edition*. One passage shows that the monastic envoys and officials of the monastery earned a commission rate on selling at the shops, on bargaining on horses at the relay station, and collected grain taxes.

According to imperial decree, monastic officials were protected in the performance of their job. Regardless of “to whom it belonged and whoever purloined or coerced others into purloining the belongings of the monasteries: houses, water, land, gardens, forest, the chief of the kinsmen, the cattle, beaters, rollers and mills for grain, taverns, shops, pawnshops, storehouses, bathing places and halls, bamboo groves, gardens, mountain plantations, threshing and market places, rivers, creeks, anchoring places and so on,”¹⁸⁶ they were all the property of the monasteries.

The tenants and poor peasants were the ones who paid for this. The land which the state could give to the monasteries in return for merits was the land of peasants and the fields of low level officials (*guantian* 官田). It was easier to confiscate it from them than to seize the assets of the rich gentry who were respected and had not been touched since the Song dynasty. The Mongols had never degraded the Song Han-Chinese gentry or taken their assets because they wanted to win their support. Only the assets of the previous imperial family were distributed as appanage to the Mongol nobles. Dehui envied the gentry's protection of their wealth. These rich families employed private soldiers to safeguard their assets and to protect the arrival of the tithes at their residence without sending their sons to live at all their distant properties.¹⁸⁷ The gentry tried to avoid paying taxes and were jealous of the monasteries, which were exempt. This may be the main reason why they encouraged and supported rebels trying to

184 T 2025: 1133, b18–9 今諸方之廢如逃亡家。住持勤舊能恤念寺門。欲搏費救弊汰除濫冗。

185 T 2025: 1123, a17–18.

186 T 2025: 1110b, 18–24 執把的聖旨與了也。這的每寺院房舍裏使臣每休安下者。鋪馬祇應休拿者。稅糧休納者。但屬寺家水土園林。人口頭匹碾磨店鋪解典庫浴室。竹園山場河泊船隻等。不揀是誰。休奪要者。

187 T 2025: 1133, b14–16 只如大家業產巨富不聞分遣子弟。遍居莊所。蓋耕種有佃。提督則有甲幹。收租之時自有監收僧行。此外縱有輸納修圩依糧等項。

overthrow the Yuan. The rebels did not realize that the wealthy Han-Chinese were using them. Without minimizing the impact of monastic greed, a detailed study of the economic situation of the Han-Chinese gentry in the south from the Jin to the Yuan dynasty would reveal much about the rebellion against the Yuan dynasty.

2.4 Limits to the ceremonies

Ceremonies and liturgical services are normally performed on special occasions. In marking the significance of the non-regular events, extra verbal and physical decorations were given. Greater magnificence was employed in order to move the audience more, therefore more was demonstrated in the form of extraordinary dress or preparation of food. Consequently, expenses were higher. The *Yuan History* records that several officials criticized the increase in the number of religious ceremonies for emperors.

Compared to the one hundred and two Buddhist ceremonies for blessings in 1293, only ten years later there were already more than five hundred. The expenses of the ceremonies had increased enormously, with huge amounts of gold, silver, and cash spent in exchange for the merits. Critics argued that the ceremonies should be reduced in number. In 1317 the high official Ali and the commandant Bie Shar presented the following argument that Zhang Gui repeated in his petition in 1324: “In earlier times the rulers’ policies were said to move Heaven and Earth, and gods and spirits, but they never tried to get the blessings of monks, neither Buddhist nor Daoist, because this would always result in the mischief of the people and the land.” They argued that blessings should totally be abolished.¹⁸⁸ A bribed official obeyed the Buddhist Imperial Preceptor who refused the petition, and the emperor Yesün Temür rejected it too.¹⁸⁹ The monasteries became richer even though they reduced the number of regular ceremonies by half, as mentioned above. We can conclude that the monasteries carefully calculated which of the liturgical services were to be deleted and which would be retained.

2.5 Limits to the ordination of monks

Although an elaborate analysis of the reasons people entered Buddhist monasteries is beyond the scope of this article, it should be mentioned that in the

¹⁸⁸ See Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 15: 4523, the petition of Zhang Gui 張桂 1976, 13: 4080.

¹⁸⁹ Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 15: 4524, 13: 4083.

beginning of Yuan times a steady stream of people fled from the Mongols to the monasteries in the south. After the country was stabilized under Qubilai, the need to take refuge within a monastery no longer existed. In the official *Yuan History*, the quota of monks together with the annual rationing of grain is discussed only once. On lunar month 5, 1331, an official declared: “The [metropolitan] monastery Wan’an and a dozen of the monasteries have been established by the current dynasty and the old quota of monks is 3150 monks. They are annually provided with grain. Now their disciples have become much more, so please, reduce your number by 943 people.”¹⁹⁰ People were not entering the monastery to flee corvée any longer nor did they buy an ordination certificate in order to escape the bloody military campaigns, as they had done in Song times. Even though there was no war, there were reasons like despair and hunger that made people enter the monastery. These poor people had no money to buy a certificate. Eventually, the monastery bought a certificate for them. On the other hand, Buddhism was so favored in the last years of Qubilai’s reign that it became attractive for all kinds of people to enter a monastery.

