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The Aesthetics of Non-Discrimination:

Chinese Poetics and Social Critique in Huihong's *Night Chats from Chilly Hut* (c. 1121)

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies

by

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December 2020

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December 2020

The Aesthetics of Non-Discrimination:

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By

Sarah Jane Babcock

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ABSTRACT

The Aesthetics of Non-Discrimination:

Chinese Poetics and Social Critique in Huihong's *Night Chats from Chilly Hut* (c. 1121)

by

Sarah Jane Babcock

This dissertation provides a comprehensive analysis of *Lengzhai yehua* 冷齋夜話 (*Night Chats from Chilly Hut*), a ten chapter miscellany (*biji* 筆記), by the monk Juefan Huihong 覺範惠洪 (1071-1128). My study contributes to our understanding of twelfth century Chinese cultural history in the following three ways. First, by examining Huihong's literary miscellany in the context of the author's monastic background, we are given access to a monk's perspective on various aspects of literati culture, an underrepresented voice compared to that of non-monks. Second, through a close study of the earliest textual examples of concepts such as the "poetic eye" (*shiyan* 詩眼) as recorded by Huihong and his contemporaries, this study clarifies the process by which Buddhist terminology and ideas were adopted and aestheticized during the nascent stages of self-conscious Chinese poetry criticism in the Northern Song. Third, by examining Huihong's approach to poetry and anecdotes on social life in *Night Chats,* this is the first full length study to reveal how Huihong's Buddhist perspective of non-discrimination became an aesthetic ideal used to promote artistic creativity and critique social limitations.

As an informal collection of diverse notes, accounts, recorded conversations, and humorous vignettes on literary and social topics of his day, Huihong's *Night Chats from Chilly Hut* has long been familiar to Chinese literature scholars and historians and is frequently cited in pre-modern commentaries. Coming from a Buddhist monk, we might expect Buddhist dogma or monastic practices to figure largely in the text. However, the entries that comprise the collection rarely deal directly with such things as monastic renunciation or solitary contemplation. Instead, they are bursting with colorful accounts of Huihong's literary interests and social interactions. As a result, a cursory reading misses the miscellany's significance as a reflection of Buddhist monastic life. But as the only Northern Song Chan monk known to write a miscellany, at a time when officials were increasingly showing interest in the form, Huihong was as much making a statement about the legitimacy and contribution of monks within literati culture as he was simply recording his personal interests and observations.

This dissertation approaches Huihong's *Night Chats* holistically from an interdisciplinary perspective in which discussions of poetics and accounts of individuals are understood within the context of the author's monastic identity. Through a study of Huihong's unconventional life story followed by a close analysis of three dominant topics in his miscellany—poetics, people, and poet-monks—we see that an important indication of his monastic outlook is not the appearance of Buddhist monks nor the occasional reference to scripture or Buddhist terminology, all of which can found in miscellanies written by non-monks, but in the underlying approach to social and literary criticism based in aestheticized Buddhist non-discrimination, or seeing beyond superficial distinctions.

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Chapter 1

A Monk's Miscellany

1.1 Chatting with the Lamp

When Chan monk Juefan Huihong 覺範惠洪 (1071-1127) was presented with a handwritten copy of his miscellaneous jottings, *Night Chats from Chilly Hut* 冷齋夜話, Huihong responded by adding a poem to the end of the work, a poem "written in jest" (*xishu* 戲書):

五鼎八珍非我事	Not my thing, the Five Cauldrons and Eight Treasures,[1]
曲眉清倡乞人爭	Let others vie after arched eyebrows and a sweet voice.
一帙冷齋夜深話	The single collection "Chilly Hut,": my late-night chats,
青燈相對聽秋聲	Face-to-face with the blue-green oil lamp, listening to autumn sounds.[2]

[1] The "Five Cauldrons" (*wuding* 五鼎) refer to the five types of delicacies—beef, mutton, pork, fish, and venison—that the ancients placed in five containers to be used as offerings. The "Eight Treasures" (*bazhen*八珍) are the eight different methods of preparing food, such as boiling, roasting, etc. Together, the phrase "five cauldrons and eight treasures" refers to finely prepared meat delicacies.

[2] Huihong, "Ying Shangren shoulu *Lengzhai* wei shi xishu qi wei" 英上人手錄〈冷齋〉為示戲書其尾; *Shimen wenzi chan, juan* (hereafter "*j.*") 16 (J 23: B135.652b-14; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 16.1050). The poem title translates as "Master Ying copied *Lengzhai* by hand and showed it to me; I wrote this in jest at the end." This poem was written in 1122, according to Zhou Yukai, *Huihong xinglü zhushu biannian zongan* 宋僧惠洪行履著述編年總案, p. 295. Master Ying refers to the monk Huiying 惠英 (dates unknown), a disciple of Huihong's who compiled many of his works.

Citations to Huihong's *Shimen wenzi chan* are given for the Jiaxing canon (J 23: B135.477b1-731c28), followed by *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan*, the critical edition published by Beijing Zhonghua shuju in 2011, annotated by the Japanese monk Kakumon Kantestsu (d. 1730). For the latter, the *juan*

Receiving the copy of his miscellany *Night Chats from Chilly Hut* from a younger monk, Huihong writes this poem to frame the work in the context of monastic asceticism. He creates an ascetic persona by expressing indifference to the sensory indulgences of meat ("five cauldrons;" "eight treasures") and of women ("arched eyebrows;" "sweet voices"). He then loosely refers to the contents of his book that has been placed before him, his miscellany collection *Night Chats,* presenting it as the innocent musings of a solitary Buddhist monk in his cold hut, muttered to his flickering lamp.[3]

As we will discover in the pages to follow, however, the entries in Huihong's *Night Chats* do not deal directly with monastic renunciation or solitary contemplation. The work is bursting with colorful accounts of Huihong's literary interests and social life, and references to forbidden female beauty and meaty delicacies are neither condemned nor excluded. Huihong was of course aware of the contents of his miscellany when he inscribed the poem. So was the monk who copied out the miscellany. This incongruency may be the source of the "jest" of his poem. Huihong knows very well that this work of *Night Chats* will not invoke archetypical visions of ascetic monasticism. Huihong's predilection to avoid literal

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卷 (chapter/scroll) and page numbers are provided. For all Buddhist canonical sources including the Jiaxing canon, see the bibliography for citation conventions.

Throughout I refer to the text of *Night Chats from Chilly Hut* (*Lengzhai yehua* 冷齋夜話) that is included in Zhang Bowei, *Xijian ben Songren shihua si zhong*, pp. 54-55, by *juan* and page number. See Appendix A for English translations of the entry titles and their location in *Quan Song biji*.