In 1292, the postulants applying for a certificate became so numerous that the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs and the Pacification Commission (*Xuanzheng weiyuan*) in Hangzhou informed all monasteries that it would be convenient for all monks and nuns to have a certificate. On lunar month 6, 1292, the governmental *Yuan Code* enumerated the conditions for “Granting a certificate when tonsuring nuns and monks” (*piti seng ni jiju* 披剃僧尼給據): “To those unable to recite the Buddhist Classics (*anjing* 諳經), who did not know fasting, and did not learn the practice of the work in a temple, but tried to dodge the corvée or had the audacity to attempt to buy the certificate with cash (*yong cai mai ju* 用財買據), the certificate would not be granted.” But those who “were proficient in the Buddhist classics and could recite them and write about them, or practiced in meditation,” could be shaved and were presented with a certificate. No certificate was handed over to vagabonds, people running away from their masters, peasants dodging the corvée or army, or men of doubtful character.¹⁹¹

Chapter 103 of the *Yuan History* reproduces the dispositions of an article of an imperial edict of the first lunar month of 1304 which stipulates that the many requests to become a monk are to be discontinued, otherwise there would be an ongoing incentive for ordinary people to avoid military service. In any case, the census registry had to be notified when one wished to abandon one’s lay family (*chu jia* 出家) and become a monk (*zuo heshang* 做和尚). It was promulgated in

¹⁹⁰ Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 3: 784.

¹⁹¹ *Da Yuan shengzheng guochao dianzhang* 1964: 467a.

1311 that the governmental office had to investigate whether the postulant's household had enough adult men for the army, laborers for the corvée, and brothers to support the parents, who would help distressed widows, widowers, orphans, invalids, and sick relatives of their own clan. If the applicant came from another place, the official had to write a letter to his place of origin to ask about the settlement. In this way, the state sought to ensure that the social environment would not suffer from the postulant's decision to abandon lay society. If the applicant for tonsure had not violated any of the above conditions, this would be reported to the district office. Otherwise, the applicant was rejected, perhaps punished, and sent back to his family. If he had a wife and a son, he had to send grain and sales tax and provisions for their upkeep, as all other people did. If he had no wives and no sons, he was exempted from those requirements.¹⁹² According to the *Yuan Code*, monks were not allowed to have a wife by the decree of day 8 of lunar month 10, 1291. An entry in the *Yuan History* states that a monk who violated his ordination and married was to be punished with sixty-seven blows and required to leave her. But if he returned to the laity (*huansu* 還俗) he was again a common person, and the governmental authority confiscated his betrothal gifts.¹⁹³ If his parents were alive, they had to allocate money for his new dwelling. If they could not afford to finance the son's decision and a relative could not support him because they were poor or ill, then the application could not be granted, for he had to support his parents and distressed members of the family. All these results had to be recorded in the register.¹⁹⁴ If he did not follow the regulations of the office, he was whipped with a light bamboo rod and the incident was registered.¹⁹⁵ Once he had left the worldly family he was born into in order to become a monk, he no longer had to bow to his parents,¹⁹⁶ although he should always be respectful, concentrate on the Way, and respond to the grace of his parents.¹⁹⁷

192 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 9: 2641. The *Yuan Code* says that the Branch Central Secretariat in Jiangzhe proclaimed this, whereas the *Yuan History* says it was the Pacification Office of Fujian Province which made it, although the latter presents it in an abridged form.

193 *Dayuan shengzheng guochao dianzhang* 1964: 467a or Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 9: 2643; note *huansu* 還俗 means "to be forced to return to laity" while *guisu* 歸俗 means to do so on a voluntary basis. Neither of these two expressions is mentioned in the *Imperial Edition*.

194 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 9: 2641.

195 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 9: 2648. The government punished with a light bamboo rod (*chi* 笞) up to 57 blows for a summary offence. For grave offences, the heavy cane (*zhang* 杖) was used, see Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 9: 2604. Surprisingly, in the *Imperial Edition* only the heavy cane is mentioned for the punishments within the monastic household, see T 2025: 1121, e7.

196 T 1484: 1008, c5 出家人法 ...不向父母禮拜.

197 T 2025: 1138, a15 心常恭敬精進行道。報父母恩.

It is a false romanticism to believe that only seekers of the truth and spiritual transformation wanted to abandon the vulgar world. The wealth of the monasteries captivated the poor, but not only the poor. Rich people still preferred to pay money instead of being recruited for the hard work of the military or the corvée troops. They bought an ordination certificate to become exempt from these services. Selling certificates represented an income for the state, which was becoming more and more burdened with financial difficulties. The business of selling certificates during the Yuan was never so lucrative as at the end of the Song dynasty. For example, the *Yuan History* records a governmental income of an exceptional ten thousand ordination certificates for Buddhists and Daoists in 1329. This was because the disastrous great famine of the Zhexi Circuit caused by drought resulted in draconian measures.¹⁹⁸

Yet, the great number who sought refuge in the monasteries were the poor and hungry people, as well as orphans. Local youth attended school at the monastery. So did the future emperor of the new Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang, when he was an orphan. In 1344, he entered the monastery with a hungry belly, and left in 1348 having learned more than just how to read and write Chinese characters.

He quickly abandoned the lofty ideals of many new monks, the idea that hierarchy would be less important or non-existent in his new spiritual family, the *samgha*. Confucian piety towards blood relatives had to be exchanged for indebtedness to the lineage-antecedents and obedience to the worldly *Yuan Code* for obedience to the Rules of Purity.¹⁹⁹

A tenderfoot like Zhu Yuanzhang entered the lowest of the three levels of teaching the Dharma. He had to behave with equal politeness to his Dharma teacher as well as to the monks of the three different classes.²⁰⁰ The highest

198 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 3: 780. In the 3rd lunar month of 1329, the nomination of the third National Preceptor took place simultaneously with the issue of the ordination certificates. It is not clear whether the issue of the certificates was in 1329 or 1330, because chap. 16 of the *Fofa jintang bian*, 佛法金湯編, edited by the monk Kuaiji, mentions that the nomination of the third National Preceptor was held in the year 1330, see T 1628: 442, c11.

199 See T 2025: 1144, b12–15 世間法即是出世間法。行腳人可貽未行腳人。The last sentence shows that both worlds are nearly identical. In comparison the Buddhist restrictions were severer.