[3] This line could be interpreted in more than one way. The translation here takes *yi zhi leng zhai* 一帙冷齋to mean the bound bundle of *Night Chats from Chilly Hut* that was presented to Huihong. But it could also be referring to Huihong's chats over the past decade (reading *zhi* 帙 as homophone of 秩 *zhi*,"ten years") in his cold hut, (with the implication that these were the source of the contents of *Night Chats*.) "Qingdeng" 青燈 (blue-green lamp) refers to an oil lamp and represents a bitter, poverty stricken existence, according to the second definition in the *Hanyu da cidian*.

expression of Buddhism and his depiction of unconventional monasticism in *Night Chats* make it easy to overlook the significance that monastic identity plays in shaping the work. For Huihong, the sign of a true monk was his ability to transcend mundane distinctions and attachments, whether they be towards worldly matters or monasticism itself.

1.2 Buddhism and *Night Chats from Chilly Hut*

In writing *Night Chats*, Huihong was venturing into an informal prose form that came to be known as *biji* 筆記, or "miscellany." These works were rarely produced by Buddhist monks in Huihong's time, but they were increasingly popular among literati.[4] Due to its unusual characteristics, Huihong's miscellany is dismissed or misrepresented in studies on Huihong and in the field of miscellany studies. On the rare occasions when *Night Chats* is mentioned in western scholarship, it is predominantly seen as a secular text, where selections on poets, for example, are "not determined by a Buddhist perspective."[5] More attention has been given to *Night Chats* in literary studies from China, but only a few masters' theses focus

[4] Prior to Huihong, it appears that only one Song monk, Wenying 文瑩 (courtesy name 道溫), a contemporary of Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072), attempted *biji* writing. Wenying wrote two miscellanies, *Yuhu qinghua* 玉壺清話 (Pure Chats of Jade Pot) in ten *juan* (completed in 1078), and a shorter three *juan* miscellany, *Xiangshan yelu* 湘山野錄 (The untamed records of Xiangshan), with an additional *Xu Xiangshan yelu* 續湘山野錄 (Supplement to the untamed records of Xiangshan) in one *juan*. In his detailed survey of miscellanies by dynasty, *Lidai biji gaishu*, Liu Yeqiu categorizes Wenying's miscellanies as the type that focuses on historical anecdotes and trivial news, (p. 108), whereas Liu does not mention *Night Chats* at all, a testament to the unusual characteristics of the work. On the increase of miscellanies in the Song dynasty, as compared to previous eras, see Ronald Egan, "The Northern Song," pp. 454-455.

[5] Natasha Heller, *Illusory Abiding*, p. 312, based on George Keyworth's description of the work in his Ph.D. dissertation "Transmitting the Lamp of Learning in Classical Chan Buddhism: Juefan Huihong (1071-1128) and Literary Chan," pp. 479-480.

on the work as a whole, and while these do highlight the influence of Chan Buddhism in the text, they lack close analysis and overlook Huihong's personal monastic experience as significant in its composition. Only in studies addressing the influence of Buddhism on Song poetics do we occasionally find some acknowledgement of the contributions of *Night Chats*, but Huihong is credited merely as a passive recorder of the ideas of literati poets, not as someone actively shaping discourse from his own perspective.

This dissertation aims to elucidate how the representation of poetics and social life in Huihong's miscellany *Night Chats* is shaped by the author's monastic identity and Buddhist perspective. Given that virtually all miscellanies were written by non-monks during the Northern Song, considering the monastic identity and Buddhist perspective of the author in an analysis of Huihong's miscellany will expand our understanding of Song miscellanies and the literary-religious culture of the Song.

My approach avoids viewing Chinese Buddhism as a monolithic entity separate from culture and consequently barely noticeable in *Night Chats*, as well as the opposite problem, in which Buddhism is argued to be universal and ubiquitous, an approach that misleadingly gives cohesion to an inherently pluralistic and messy text. Instead, I view Buddhism as shifting "repertories" that make up part of Song cultural history. This idea of repertories is adapted from sociologist Ann Swidler's argument that human action is not so much guided by cultural values as it is by cultural "repertories" of resources.[6] Seeing culture as repertories presents culture as varied, as unevenly applied, and as adopted both intentionally and

[6] Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," p. 1 (abstract).

unintentionally, just as some parts of a musician's repertoire seem easy, almost ingrained, while other parts require conscious effort.[7] Using the metaphor of repertories for religion, a part of culture, opens up new possibilities of inquiry. It is especially applicable when dealing with the interaction between Chinese religion and literature, a major focus of this study of *Night Chats*.

Several western scholars have used the idea of repertories as a way to approach the study of Chinese religion and culture. Robert Campany and Robert Hymes applied the idea of repertories to their work in early medieval Chinese religions, and Natasha Heller expanded on the concept in demonstrating the "cultural construction" of a Yuan dynasty Chan monk.[8] Campany has suggested that viewing religion with the metaphor of "repertories of resources" is one way we can avoid "picturing religions as really existent things in the world; as organisms; as hard-sided, clearly demarcated containers of people and things; and as agents, because picturing them in all these ways falsifies the actual state of things and skews our research questions in unfortunate ways."[9] Heller discussed the role of ritual in repertoires and pointed out that the "models and symbolic resources" of repertories have practical ends, like social standing, but they can also be engaged in for their own sakes, "to augment or perfect

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[7] Swidler, *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters*, p. 25.

[8] Hymes, *Way and Byway*, p. 5. Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions," pp. 317-319. Heller, *Illusory Abiding*, pp. 3-6.

[9] Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions," p. 319. In his article, Campany critiques some of the common metaphors for eastern religion and discusses indigenous terms used to represent medieval Chinese religions. When referring to a religion, the founder or paragon might be used, or "the Way" 道, "the law" 法, or the "teachings of x," to name a few. See pp. 299-311. There was no single word that corresponds to the western idea of "religion."

the repertoire itself."[10] Hymes emphasized that people become "cultural actors" by availing themselves of varied and uneven cultural resources.[11] An elite Song monk might have in his repertoire the ability to compose poetry as well as skill in more didactic religious literary forms.[12]

Looking at Buddhism as repertoire allows for a diversity of ideas, acknowledges the different ways those ideas are approached, and provides a flexible understanding of the participants, or "actors" that make up the Buddhist community.[13] Amidst this plurality, shared goals and values such as "enlightenment" or "monasticism" help to create cohesion, but they are not evenly adopted or consistently interpreted.[14] The vows and precepts taken on by monks create social and religious expectations about monasticism, but each monk has to find his own way of holding to them, given his circumstances. For Huihong, his repertoire included a deep understanding and application of Chan and Huayan texts, appreciation for the lineages of masters and monks, social suavity, and extensive ability in the literary arts, especially poetry.

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[10] Heller, *Illusory Abiding*, p. 4.

[11] Hymes, *Way and Byway*, p. 5.

[12] Heller, *Illusory Abiding*, p. 5.