200 T 2025: 1138, a14 於和尚阿闍梨一如法教於上中下座。The ranking in upper, middle and lower seats could also be discussed according to the system of Ranking that was known in the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs during Yuan times, see Sagaster 1976: 116–117, 279. The question arises whether this Tibetan system of dual order (*liang ban* 兩班 or *liang xu* 兩序) in the *White History* may have influenced Dehui, because he admitted that he had consulted the Tibetan scriptures of his friend and old abbot Yunming, see T 2025: 1158, c14. But Both Ranks originated from the Tang, see my footnote 140. For the Tibetan Ranking system see my footnotes 24, 43, and 48. Conversely, we think, the Chinese Tang system might have influenced Pags-pa and his idea of ranking.

class consisted mostly of eminent monks between twenty and fifty years; the middle class was made up of adolescents, and the lowest class of children under ten. Their education was the monastery's responsibility.

This shows that education was not left only to Confucians. Confucian education was restricted to the rich and ambitious, those who wanted to place their children in governmental offices. Few students attended public Confucian schools. Only about a hundred places were available in the metropolis. In the south, there were about forty private academies (*shuyuan* 書院) which drilled the Confucian classics, and 24,400 public schools at the district level *xian* 縣.²⁰¹ But the number of schools and teachers was still inadequate. The rich hired private tutors to educate their children. For most of the poor, education in Buddhist monasteries was the only real possibility. Buddhism thus offered people an “equal” educational opportunity to prepare for a career, and not only in a monastery. The teacher-monks sought to advance themselves in the field of merit²⁰² and taught for nothing but frugal meals together with the *saṃgha*. The state had no reason to complain about this situation. The monasteries assumed the responsibility of educating the local and poor people, a responsibility the state was happy to delegate. Instead of individually remunerating Buddhist teachers, the state remunerated the monasteries collectively.

The teaching in the monastic schools included the Rules of Purity. For some abbots, like Dehui or Chan-master Wuliang from Zongshou, the first requirement for one who “left the dust and the vulgarities of the world” for a life in a monastery, was to understand the rules clearly.²⁰³ Most importantly, the schools had to prepare the young postulants as quickly as possible for their ordination certificate,²⁰⁴ which was given together with the robe in exchange for the vow of keeping the precepts. This procedure ensured that nothing would go awry. The monks would be *peaceful* and harmonious if at least the Ten Grave Precepts of *Brahma's Net* were kept.²⁰⁵ If one obeyed the rules, it would be difficult to fail and be rejected by the *saṃgha*. The reverse is also true: the

201 See Lao 1981: 113–114.

202 Both Dehui (date unknown) and Daxin (1300–1375) were disciples of the Chan-teacher Huiji Yuanxi 晦機元熙. Dehui handed down his teaching and dharma to only one disciple, to Zhongyan Yuanyue, who established a new branch in Japan. Xiaoyin Daxin transmitted his way of Chan to nine followers. One left also for Japan, see *Zengaku daijiten* 1978: 14, Table 11 of the Patriarchs, 禪宗法系譜, field 10 to 11.

203 T 2025: 1144, b6–7 無量壽禪師述序曰：脫塵離俗圓頂方袍。大率經歷叢林。切要洞明規矩。舉措未諳法度。

204 T 2025: 1136, c18 凡行者初受度牒。

205 T 2025: 1137, c27–1138, a2 and 1138, a5–1138, a9 “The Ten Grave Precepts from Brahma's Net *Fanwangjing shi zhong* 梵網經十重” are the Ten Vows the novice takes.

postulants had to nourish the Three Jewels – one of the three being the *saṃgha* – and diligently plant the field of merit.²⁰⁶ If a monk killed somebody, the monastery had to inform the government and deal with the delinquent.²⁰⁷ The punishment for such a serious felony was regulated under the jurisdiction of the local government office.²⁰⁸

If the rules were the only obstacle to overcome, it was easy to obtain Buddhahood and become a glorious antecedent. All Buddhas of the Three Ages, the lineage-antecedent, and the teachers of the past dynasties who transmitted Buddha's mind seal, were once beginners, like a monk (*shamen* 沙門, Skt. *śramaṇa*). They naturally took part in meditation, asking for the Way, keeping the precepts as their foremost task. It is said in the *Imperial Edition* at the beginning of the chapter “Ascending the Platform to Receive the Precepts” (*dengtan shoujie* 登壇受戒): “If a beginner did not get rid of transgressions and did not avoid contradictions, how could one attain Buddhahood and become an ancestor?”²⁰⁹

The Yuan state delegated autonomy in education to the monasteries. The numerous and potentially unruly wandering monks were to be kept under strict control and were to be stringently organized. One possibility was to register them. This was accomplished by means of the Bed Register. Entering the name of a monk in the Bed Register implied that each monk had to have something like an identity card. In the *Imperial Edition*, Dehui stated that ordination certificates were only necessary in the old days. He went on to explain that:

It was the hall manager who provided these cards (*you* 由) for the *saṃgha* of the training-hall. To those who stayed only temporarily, the guest office handed out the card, reflecting their profile for proof.²¹⁰ Because in the past, Buddhists and Daoists paid contribution money annually to the army to avoid service, the card was given to them to show inspecting officials as proof. For this reason, they had, in addition to the ordination certificate (*dudie* 度牒) as travelling equipment, firstly an annual card that read “avoidance of adult male service (*mian ding you* 免丁由),”²¹¹ and secondly, a certification attesting where they had been during the summer session and, thirdly, one attesting the special enrolment for the term on the openings of the Imperial Birthday. Thus, they were prepared

206 T 2025: 1138, a13 不得違犯所持戒律。供養三寶勤種福田。

207 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 9:2679.