[13] Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions," p. 218. Campany also includes a very useful discussion on the early Chinese ways of referring to "belief" and "believers" that reflect the focus on practice and values, and "trust or confidence in a teaching, method, or path," as opposed to the way these terms are used in western religion, pp. 310-311.

[14] In discussing another useful metaphor for religions, as "imagined communities," Campany points out that the coherence or unity of a religion does not exist independently from the references to it. He suggests we "think of the coherence of such imagined communities as something repeatedly claimed, constructed, portrayed, or posited in texts, rituals, and other artifacts and activates, rather than as simply given." Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions," p. 317

By "monastic identity," I am considering the social position, appearance, and practices of a monk as determined by the fact he has ordained and received monastic precepts, as well as the ways a monk presents himself in light of his particular circumstances. Huihong brings elements of his Buddhist repertoire and monastic identity into his miscellany entries, sometimes intentionally and sometimes passively. In doing so, he demonstrates a monk's ability to challenge and contribute to the broader literati and social culture of his day.

The significance of Huihong's Buddhist perspective and monastic identity in *Night Chats* will be revealed in three areas: first, in the explicit use of Buddhist terminology and the depiction of Buddhist individuals and their social networks; second, in the implicit underlying attitude and spirit the author brings to discussions and portrayals; and third, counterintuitively, in the attention to non-religious concerns and topics.

The first area of exploration—the use of Buddhist terminology and the depiction of Buddhist individuals—is an overt manifestation of Buddhist culture. Huihong gravitates towards terminology adapted from Chan and Huayan thought to make his points about the ideals and pitfalls of poetic composition. He occasionally mentions Buddhist scriptures and deity figures in accounts of social interaction. More prevalent are his depictions of Buddhist monks and laymen. For example, there are at least fifty-five different named monks in *Night Chats*, many of whom are featured as the protagonist of anecdotes. Whereas Buddhist terms and monks can sometimes be found in the miscellanies of Huihong's non-monk contemporaries, Huihong gives a greater degree of attention and legitimacy to these elements in *Night Chats* and they reflect his distinct aesthetic view and social network, which are inextricably linked to his monastic background.

The second area of exploration is the attitude or spirit reflected in the text that is shaped by Huihong's Buddhist perspective and monastic background. Many different Buddhist concepts formed Huihong's perspective, but it is the mindset of non-discriminatory (*wu fenbie* 無分別) wisdom that we see repeatedly illustrated in *Night Chats*. Non-discrimination refers to the enlightened perspective in which distinctions between objects, or between subject and object are avoided.[15] "Non-duality" or the absence of "all-or-nothing thinking" are related concepts. Approaching things or circumstances with non-discrimination does not mean one is indiscriminate or lacks critical judgement. As it says in the *Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra*, a text Huihong admired, "Discerning all things, clearly distinguishing, / Yet free of any thought of discrimination" 分別一切法，不起分別想.[16] Although they are aware of distinctions, one who views things or circumstances this way does not become caught up in superficial appearances or mundane contradictions that obstruct liberation. Huihong studied and wrote commentaries on scriptures that expressed this principle, and it is seen in the poetry he created to maintain his monastic image despite perpetual challenges to his monastic status (as we will see in chapter one). Uncovering the play of non-discrimination in his perspective and expression is essential for understanding what Huihong was trying to convey in his miscellany. In addition to explicit illustrations, the non-discriminatory perspective is revealed in Huihong's general approach to poetics and

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[15] See the entry for "wu fenbie" 無分別 in the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* and "wu fenbie zhi" 無分別智 [non-discriminatory wisdom] in *Foguang da cidian*, p. 5074. Also useful is Kogen Mizuno description of "nondiscriminating wisdom" as that of the "free, unhindered mind acting spontaneously within the realm of absolute Truth," *Essentials of Buddhism*, pp. 187-188.

[16] *Liuzu Dashi fabao jing* 六祖大師法寶壇經; T 48: 2008.357b6. Translation from the Sixth Patriarch Sutra Translation Committee, *Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra, a New Translation,* p. 80.

social life in *Night Chats*. It informs Huihong's representation of aesthetic theory and social dynamics.

The third area of exploration revealing the significance of Huihong's Buddhist perspective and monastic identity is in entries of *Night Chats* that do not appear to depict obvious religious figures or reflect Buddhist meaning. Huihong addresses poetic issues and accounts of individuals that do not reflect Buddhist concerns. There are dozens of entries dealing with purely literary topics such as philology, textual variants, poetry methods, poetic ability, situations that produced poems, and poetic inspiration. Furthermore, numerous individuals in *Night Chats* are represented in a non-religious capacity. Monks have a more prominent presence compared with what is found in contemporary miscellanies, but their number still pales in comparison to the representation of non-monks in *Night Chats*. While many of these lay individuals are shown interacting with monks or engaging with some aspect of Buddhist thought, usually the main point of an account is not a religious lesson. Rather than force a Buddhist explanation for these entries to try to make them appear consistent with the Buddhist elements in other parts of the work, I consider these entries in light of Huihong's monastic background, aiming to demonstrate Huihong's participation in the broader literati culture. Huihong embraced the flexible conventions already in place surrounding miscellany writing, in some respects outdoing contemporary literati authors in his attention to individuals, themes, and issues at the heart of literati culture. But as a Buddhist monk who remained committed to monasticism despite multiple imprisonments, exile, and personal attacks, Huihong did not simply set aside his Buddhist perspective when engaging in his miscellany. Rather, his monastic background—his years of studying

Buddhist principles and applying a Buddhist lens to all manner of pursuits—allowed him to reveal how Buddhism and Buddhist monks were woven into the fabric of Song elite culture.

1.3 Previous Scholarship and General Issues

In bringing to light the characteristics of Huihong's *Night Chats*, this study touches upon several different aspects of 11th and 12th century cultural and religious history: Buddhism and Song Poetry, Huihong and *wenzi chan* 文字禪 (literary Chan), and the informal prose forms *biji* ("miscellany") and *shihua*, 詩話 ("remarks on poetry").

1.3.1 On Buddhism and Song Poetry

Buddhism was integrated into society in the Northern Song to an unprecedented degree.[17] It is important to consider the contribution of Buddhism when addressing almost any element of Song culture, but it is especially the case with regard to poetry and poetics. Many famous Song literati poets steeped themselves in Buddhist texts and befriended Buddhist monks. This exposure influenced the content of their poetry and shaped the discourse on poetics. By Huihong's time, it was not unusual to find monks with well-established reputations as poets, admired by both literati and their monastic brothers, although poetry as a pursuit for monks was not without controversy. The contents of Zhou Yukai's 2014 book *Fayan yu shixin* (Dharma Eye and Poetry Mind) reflect the areas of integration between Song Buddhism and literature. Zhou addresses the Buddhist

[17] See Peter N. Gregory's introductory chapter to *Buddhism in the Sung*, "The Vitality of Buddhism in the Sung" pp. 1-20.

understanding and writings of Song dynasty literati and monks, the specific Buddhist scriptures that literati studied, the transformation of Chan Buddhist meditation methods into approaches to poetry composition, and the use of Chan terminology in poetry criticism by Song literati. His work shows the specific ways Buddhist perspectives and concepts were aestheticized in Song poetry criticism.[18] In general, studies focusing on Buddhism and poetry tend to address the one of three areas: the influence of Buddhism on literati poets, the use of Buddhist ideas in approaches to poetry composition and critique, and the influence of Buddhist on the approach and output of poet-monks. While interaction between Buddhism and literati culture has long been acknowledged, uncovering the details and issues involved in that interaction as it occurred in the Song while avoiding imposing later developments, continues to be a challenge.

The Buddhist influence on individual literati poets has received the most attention over the years. The ideas and writings of literati were influenced by reading Buddhist texts as well as by their relationships with Buddhist monks. There are works in Chinese on the social lives of Huang Tingjian and Su Shi that include sections on their interaction with monks and the writings that were produced as a result.[19] Ronald Egan addressed the role of Buddhism in the life and writings of Su Shi, and Beata Grant went into the issue in more detail, providing

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[18] Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin: Songdai Chan yujing xia de shixue huayu jiangou* 法眼與詩心:宋代禪語境下的詩學話語建構 (Dharma Eye and Poetry Heart: The development of poetic discourse in the context of Song dynasty Chan). A more narrow study is Zhou's 2015 article, "Ziran, yishu, zongjiao, ziwo: *Shimen wenzi chan* zhong jing hua shi chan zhi jiaorong" 自然、藝術、宗教、自我——《石門文字禪》中景畫詩禪之交融(Nature, Art, Religion, and the Self: The Intermingling of Landscape, Painting, Poetry and Chan in *Shimen wenzi chan*).

[19] For instance, see Zhang Bingquan, *Huang Shangu de jiaoyou ji zuopin*, and Wu Xuetao, et. al., *Su Shi jiaoyou zhuan*.

a biographical account that includes numerous encounters and literary exchanges between Su Shi and monks.[20] Zhou Yukai has compared the different approach to Buddhism exhibited by Huang Tingjian and Su Shi and studied the role of Buddhism in the lives of Song literati more broadly, focusing on their interest in the different schools of Buddhism, familiarity with specific scriptures, and the resulting Buddhist writings they produced.[21]

While poets had long been writing poems expressing Buddhist ideas and topics, it is in the Northern Song, with the establishment of the Chan Buddhist tradition, that we see Buddhist terminology and ideas adapted into the emerging discourse on poetics. Zhou Yukai has led the investigation in this area, beginning with his 1988 book *Wenzi chan yu Songdai shixue* 文字禪與宋代詩學. He looked at both the influence of Chan on poetic content and discourse on poetics, developments that are often captured with the phrase *wenzi chan* 文字禪 (literary Chan) or *yi chan yu shi* 以禪喻詩 (using Chan as an analogy for poetry). But these phrases were not widely used by poets to equivocate Chan and poetry until the Southern Song, so their applicability to discussions of poetics in the Northern Song is questionable. In recent years, Zhou tends to focus on analysis of examples of Buddhist ideas (from various schools, not only Chan) influencing Song poetry and poetics.[22] *Night Chats*

[20] See Egan's chapter, "A Thousand Arms and Eyes: Buddhist Influences," in *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*, pp. 134-168, and Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih*.

[21] On the different approaches to Chan by Su Shi and Huang Tingjian, see Zhou Yukai's *Wenzi chan yu songdai shixue*, pp. 71-86. On the broad inclination towards Buddhism shown by literati, see Zhou's *Fayan yu shixin*, pp. 4-87.

[22] See sections three and four of Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, pp. 141-245.

contains some of earliest written records of Song poetic discourse influenced by Buddhist language or viewpoints.

Whether we are talking about the influence of Buddhism on poetic content or on poetry criticism, most studies to date tend to focus on the perspective of the literati. However, we are beginning to see more attention given to the poetry and perspective of monks. Several recent dissertations have explored the topic of poet-monks and the unique issues they faced as poets. Christopher Byrne studies Buddhist verse written by monks that were collected in Song Dynasty Chan *yulu* (discourse records), demonstrating that the perspective that Chan was "not dependent on words and letters" (*buli wenzi*) "paradoxically informs the literary character of its monastic poetry."[23] Jason Portass reveals the tension between monasticism and poetry during the Song by reading the occasional poetry written by Buddhist monks against the monastic rules, Buddhist scriptures and commentaries, and literary criticism.[24] As Protass demonstrates, "there was an ongoing conversation about not only the legitimacy of monastic poetry, but how to appreciate its value."[25] In his historical and literary study of poet-monks in the late medieval period (760-960), Thomas Mazanec traces the development of the concept of "poet-monk" and reveals the ways that poet-monks looked for unity between poetic and religious practices.[26] In addition to their broader arguments, Byne,

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[23] Christopher Byrne, "Poetics of Silence: Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091-1157) and the Practice of Poetry in Song Dynasty Chan Yulu," p. i.

[24] See Protass's 2016 Ph.D. dissertation "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poems: Song Dynasty Monastic Literary Culture."

[25] Protass, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poems," p. 122.

[26] See Thomas Mazanec's 2017 Ph.D. dissertation, "The Invention of Chinese Buddhist Poetry: Poet-Monks in Late Medieval China (c. 760-960 CE)."

Protass, and Mazanec each focus on the poetry of one or more Buddhist monk in their studies. These studies have challenged misconceptions about the relationship between monasticism and the pursuit of poetry and have opened up the field of medieval Chinese literature to include the voices of Buddhist monks.

Huihong was a part of this world, and he used *Night Chats* to promote and challenge views on poetics and poet-monks. Beyond promoting monks as poets, his *Night Chats* raises the issue of monks as poetry critics, an area even less understood than monk as poets. The discussions of poetics, along with the accounts of literati poets, poet-monks, and other anecdotes, make *Night Chats* an interesting and unusual source for studying the interaction between Buddhism and literature in the Song.