208 T 2025: 1121, f6–7 除刑名重罪。例屬有司外。

209 T 2025: 1138, c8–11 三世諸佛皆曰出家成道。歷代祖師傳佛心印盡是沙門。蓋以嚴淨毘尼。方能弘範三界。然則參禪問道戒律為先。若不離過防非。何以成佛作祖。

210 Whether they had a kind of picture in it or only a simple description, we do not know.

211 “Ding 丁” was a man at the age of sixteen and more years to be recruited for corvée. See Zhongwen dacidian 1968: 3.4.

for a check by levy collectors. Each card was only a trifling formality. Today however, these cards are no longer needed. Even so, it is still mentioned in the old rules.²¹²

An entry in the *Yuan History* of lunar month 12, 1297, confirms Dehui's statement. The privy councilor Luohuan of the Central Secretariat claimed that in the Song dynasty, one had to give money to the district official before one obtained the Daoist or Buddhist ordination certificate. "No such requirement exists any longer. How lucky and happy, they must be!" he commented.²¹³

Due to the chaos caused by the Daoist Wang Daoming and the Buddhist Yuanming, the *Yuan History* records on lunar month 3, 1323, that the Buddhists and Daoists were prohibited from purchasing ordination certificates.²¹⁴

The discussion of ordination certificates is not exhaustive and does not clarify whether only the state or also the *samgha* made a business out of it and whether it was the same policy under all the Yuan emperors. The huge Yuan Empire contained a multitude of monasteries. They handled ordination certificates differently. As we have seen above (main text around footnote 192), some people attempted to buy or bought certificates for cash although it was forbidden. Therefore, it was necessary to abolish it by decree. The *Yuan History* records that after lunar month 12 in 1334 it became illegal to privately open a Buddhist monastery, a Daoist tower, nunnery, or temple. And, when abandoning the lay family and becoming a Daoist or Buddhist, one had to pay 50 guan cash for an ordination certificate.²¹⁵ The fact that the price of a certificate was mentioned proves that they were being sold at any time of the Yuan period, whatever the decrees said.

Dehui may have wanted to clarify the situation and this might be the reason why he stated again that the ordination certificate was no longer used as a legitimation card for tax exemption, only as a degree or identity card. The postulants received the ordination certificate together with a covering wrapper and the monk's robe at the tonsure ceremony. They presented the certificate to their abbot and to Both Ranks' monks.²¹⁶ The form given in the *Imperial Edition* shows that besides the monk's worldly and Buddhist name, his place of birth and age had to be provided. The numeral quantifier in Chinese used indicates that the age was below ten. From this we can deduce that most of the monks

212 T 2025: 1113, c17–19 聖節啓散古規所載。堂僧堂司給由。暫到客司給由照證。蓋往時僧道歲一供帳納免丁錢。官給由為憑。故遊方道具度牒之外。有每歲免丁由。有何處坐夏由。有啓散聖節。以備徵詰。各亦畏慎。今雖不用。存其事以見古也。

213 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 2: 415.

214 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 3: 629.

215 Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 3: 825.

216 T 2025: 1136, c18–19 凡行者初受度牒。以袈裟托呈本師兩序各處。

entering the *saṃgha* were younger than ten years old.²¹⁷ From this moment on, the age of a monk was counted in monk years (*jiela* 戒臘). His future position on the seats in the *saṃgha*-hall, his career, and his ranking as a monk relied on the seniority of his ordination date and his certificates.²¹⁸

When newly arrived monks matriculated, the rector collected the ordination certificates in order to copy the coordinates into the Register of Beds.²¹⁹ A duplicate was submitted to the state. No one from outside the monastery was allowed to stay overnight in the rooms of the *saṃgha* (*zhongliao* 衆寮) or in the halls.²²⁰ Officials were always informed of a monk's whereabouts. Indeed the state knew even the bed number of each monk.

While copying the ordination certificates, the rector checked their legitimacy, looking for counterfeits.²²¹ Dehui recalled the Hanlin-Academy scholar Yang Yi 楊億 of the Song dynasty, who inferred from the rules of Baizhang that falsification of certificates occurred. If a monk was discovered to have forged his name or stolen the name from somebody else, and insinuated that he himself was of the monk community, he was severely punished and immediately removed from the *saṃgha*. Even if he was serious about spiritual exercises, his mind was deceitful. So the guilty monk had to take off the robe and leave his local matriculated seat. He was ordered to quit the monastery, not by the main entrance, but by a side door. In order to safeguard the purity of the *saṃgha*, this had to be done immediately as a warning to the community, otherwise, all monks would be implicated and in error.²²²

Deceits of this sort were an odious crime, Dehui explained, requiring that the delinquent be severely punished. On the one hand, it was necessary to preserve the internal peace of the monastery. On the other, by bringing the case to the provincial prison or litigation court, the public would be troubled. The reputation of the monastery would be damaged if the wrongdoings were divulged to the outside.²²³ This was Dehui's declared justification for the severe punishments inside the monastery.

When a monk died, the ordination certificate was cut in two pieces, horizontally over the characters of the name of the dead monk. While destroying it

217 T 2025: 1147, c1-2 右某本貫某州某姓幾歲給到某處度牒為僧。

218 T 2025: 1132, b6 戒臘資次床曆圖帳。

219 T 2025: 1140, c2 維那令行者請新到。喫茶畢出。度牒上床歷(詳具大掛搭歸堂)候送歸堂。For details, as mentioned, see "Big Registration and Back Home to the Hall" T 2025: 1140, c4-5.