1.3.2 On Huihong and *wenzi chan*

Due to a controversial life story, copious Buddhist and literary writings, and his promotion of *wenzi* (words and texts) as necessary for the Chan tradition, Huihong has piqued the interest of scholars of Buddhism in east Asian and the west. Beginning in the latter half of the twentieth century, Huihong became the subject of studies in Japan, China, and the U.S.[27] These studies focused on biographical issues and various aspects of Huihong's Chan thought. In the early years of this century, Huihong became the subject of full-length

[27] One of the earliest studies on Huihong is Abe Chōichi's 1977 article "Hoku Sōno gakusō Tokkō Kakuhan ni tsuite" (On the Scholastic Northern Song Dynasty monk Dehong Juefan) in *Komazawa shigaku*, pp. 3-19. In the early nineties, Taiwanese scholar Huang Ch'i-fang 黃啟方 published, "Shi Huihong wukao" (Five-part investigation of Master Huihong), which provided a preliminary discussion of several aspects of Huihong's background. Several years later, Huang's brother, Huang Ch'i-jiang 黃啟江, wrote about Huihong's synthesis of the Teachings and Chan in "Sengshi jia Huihong yu qi 'Chan Jiao helun' shuo," a chapter in his book, *Beisong Fojiao lungao*, pp. 312-358.

works: Chen Zili's 2005 *Shi Huihong yanjiu* (A study of Master Huihong), which aimed to give a comprehensive picture of Huihong's life, Chan thought, and artistic views, Zhou Yukai's carefully annotated chronology of Huihong's life and works, *Song seng Huihong xinglü zhushu biannian zongan* 宋僧惠洪行履著述編年總案, and, in English, George Keyworth's "Transmitting the Lamp of Learning in Classical Chan Buddhism: Juefan Huihong (1071-1128) and Literary Chan."

Many of Huihong's ideas on Chan and writing were discussed in Zhou Yukai's 1998 *Wenzi chan yu Songdai shixue* (Literary Chan and Song Dynasty Poetics), where Zhou traced the relationship between developments in Song poetics and the increased emphasis on *wenzi* (words, literary-ness) in the Chan tradition. Zhou identified what he called a broad and narrow definition of *wenzi chan*. In the broad definition, *wenzi chan* comprises commentaries on Buddhist sutras, compilations of *denglu* (lamp histories) and *yulu* (discourse records), Buddhist verses, and secular poetry, whereas the narrow definition refers to all poetry by monks and the poetry by literati that contains Buddhist principles or allusion.[28] In the U.S., Huihong and *wenzi chan* were brought to the attention of western scholars of Buddhism in the early nineties, when Robert Gimello wrote about what he called the lesser known "conservative" strain of Chan that became popular in the Northern Song in 1992.[29] According to Gimello, advocates of *wenzi chan*, such as Huihong, promoted an approach to Chan that emphasized "a combination of spiritual discipline with literacy and learning,"

[28] See Zhou Yukai, *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue*, pp. 31-42.

[29] Robert Gimello, "Mārga and Culture," p. 338.

eschewing the ultra-literal interpretation of the self-description of Chan as *jiaowai bie chuan, buli wenzi* (a special transmission outside the teachings, not established in words or language).[30]

Huihong and *wenzi chan* became closely associated with writings that challenged the idea of Chan as separate from words. Expanding on Gimello's perspective of *wenzi chan,* Keyworth explored the relationship between Huihong, *wenzi chan,* and rise of Chan in the Song dynasty.[31] For Keyworth, the case of Huihong and "his literary Chan" demonstrated that language was an integral part of Chan practice.[32] Ronald Egan has since referred to Huihong as the leader of the *wenzi chan* "movement," and the trend to use *wenzi chan* to describe the harmony between poetry and Chan was continued by Hsiao Li-hua in her 2012 work *'Wenzi chan' shixue de fazhan guiji* (The trajectory and development of "wenzi chan" poetics).[33] Hsiao devotes two chapters to Huihong and argues that Huihong's *wenzi chan* ideas—using the narrow scope of the term as referring to poetry—were heavily influenced by Su Shi's view of poetics.[34]

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[30] Ibid., p. 374 and p. 381.

[31] George Keyworth, "Transmitting the Lamp of Learning," p. xv.

[32] Keyworth's dissertation is the only English language source that attempts to discuss Huihong's Buddhist works in any detail. It includes numerous translations of Huihong's writings, including a full translation of Huihong's *Linji zongzhi* 臨濟宗旨, in which Huihong recorded his views on Chan thought by quoting Chan masters and scripture.

[33] Ronald Egan, "The Northern Song," p. 426.

[34] Hsiao Li-hua [Xiao Lihua], *Wenzi chan shixue de fazhan guiji,* p. 182. See Hsiao's chapter entitled "Su Shi shichan heyi lun dui Huihong 'wenzi chan' de yingxiang," pp. 181-229.

While these studies did a great deal to emphasize the literary side of the history of Chan and pushed literary studies to include Buddhist ideas on poetry and the contribution of poet monks, they may have led to misunderstandings about Huihong's view of the relationship between Chan and writings generally, and his understanding of *wenzi chan*, specifically. Huihong was closely associated with the phrase *wenzi chan* (Chan of words and texts, or "literary Chan") partly because he gave his literary collection the title, *Shimen wenzi chan* (The literary Chan of Shimen), and partly because he often argued that the practice of Chan shouldn't exclude the study and production of scriptures and writings. But as Jason Protass has recently demonstrated, Huihong's idea of *wenzi chan* was different than the picture of harmony between text—including scripture as well as poetry—and Chan, that is so often emphasized.[35] It is possible that *wenzi chan* has become an all-too convenient catch-phrase to characterize the literary trends of Chan and the Chan influence on literature during the Northern Song, and Huihong's approach to Chan specifically.

Through a careful analysis of the handful of passages in Huihong's works in which the phrase *wenzi chan* is actually used, Protass concluded that for Huihong, the phrase *wenzi chan* was actually "a term of self-effacement," usually applied to poetry and, "another reflection of the attendant problem of the emotions [related to poetry]."[36] He showed that *wenzi chan* as referring to the harmonization of Chan Buddhism and literature was not

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[35] See Protass, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poems," pp. 106-114, for a careful analysis of the way Huihong used the phrase *wenzi chan* in his own writings.

[36] Ibid., p. 103. See pp. 102-115, for his thoughtful discussion of Huihong's usage of *wenzi chan* as compared with later usages. Protass also provides a detailed summary of the representation of *wenzi chan* in scholarship on pp. 51-58.

employed until the Ming dynasty.[37] This interpretation allowed Protass to be more sensitive to the tensions that played out between poetry writing and Buddhist monasticism during the Song.

Despite the interest in Huihong shown by scholars of literature and Buddhism, there has not yet been an adequate study of his lengthy miscellany, a text that, in my view, brings together Huihong's multifaceted talents, as monk, poet, historian, literary critic and storyteller, and provides monk's perspective on the literary-religious landscape of the Song. In my study of the Buddhist ideas in *Night Chats*, we will find there are many ways that Chan is integrated into the discussions of poetics and in anecdotes. But Huihong never referred to *Night Chats* or similar works as *wenzi chan*, nor did he apply the phrase when discussing anyone's poetry within the work. We do not find Huihong explicitly advocating an equivalency between Chan practice and the composition of poetry.