220 T 2025: 1133, a7 母容外人止宿及寄賣物件。

221 T 2025: 1132, b5 堂僧掛搭辨度牒真偽。

222 T 2025: 1121, e5-6 有或假號竊刑[形! in XZJ 111]混于清衆。別致喧撓之事。即當維那檢舉。抽下本位掛搭。擯令出院者。貴安清衆也。或彼有所犯。

223 T 2025: 1121, f3-4 三不擾公門。省獄訟故。四不泄於外。護宗綱故。

with the scissors, the director of the funeral said in a loud voice to the community the name of the dead monk on the ordination certificate and commented: “It is all transferred and over for the practitioner.” Then he showed the two parts to the monks of Both Ranks.²²⁴

When a monk was travelling he had to carry the ordination certificate together with the travel permit in a small bag hanging on his chest. Less important papers such as the ancestral tablet, the Buddhist family manuscripts, the bamboo water bottle (*tong* 筒), and the razor blade were placed in the big backpack, rolled in the soft bedding and clothing. The sutra and the tea utensils were placed under his rain hat.²²⁵

The mobility of the *saṃgha*, travelling from one monastery to another as a “wandering cloud” (*xingyun* 行雲) or “running water” (*liushui* 流水), could have been severely restricted by the state. The Mongol rulers deserve some credit for granting the monks’ mobility. This generosity might be traced back to the Mongols’ different perception of the geographical dimensions of a country that was bigger than it had ever been, or ever would be again. The geopolitics of the Yuan Empire would have allowed traveling in a far bigger radius than before within a single country. But most Chan-monks started their journey with a recommendation to another monastery in the big area of Jianghu where the main Chan-monasteries were located. However, the local government office or the monastic administration may have been pettier and restricted the monks’ mobility.

The *Imperial Edition* indicates that the state gave autonomy to the monastery in granting travel permits. Travel permission was normally required half a month in advance. Dehui probably repeated the old rules here, because he did not change anything about asking for leave to travel to the mountain-monasteries. Once the period of travel was over, the applicant had to register again according to the old record in the hall manual. If a monk’s master or parents got sick or died, however, he was not subject to these restrictions.²²⁶ Whatever the reason might have been for coming and going, an entry in the hall manual was required.²²⁷

224 T 2025: 1149, a3–4 拈度牒。於亡僧名字上。橫剪破云(亡僧本名度牒一道對眾剪破)鳴磬一下。付與行者。捧呈兩序。

225 T 2025: 1140, a8 度牒有袋懸胸前, and T 2025: 1140, a2–4 裝包。古者戴笠。笠內安經文茶具之類。衣被束前後包。插祠部筒戒刀。

226 T 2025: 1140, c6–8 半月方可請假。古云。請假遊山者常將半月期。過期重掛搭。依舊守堂儀。如迫師長父母疾病喪死者。不在此限。

227 T 2025: 1140, c5 或有故出入。須守堂儀。

The wandering monk was supposed not to wear fancy colored clothes,²²⁸ only a rain hat and backpack. The clothing and the bedding bundle were carried in the front and the petty coat, shoes, and socks were bagged and tightened up in a backpack. The textiles were first rolled in one towel, then wrapped in an oiled blanket against the rain and then again in a second blue towel fixed on the four corners with clips and a hook on the top of the pack. With that backpack and the beggar's staff held in the right hand, he went on his journey.²²⁹ He was supposed to behave according to the moral obligations and the regulations, and stay, regardless of food, wherever the Dharma was taught.²³⁰

2.6 Limits of the *saṃgha*

This section argues that the monasteries of the Yuan era became increasingly unable to manage their increased assets and worldly wealth. Managing the assets exhausted the personnel capacity of the administration quarters in the Buddhist monasteries, as is indicated by the lamentations of Dehui.

The estates had become too big to be efficiently managed. The comptrollers, and especially the labor stewards and stewards for the pawned villages, under supervision of the superintendent, were responsible for keeping in good order the halls and buildings in the monastic compounds in addition to the pawned huts of the monasteries' villages.²³¹ The *Imperial Edition* explains that mice and sparrows could enter the granaries, or rain could get in and rot the crops. These administrators had to organize the workers and slaves to restore and repair the buildings so they would not become dilapidated. They had to fire lazy people or

228 T 2025: 1138, a15 衣取蔽形不以文彩. Clothes should cover you, but (their) appearance should not be that of colored printed silk.

T 2025: 1138, a16 食取支命不得嗜味. 花香脂粉無以近身. Food should be taken to stay alive and not to get addicted to the taste. Flowers and perfumes, rouges, and powders are not to be used on your body.

229 T 2025: 1140, a2–9 裝包. 古者戴笠. 笠內安經文茶具之類. 衣被束前後包. 插祠部筒戒刀. 今則頂包裝包之法. 用青布袱二條. 先以一條收拾衣被之屬. 仍用油單裹於外. 復用一條重包於外. 四角結定用小鎖鎖之. 仍繫包鉤於上. ... 袈裟以帕子縛定. 入腰包繫於前. 下裳鞋襪有袋繫於後. 右手攜主杖. 途中雲水相逢.

230 T 2025: 1140, a15 比丘有法有食處應住. 有法無食處亦應住. 無法有食處不應住)古規首到客司相看.

The monk should stay at the places where Dharma and food are. If there is Dharma but no food, he may also stay. But if it happens that there is no Dharma but food, he dare not stay.

231 T 2025: 1132, c20 凡殿堂寮舍之損漏者. 常加整葺, 1133, b3 提督農務撫安莊佃. 些少事故隨時消弭, 1133, b18 有補常住而消禍未萌, and 1132, c10–11 如倉庫疏漏雀鼠侵耗米麥. 蒸潤一切物色. 頓放守護有不如法者.

to admonish, whip, or beat the laborers, but only with good cause.²³² The monks' pockets were too long and their arms too short in distributing food, contrary to what was stated in the *Imperial Edition*,²³³ so it is not surprising that people shirked when repairing dilapidated houses and huts.