It should be pointed out, however, that an examination of Huihong's poetic reactions to his legal ordeals (chapter two) as well as his approach to poetry and social life in *Night Chats* (chapters three through five), shows that Huihong eschewed binary thinking. He may not have thought of *wenzi* (in this case, referring to poetry) as equivalent to Chan practice or enlightenment, but he also would not go so far as to say *wenzi* was automatically apart from Chan understanding. In combining *wenzi* and *chan*, two words that to many represented contradictory ideas, Huihong was probably playing with his readers' expectations, more than making a definitive statement about poetry or Chan.

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[37] Protass, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poems, p. 58; p. 103.

In *Night Chats* we see Huihong use Buddhist ideas—not just from the Chan tradition but from Huayan as well—to promote an approach to poetry (chapter three), human behavior and social interaction (chapter four), and the contributions of poet-monks (chapter five) that challenged certain kinds of discriminatory thinking. A Buddhist perspective assisted his aesthetic and social critique. As to whether or not the process worked in the reverse, that his literary approaches to aesthetics and social critique could bring about awakening, Huihong does not address in *Night Chats*.

1.3.3 On Song dynasty *biji* and *shihua*

In this dissertation, I refer to *Night Chats* as a *biji*, "miscellany," for the sake of convenience. In form and content, the work is a cross between *biji* and a form that originated in the Northern Song called *shihua* 詩話, "remarks-on-poetry." While neither category captures the scope of *Night Chats*, it is primarily through the lens of *biji* and *shihua* that *Night Chats* has been discussed.

Biji, literally "brush notes," sometimes translated as "notebooks," is a term used to refer to a large variety of informal prose precluded from literary collections. Typically comprised of entries of varying length that address a range of topics, *biji* are "characterized primarily by the way in which data are collected and recorded rather than by topical content…the culminative result of the personal collecting, recording, and evaluating of information acquired by hearsay and/or reading."[38] *Biji* collections had circulated since before the Tang dynasty, but literati in the Song dynasty produced them at an unprecedented

[38] Hilde de Weerdt, "The Production and Circulation of 'Written Notes' (*biji*)," p. 1.

rate and explored new subject matter.[39] Well into the Northern Song, miscellanies were generally of two types: those that recorded strange and uncanny events or those that focused on historical figures and court life. Beginning with Ouyang Xiu's *Guitian lu* 歸田錄 in 1067, eminent literati began giving miscellanies attention and the subject matter expanded to include more diverse topics including anecdotes about individuals from a wider range of social and economic backgrounds.[40] While there was a collective understanding of these works as early as the 11th and 12th centuries, the term *biji* was not used as a classification until recent times.[41] In the Song, the term *biji* was simply one of many designations for this style of work.[42]

Shihua, literally "poetry chats" and sometimes translated "remarks on poetry" are collections of notes, stories, and recorded conversations on poetry that originated in the Northern Song and became a popular form of poetry criticism.[43] *Shihua* are an offshoot of the miscellany and possibly inspired by Buddhist discourse records between master and disciples. But unlike the *biji*, *shihua* became a somewhat distinct classification early on because the original *shihua*, Ouyang's *Liuyi shihua* (compiled in 1071 or 1072), was one-of-

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[39] Ronald Egan, "The Northern Song," p. 455.

[40] See Ronald Egan's discussion of this form in "The Northern Song," pp. 454-460. Liu Yeqiu identified three broader categories of miscellanies, those that focused on short anecdotes 小說故事類的筆記, those that focused on accounts of history or trivial news 歷史瑣聞類的筆記, and those that aimed to investigate and authenticate matters 考據辯證的筆記. See Liu's *Lidai biji gaishu*, p. 4. Liu categories *Guitian lu* in the third group and discusses its characteristics on pp. 105-106.

[41] Hilde de Weerdt, "The Production and Circulation of 'Written Notes' (*biji*)," p. 19.

[42] Examples of the many terms used for works now classified as *biji* is discussed in the section called "Title," p. 44

[43] Ronald Egan, "The Northern Song," p. 460.

a-kind, and many writers following Ouyang adopted the term *shihua* in their titles for similar types of poetry criticism.[44] But miscellany-style works such as *Night Chats* were also being produced in the same vein as *Liuyi shihua* that were not identified as *shihua* until much later, suggesting that the classification of *shihua* was not yet firmly established in the late Northern Song.[45]

Although the Northern Song the division between *biji* and *shihua* was not always straightforward, scholarship tends to focus on one or the other form. But is only in the past half a century that *biji* have received focused attention from literary scholars and historians, and *shihua* is an even newer area of study. Texts that were not clearly demarcated as *shihua* by their authors, but that seem to resemble *shihua*, are often simply co-opted into studies of *shihua*.

Early research on Song miscellanies focused on surveying multiple works to understand the range of topics and causes for their popularity in the Song. This is the case with Zhang Hui's 張暉 1993 work, *Songdai biji yanjiu*. More recently, the print history and physical circulation of miscellanies has been addressed.[46] The motivations of miscellany

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[44] See Egan's in-depth chapter on Ouyang Xiu's *Liuyi shihua* and the characteristics and reasons for the popularity of the form, entitled, "A New Poetry Criticism: The Creation of "Remarks on Poetry," in *The Problem of Beauty*, pp. 60-108. In an earlier work, Stephen Owen discusses *Liuyi shihua* as well, but downplays the suggestion that Chan *yulu* were an influence, concluding, "…both Ch'an and Neo-Confucian 'sayings,' along with the shih-hua, derive their form, their appeal, and their particular authority in large measure from the *Analects* of Confucius." Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p. 361.

[45] The collection by Huihong's contemporary, Fan Wen范溫(fl. 1122), is another example. Fan called his collection of notes on poetry *Qianxi shiyan* 潛溪詩眼, but later it was renamed *Fan Wen shihua*.

[46] See, for example, Hilde De Weerdt, "Continuities between Scribal and Print Publishing in Twelfth-Century Song China: The Case of Wang Mingqing's Serialized Notebooks."

writers and the professed purpose of miscellanies are complicated issues that could use further study, but they have received attention from Ronald Egan, Cong Ellen Zhang, and Meghan Cai.[47] Manling Luo avoids seeing miscellanies as "repositories of random historical information" and argues instead that they are a "distinct mode of cultural memory construction, the piecing together of anecdotes gathered from oral and written sources to create a composite, multifaceted picture of the past, or "mosaic memory."[48]

As pointed out by Christian de Pee, and reemphasized by Meghan Cai, there is a need for more holistic studies of miscellanies, where entries of a miscellany are read in the context of the entire work, not simply "mined for data."[49] In addition to general issues and

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[47] Ronald Egan explores Ouyang Xiu's stated and unstated reasoning for writing *Guitian lu* by comparing his apologetic preface with the content of the miscellany in *The Problem of Beauty*, pp. 63-72. In her article, "To Be "Erudite in Miscellaneous Knowledge": A Study of Song (960-1279) *Biji* Writing," Cong Ellen Zhang looks for authorial motivations by examining numerous miscellany prefaces for commonalities, depicts her findings using tables, and includes a focused study of a single miscellany to support her arguments. In chapter one of her dissertation "The Social Life of Texts: Reading Zhuang Chuo's 莊綽 (fl. 1126) Jilei bian 雞肋遍 (Chicken Rib Chronicles)," pp. 1-40, Megan Cai details the shared ways Song miscellany writers describe the purpose of their miscellanies in prefaces and argues that they reframed "gossip as an ideal vehicle for the transmission of intimate knowledge, and gossipers as a group of people with special access to this knowledge and a unique understanding of its value" (p. 5).

[48] Manling Luo, "Remembering Kaiyuan and Tianbo: The Construction of Mosaic Memory in Medieval Historical Miscellanies," p. 263.

[49] In his unpublished paper presented at the 2005 Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies entitled "Circumscriptions of the Center: The Writing of the Empire in Song Notebooks (*biji*)," Christian de Pee explored implications of using "marginal" miscellanies as resources to map the "center" of court history. He cautions against this piecemeal approach, warning that it can result in alarming misinterpretations of a text. He eloquently argued that "The cultural geography of notebooks [*biji*] should not be drilled as though it were an Arctic Wildlife Refuge and 'mined for data,' but should instead be carefully surveyed and mapped as an historical landscape that is itself worthy of study." Similarly, Meghan Cai discovered that different meanings come to light when miscellany entries are read within the context of the larger work along with the author's preface and life experiences. See Cai's 2015 dissertation, "The Social Life of Texts: Reading Zhuang Chuo's 莊綽 (fl. 1126) *Jilei bian* 雞肋遍 (Chicken Rib Chronicles)," p. 180.

characteristics of *biji*, detailed studies focusing on single works are beginning to emerge. With few exceptions, however, only the most famous miscellanies have been covered, such as Ouyang Xiu's *Guitian lu*, Shen Kuo's 沈括 (1031-1095) *Mengxi Bitan* 夢溪筆談 and Hong Mai's 洪邁 (1123-1202) *Yijian zhi yi* 夷堅志.[50]

Shihua have attracted a great deal of attention as an early form of Chinese poetry criticism. The most well-known survey is Guo Shaoyu's *Song shihua kao* 宋詩話考 published in 1979. Guo discusses over one hundred *shihua*, providing information on the author, organization of entries, primary viewpoints, variant versions, and a critique for each. Scholars of Chinese literature in the west approach *shihua* as an early form of poetry criticism. In 1992, Stephen Owen presented an annotated translation of excepts from Ouyang Xiu's *Liuyi shihua* and the Southern Song work by Yan Yu 嚴羽 (fl. 1200), *Canglang shihua* 滄浪詩話, in his *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*.[51] Owen shows that entries in *Liuyi shihua* reflect Ouyang's concerns with the fragility of reputation, misunderstandings, and the impermanence of literary works and loss of knowledge of their authors.[52] Yan Yu's *Canglang shihua*, "the most famous and most influential work in the genre," according to Owen,

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[50] For discussions of *Guitian lu* in English scholarship, see Ronald Egan, "A New Poetry Criticism," in the *The Problem of Beauty*, pp. 63-72, and "The Northern Song,' pp. 457-460. Egan also wrote on Shen Kuo's *Mengxi bitan* in "Shen Kuo Chats With Ink Stone and Writing Brush," pp. 132-153. Prior to Egan, Shen Kuo received attention from Nathan Sivin in "Shen Kua: A Preliminary Assessment" and from Donald Holzman, "Shen Kua and his *Meng-ch'i pi-t'an.*" Alister D. Inglis' *Hong Mai's Record of the Listener and Its Song Dynasty Context* is the first full-length study on the *Yijian zhi*, and the only full-length study focusing on a single miscellany in English, to my knowledge.

[51] Stephen Owen, "Remarks on Poetry': Shih-hua" and "Ts'ang-lang's Remarks on Poetry," in *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought,* pp. 359-420.

[52] Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought,* p. 363.

reveals how far the analogy between Chan Buddhism and poetry composition had developed by the Southern Song, but in contrast to traditional readings, Owen emphasizes how Yan Yu bases "a literary historical orthodoxy on the model of Ch'an orthodoxy."[53] More recently, Ronald Egan explored the distinct characteristics of *shihua* and its special appeal to writers like Ouyang Xiu in his chapter entitled, "A New Poetry Criticism: The Creation of 'Remarks on Poetry."[54] Egan explains the niche that *shihua* filled: "Poetry played too large a role in literati life for there not to be an arena, less ephemeral than that provided by informal conversation, for the adjudication of the merits and demerits of particular poems."[55] In 2014, Egan's student, Jiayin Zhang, completed her dissertation in which she traced the development of Song *shihua* by highlighting the changes in content and format as exemplified by five key *shihua*, beginning with *Liuyi shihua*.[56] Zhang concludes that *shihua* developed into a systematic and structured approach to poetry, diverging from its more fragmented and anecdotal beginnings.[57]

The influence of Buddhism on poetics in *shihua* has not been explored in detail. Only *Canglang shihua*, known for its use of explicit Chan analogies has received extensive attention. *Canglang shihua* is perhaps the most well-known record of the integration of Chan and poetics in the Southern Song, but before this there were other writings that discussed

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[53] Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p. 392.

[54] Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, pp. 60-108.

[55] Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, p. 108.

[56] Jiayin Zhang, "Theory and Anecdote in Chinese Poetics: the Trajectory of Remarks on Poetry in Song Dynasty China."

[57] Zhang, "Theory and Anecdote in Chinese Poetics," p. ix.

methods and principles of poetry using the language of Chan, often in different ways than what is found in *Canglang shihua*. Zhou Yukai has recently expanded our understanding of the Buddhist influence on *shihua* by discussing the Buddhist elements of Fan Wen's 范溫 (fl. 1122) *Qianxi shiyan* 潛溪詩眼, Wu Ke's 吳可 (fl. 1109) *Canghai shihua* 藏海詩話, and others, in addition to *Canglang shihua*.[58] We will find that Huihong's use of Buddhism to approach poetics is very different than what is found in these other *shihua*.

1.3.4 Categorization Issues: *Night Chats* in the context of Song *biji* and *shihua*

While *Night Chats* was traditionally listed among "trivial anecdotes,"(*xiaoshuo* 小說), it is included in modern collections of both *biji* and *shihua*. It is easy to see why. *Night Chats* contains the disparate topics and anecdotal content that has come to be associated with *biji*. But the pervasive focus on poetry and poets, as well as the fact that later *shihua* often cited passages from it, makes *Night Chats* a good candidate for *shihua*. One reason *Night Chats* is so often overlooked, given short shrift, or harshly criticized may be because it, like its author, doesn't fit neatly into a single category. While neither the category of *biji* or *shihua* quite capture the content of *Night Chats*, there are advantages and disadvantages to discussing the work as one or the other, because categorization influences how a text is studied and represented.