Yet, people continued to be attracted by the monastery lifestyle and came from all directions.²³⁴ The big monasteries were crowded places, a safe haven for hundreds of thousands.²³⁵ For many people, life outside the monasteries had become unbearable. The poor drifted and roamed, looking for food. Many of them must have felt that they were born only to die. They were left to the mercy of Buddha.²³⁶ The fact that so many people fled to monasteries demonstrates that the government was increasingly unable to care for the growing number of poor in the country.²³⁷ But it also shows that the Buddhists felt a moral duty to help the poor and to protect and ensure life.²³⁸

Dehui and the abbots had to deal with this huge problem. Dehui urged Both Ranks to welcome every practitioner in a big-hearted way and to give food to them as well as to the laity, and to let them live at least three nights in the overnight quarters.²³⁹ But he wondered what the effects on the long-time resident monks might be.²⁴⁰ Lack of space was admittedly not the problem; the *samgha*-halls were at times empty.²⁴¹ However, it is clear that young people were missing, and that the main administrators were either overworked or involved in

232 T 2025: 1132, a14 訓誨行僕不妄鞭撻。

233 T 2025: 1132, c21–24 役作人力稽其工程黜其游墮。毋縱浮食蠹財害公。...差撥使令賞罰惟當。並宜公勤勞逸必均。如大修造則添人同掌之。

234 T 2025: 1136, b29 而四方之來...

235 T 2025: 1136, b28 今夫大方居衆千百。The morning toilet is exactly described at T 2025: 1144, b22–1144, b29.

236 T 2025: 1136, b30 蓋佛以人之流轉三界出沒生死。That was because “Buddha took these people who were drifting and roaming around in the Three Realms (*samsāra*) out to where is no birth and death.”

237 An office existed that took care of the widowers and widows, old, disabled, and orphans if they could not support themselves and nobody else did (Song Lian 宋濂 1976, 9:2640). Even though the Bureau of People's Assistance (*jizhongyuan* 濟衆院) should have been established after 1282 in all localities, we assume that the law was not enforced at all places, especially not in the south. See *Da Yuan shengzheng guochao dianzhang* 1964: 17, 64.

238 T 2025: 1152, c5–6 That is why on this day Buddha's sons protect living creatures, in respectfully assembling the Great Assembly and paying a visit to the departed souls and bowing to the deity Mars. T 2025: 1139, c17.

Filtrating the water was a way to protect life. The first passage ensures symbolically that Buddhists protect life, whereas the second passage shows in a practical way, how one can prevent carelessly putting life in danger.

239 T 2025: 1146, c19 ; T 2025: 1147, b5–9 豈可妄生分別輕厭客僧。且過寮三朝權住盡禮供承。

240 T 2025: 1136, b30 若已所固有者果何為哉。

241 See main text around footnotes 75 and 131.

worldly matters. Young monks, with fresh and innovative ideas, would have been invaluable to the *saṃgha* in renovating the Buddhist Way, and in developing new rules as well, Dehui thought.²⁴²

It is hardly surprising then, that Dehui often complained that there were too many mediocre monastic officials who considered their job to be entertaining guests with drinks and food at banquets.²⁴³ The earlier rules, integrated in the *Imperial Edition*, admonished Both Ranks about consequences of not fulfilling their duty,²⁴⁴ and urged them to take part in communal labor as Baizhang had suggested that one day not working is one day not eating!²⁴⁵ Otherwise, Dehui warned, the *saṃgha* would fall apart. He conveyed the abbots' sorrow about the monastic situation and their struggle to change it. The change in the rules shows their intention to restructure and reform the *saṃgha*, but it is clear that the problem was not essentially a structural one.

An article about Baizhang and his rule in a contemporary magazine²⁴⁶ reveals a romanticized picture of monastic life. But the administration of a monastery and the upkeep of its buildings was not a romantic job. What did it mean for the organization to nourish a monastic community of 200 to 2000 monks, plus thousands of lay people living nearby? Today there is less farmland, and fewer people in the monastery compared to their heyday at Qubilai's time. There was no chemical fertilizer, no engines like today, and no electricity existed to make life easier. Nonetheless, the *saṃgha* had to be sustained and safeguarded. During the Yuan dynasty, the *saṃgha* was larger than now. Hundreds of monks had to be fed regularly but frugally,²⁴⁷ so that food would not be wasted.²⁴⁸ In addition to the *saṃgha*, tenants had to be fed with the produce of the monastery's land. Servants in the fields and paddies had to be fed as well.²⁴⁹ The cook was responsible for ensuring that nothing in the kitchen of the monastery was thrown away and no one squandered resources.²⁵⁰ In a

242 T 2025: 1138, a20 精勤思義溫故知新。Be precise and vigorous in your thoughts and righteousness when reviewing the old in order to actualize it. T 2025: 1146, c13 是以叢林之下道業惟新。Hence (the rules [as mentioned in the *Turtle Mirror*] above) will provide but new [generations of monks and new reformations] within the big monasteries.

243 T 2025: 1134, a08 ... 而近之庸流責以飲食延接為事, also T 2025: 1133, b10 ... 而州縣應酬。

244 T 2025: 1146, c17–1147, a6. It was addressed to Both Ranks including the abbot himself.

245 T 2025: 1119, b2 猶與衆均其勞常曰。一日不作一日不食。See also my footnote 14.

246 Kim, Young-ock 2013, 14. 2: 24–29.

247 T 2025: 1138, a19 非時不食。Do not eat if it is not time for it.

248 T 2025: 1145, a25 隨量受食。不得請折。Get food as much as you need, (but) do not get more and then leave leftovers.

249 T 2025: 1132, c21 役作人力稽其工程黜其游墮。毋縱浮食蠹財害公。

250 T 2025: 1132, c14 物料調和檢束局務。護惜常住不得暴殄。

well-managed kitchen scarcely enough food was left for a beggar's bowl who did not belong to the community of begging bowls, i. e. the *saṃgha*.

Yet, the *saṃgha* was “steaming” so much food and wood²⁵¹ that the granaries were emptied to the bottom and the mountains left “naked-red”.²⁵² To sustain the forest and the tea from the mountain plantations, it was forbidden to harvest in the third lunar month.²⁵³ Despite warnings not to harm the grasslands and forest²⁵⁴ or to waste water,²⁵⁵ the *saṃgha* consumed too much. It would be interesting to analyze the Chan-monasteries' wood and tea plantations during the Yuan dynasty from an ecological point of view, but this would go well beyond the task in hand.²⁵⁶

Moreover, in the monasteries, particular attention was paid to hygiene. For example, water filtering and bathing were strictly regulated.²⁵⁷ As a result, the monks generally lived to a great age and old retired monks numbered in the hundreds.²⁵⁸ The retired and current official monks insisted on having their own single-room, couches, and seats, which caused intrigue.²⁵⁹ Furthermore, the old emeriti had a service staff who numbered many more than they did.²⁶⁰ From

251 Wood was used not only for cooking but also for cremation (*banchai huawang* 辦柴化亡), see T 2025: 1148, b19. The fee for a cremation was high, about ninety-one guans. The items and services were listed with the price. One guan was equal to one string of thousand cash of copper coins, T 2025: 1149, b14, see Chan, Hok-lam 1990: 446. Therefore, wood especially, and service in general, were both very expensive.

252 T 2025: 1136, b28 ...倒廩而炊赭山而爨.

253 T 2025: [1154c28]...1155, a1 [三月]...此月出榜禁約山林茶筍.

254 T 2025: 1138, a18 ... 草木無傷. No harm to plantations.

255 T 2025: 1144, b22 ... 輕手取盆洗面. 湯不宜多. [While in the morning toilet,] you lightly ladle (water) with the hand from the basin to clean the face. Do not use a lot of hot water.

256 An interesting study about hierarchical and ecological aspects of big monasteries shows the actual situation in Thailand. See Sponsel/Natadecha–Sponsel 1997: 45–68.

257 T 2025: 1139, c25–28 常住若不濾水. 罪歸主執之人. 普冀勉而行之. At the wells – more than twenty – water filters should be installed. If they do not filter the water at the permanent assets, then the culpability is the officeholder's. In general, we expect and encourage them to do this (i. e. install these filters).

258 T 2025: 1134, a13 近來諸方大小勤舊動至百數.

259 T 2025: 1134, a12 初無單寮榻位. In the beginning there were no single rooms, couches, nor seats.

T 2025: 1141, b4...b6 西堂首座掛搭...住持度有單寮可處. If a west-hall monk [i. e. a former abbot, a teacher of the sophistication-hall (*mengtang*), or a qualified ordained official (*qianzi*) of another monastery] registers, the abbot of the actual monastery has to check if a single room would be available. This is also valid for the lineage-family of the present abbot and his former acolytes. See T 2025: 1141, c.

260 T 2025: 1134, a13 僕役倍之.

what Dehui writes, the monasteries were unenviable places.²⁶¹ They sounded like old peoples' homes, crowded, and administered by mediocre official monks.

This may seem a simple point, but it had significant implications if we recall who the rest of the inhabitants were. The monasteries may have been homes for the elderly and filled with lazy people²⁶² who were also loud. Are old people really loud? The ones in charge of keeping the halls in order disturbed the silence required for meditation. Dehui complained that “the hall monitors had become a crowd and in mutual company they separated fruit kernels, scattered them around, gathered for chatting, showing off and joking, and made a habit of this.”²⁶³ Here, it seems that Dehui was sensitive to noise and thus disliked these young people, or he lamented because the young did not meditate in the *samgha*-hall. Because there was too much going on inside the walls of the monasteries and there was too much coming and going, the truly wise scholars, who stuck to the Way by living an austere life, preferred to take refuge in a retreat.²⁶⁴

As with managing the immense monastic assets, managing so many people, most of whom were not monks, constituted a serious problem.²⁶⁵ Dehui was astonished at the way newly arrived monks treated the assets of the institution, as if they considered the monastery to be their own property.²⁶⁶ He compared the offices with a relay station where the coming and going was continuous, giving opportunity to thieves. Everything not nailed down suddenly disappeared after a fleeting visit to the administrating offices, especially whenever there was a shift in personnel. Dehui warned office-holders to make sure that the offices and quarters did not turn into a self-service store, as had frequently happened, and to accurately administer them for the community: “How could the old office holders have been so irresponsible as to leave the new crew of office holders nothing to stumble on?”²⁶⁷

The social strata in the monasteries of Yuan times can be deduced from the different lists of attendees at ceremonies in the *Imperial Edition*. These lists illustrate the social hierarchy. The best and most condensed form is found in Chapter III, which deals with the abbot. It contains lists of those to be invited for the election and installment of a new abbot, for the abbot's funeral procession,

261 T 2025: 1134, a09 叢林何由歆豔。

262 See my footnote 132.

263 T 2025: 1142, c31–1143, a2 近時直堂成群相陪。分俵果核聚談戲笑習以為常。惱亂禪寂住持首座力戒違者示罰。

264 T 2025: 1134, a9 使守貧抱道之士愈甘退藏。

265 T 2025: 1136, b29 亦其所聚也。This is also caused when they are all gathered.

266 T 2025: 1136, b29 ...來如歸。... they are coming like returning home [to their proper house].

267 T 2025: 1135, a6 往往職事人視為傳舍臨進退時。鄉人各自搬移蕩然一空, and T 2025: 1135, a13 責在本寮人僕。毋得走失。違者陪償。

and for the enshrinement of his ashes and bones. These passages show that not only the ruler's family, statesmen, nobles, and officials attended these events,²⁶⁸ but also lay people engaged in the daily life of the monastery.²⁶⁹ Behind the chief of the heavy works, the labor-servants of the abbot, the bearers of the abbot's sedan chair, the hall guardians, the old labor-servants, the foremen of the monasteries' estates, the fire guards, people from the offices for repair and manufactories, and all chiefs of various labor groups followed. How big each of the working brigades and groups were is not known in detail, but the *Imperial Edition* reveals that in the funeral quarter alone a thousand or more people often gathered to help with funerals.²⁷⁰ The number is approximate, but it definitely provides two important indications about the monasteries and functions of Buddhist monks in Yuan society. Firstly, monasteries employed an enormous number of lay people. Secondly, they were responsible for the funerals of Buddhist monks and other laity. If we were to go through every artisan group, we could probably draw a picture of the entire Yuan society. We can see that those who did the menial work, like the domestic servants (*pucong* 僕從)²⁷¹ and the slaves (*puyi* 僕役)²⁷² were engaged everywhere in the monastic estates, because they are often mentioned in the *Imperial Edition*. It also indicates that the *samgha* lived comfortably as the crown of the whole monastic institution in Yuan times.

3 Conclusion

Through an analysis of the *Imperial Edition*, this essay has attempted to elucidate Buddhism in general, and particularly Chan-Buddhism, in Yuan times. It

268 T 2025: 1119, a25 上而君相王公.

269 The monastic hierarchy is shown by the attendees at the funeral procession: Both incumbent and emeriti Ranks, the manager of the funeral, the special envoy, the retired foreigner abbot of the west-hall, the retired teachers of the sophistication-hall, all from the Chan-monasteries of the provinces of Jiangzhe, Jiangxi, and Guanghu, the earlier qualified officials of the finance office, the old trained monks, the chief of the common quarters, the ones managing transaction affairs, the old acolytes, people of the same village as the deceased, the ones who belong to the same Dharma-lineage-family as the deceased, the ones from the different hermitages and the several mortuary temples, the young disciple teachers of the deceased abbot, the grand-children disciples of the lineage-family, the postulants in the abbot's quarter, the postulants in the six offices of the prefects, and the hall of the practitioners, etc., see T 2025: 1128, c9–14.

270 T 2025: 1128, a17 喪司合千人僕.

271 T 2025: 1122, c1.

272 T 2025: 1134, a13.

has offered some answers and left others open for future research, and will hopefully stimulate rejoinders. However, some questions have been left for future investigation, due to the lack of space at hand.

For the Yuan government, possessing the yardstick of a single monastic code facilitated the managing of all monasteries on a uniform national level. That five decrees were issued under the Ming emperors promulgating the Rules of Purity as edited by Dehui and corrected by Daxin, raises the question of whether they had ever been enforced upon all monasteries or only upon Chan-Buddhist monasteries. Another question worth pursuing is whether the rules formed part of a mythological construction by the Chan-school aimed at embellishing its leading position at the time. The intention of the *Imperial Edition* seemed to be to secure the high rank of Chan-Buddhism, which faced competition from Tibetan Buddhism, the influence²⁷³ of which was predominant in Mongolian society.

Dehui sometimes felt depressed and compared himself to “a fish in a pond in which the water was running out.”²⁷⁴ While establishing rules for all Buddhist monasteries, by claiming the symbolic name of Baizhang in the title of the rules and the position of the commemoration days of the Chan-antecedents, he asserted that the Chan-Buddhist school remained in the top rank. He invested all his intellectual energy in keeping Chan-Buddhism alive. He thought it would help even more than the Essential Teaching (*zongjiao* 宗教) of the school.²⁷⁵

Dehui's complaints in 1335–1340 might stem from the fact that too few young monks could be recruited. The *Yuan History* records that between 1290 and 1300 more ordinations of monks and nuns took place than were once presumed. This suggests that by the time of Dehui's writings forty years later, the ordained monks had become old, turning the monasteries into homes for the elderly. But in general, statistics about Buddhism in the Yuan dynasty require careful scrutiny in relation to the region, the Buddhist schools, and their affiliated monasteries.

Especially in the Jiangnan region, the wealthy monasteries were an attractive haven for the poor and the discriminated Han-Chinese people. During the Yuan dynasty their wealth and assets increased. Despite the fact that the administrative monks threatened the spiritual goals and original ideals while managing worldly affairs, the monasteries played a key economic role and had a

273 Not only by the competitive Tiantai-school, as Foulk supposes, see 1995: 456.

274 T 2025: 1121, a24 是日已過命亦隨滅。如少水魚斯有何樂。

275 T 2025: 1159, b18 子汲汲於是書若有意於宗教。Dehui says verbatim: “I gave all what I knew (the Pure Rules) and let it flow into this writing in order to have more impact (on the school) than the Essential Teaching.”

special status and power in the local and civic governments in jurisdiction, education, and social welfare. The Mongol rulers knew how to use the power of the monastic institutions to advance their own aims. They trusted Buddhist institutions. The governmental Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs never limited the monasteries numerically to such an extent that Dehui would have disapproved. However, the Bureau seemed to make use of its veto when installing new abbots. Conversely, the rulers bestowed them with wealth in exchange for spiritual merits, local education, governing and welfare. The state and the monasteries were interdependent, not separated, in one common office.

Concerned about increased wealth and administrative abuses, Dehui sought to foster Chan-Buddhism, to prevent it from decline. He believed that a reform of the rules would ensure a better administration and thereby improve the monastic and spiritual situation. Nevertheless, the Chan-Buddhists' efforts to keep their wealth and retain their power and social influence by reforming the Rules of Purity was undermined by an inability to manage the enormous wealth they had accrued and the Essential Teaching continued to be condemned to stagnation.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Griffith Foulk for his many suggestions to improve the various aspects of this study.

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