Traditional and Modern Categorization Trends

[58] See chapters two and three under the section entitled "Shixue huayu: Song ren shilun zhong fochan shuyu de yinyong he yanyi" (Poetic Discourse: The quotation and elaboration of Chan Buddhist terminology within the poetics discussions of Song literati) in Zhou Yukai's *Fayan yu shixin*, pp. 206-245.

From the Southern Song to the Qing dynasty, *Night Chats* was most often categorized as "trivial anecdotes."[59] According to Guo Shaoyu, despite the pervasive focus on poetry, bibliographers categorized Huihong's work as *xiaoshuo* instead of literary criticism because it included so many miscellaneous matters besides poetry.[60] But in practice, Southern Song writers recognized the work as something beyond mere *xiaoshuo* (which was considered a very low and minor form of writing at the time), for they frequently cite and discuss poetry entries from *Night Chats* in their *shihua* and *biji*.[61] These writers were often critical of Huihong, but they must have taken his work seriously or they would not have given it any attention.

In modern times, we find *Night Chats* in collections of *biji* and collections of *shihua*. In his *Songdai biji yanjiu* (1993), Zhang Hui includes *Night Chats* among his lists of 155 *biji* titles, and it is included in the second series of the *Quansong biji* project undertaken by Daxiang press that began in 2003. Guo Shaoyu, however, considered *Night Chats* to be a

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[59] In his table of early editions of Song miscellanies, Zhang Hui indicates that the Southern Song bibliographic works *Jun zhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志, *Wenxian tongkao*文獻通考, *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解, and the *Songshi* 宋史 all categorized *Night Chats* as a *xiaoshuo* (minor anecdotes). See Zhang Hui, *Songdai biji yanjiu*, p. 6. Traditionally, miscellanies and anecdotal story collections were often linked together, as *biji xiaoshuo* 筆記小說, a categorization that referred to a large variety of "non-literary" informal prose that would not be included in individual literary collections. Modern editors and scholars of Chinese literature often place biji and xiaoshuo (minor anecdotes) into two distinct categories. In the Qing dynasty, the SKZM included *Night Chats* among "miscellaneous writers" (*zajia* 雜家) in the section on "Philosophers" 子部 (*zibu*), according to Zhang Hui, p. 6.

[60] Guo Shaoyu, *Song shihua kao* 宋詩話考, p. 14.

[61] For example, poetry entries from *Night Chats* are cited in Wu Zeng's 吳曾 (fl. 1141) *Neng gai zhai manlu* 能改齋漫錄 and Hu Zi's 胡仔 (fl. 1147-67) *Tiaoxi yu yin conghua* 苕溪魚隱叢話.

shihua, including it among numerous Song *shihua* in his 1979 study *Song shihua kao*.[62] In recent times, *Night Chats* is increasingly seen as a *shihua*, a characterization almost taken for granted by Zhang Bowei when he featured it among his selection of four "rare"*shihua* from the Song dynasty in 2002.[63]

Reading Night Chats as biji

Night Chats is often misrepresented, or inadequately represented, because its content and author are unusual for *biji*. It does not resemble the most ubiquitous types of *biji*—those focusing on uncanny happenings or unofficial histories of court life. But *biji* was not a stagnant form in the Song. For one thing, there was a shift away from recording events that took place during the Five Dynasties (907-979) and the Tang dynasty (690-705) to more contemporary events.[64] As eminent writers began to engage in the form, new topics and styles were explored. Beginning with *Guitian lu*, more attention was paid to personal habits and literary pursuits of officials, rather than to their careers or intrigues at court. Incidents and individuals outside the official ranks were included and authors explored their interest in language, words, and writing as well.[65] *Night Chats* reflects these new trends, but Huihong

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[62] According to Guo Shaoyu, *Song shihua kao*, p. 14, because *Lengzhai yehua* focuses on many miscellaneous matters besides poetry, Song bibliographers categorized it as *xiaoshuo* instead of literary criticism.

[63] Zhang Bowei, *Xi jian ben Songren shihua sizhong*, pp. 1-98. Zhang doesn't discuss his justification for considering *Night Chats* a *shihua*, except to point out that the categories of *biji xiaoshuo* and *shihua*, in terms of format, are very similar and since *Night Chats* contains a lot of poetry, "it can be considered a *shihua*." See p. 2 of the introduction. To my knowledge, *Night Chats* did not start to be called *shihua* until the latter half of the 20th Century.

[64] Liu Yeqiu, *Lidai biji gaishu*, p. 104.

[65] Egan, "The Northern Song," pp. 457-459.

gives greater voice to monks and religious figures within literati culture and is more interested in expressing aesthetic or spiritual values than making historical points.

Although Ouyang opened up the *biji* form to include new approaches, *biji* were still often seen as a kind of informal supplement to historical accounts. When *Night Chats* is put into the category of *biji*, issues of fact and accuracy tend to dominate the discussion. But Huihong prioritized communicating his perspective on aesthetic questions and the use of anecdotes to challenge values and priorities, rather than dwell on factual questions, a principle that is also mirrored in his approach to poetics in the work (as seen in chapter three). When compared to the more historical miscellanies, even those like Ouyang's or the works of Southern Song monk Xiaoying 曉瑩, the number of unverifiable accounts or factual mistakes becomes a problem, and Huihong's interest in something beyond trying to supplement accounts of history, even in his entries featuring historical figures, is missed.

Reading Night Chats as shihua

Like *biji*, the style and content of *shihua* changed over time. The early *shihua*, beginning with Ouyang's *Liuyi shihua*, reflect the social and oral exchange of ideas and anecdotes about poetry.[66] Later *shihua*, like the Southern Song *Canglang shihua* by Yan Yu, were more thematic, systematic, theoretical, with almost no anecdotal components.[67] Huihong was making the final revisions on *Night Chats* in 1121, fifty years after Ouyang Xiu

[66] See Egan's discussion of Ouyang's *Liuyi shihua* and other Northern Song *shihua* in *The Problem of Beauty*, pp. 73-108.

[67] See Jiayin Zhang's section on the scope and functions of *shihua* in "Theory and Anecdote in Chinese Poetics: the Trajectory of Remarks on Poetry in Song Dynasty China," pp. 10-12.

completed *Liuyi shihua* and about one century before Yan Yu wrote *Canglang shihua*. The "shihua" aspects of *Night Chats* can be said to reflect a transitional phrase in the development of poetry criticism. *Night Chats* reflects a period when poetry theory was still in its epoch stages, where theory was never far from practice, and when anecdote was often seen as the best way to make critiques. *Night Chats* retains some of the anecdotal qualities of pre-Song works on poetry such as the *Benshi shi* 本事詩 (Poems with their stories) and expands on the approach to poetry as seen in *Liuyi shihua*. But we can also see the emerging interest to speak about poetics in a more theoretical and abstract way, without necessarily bringing in the poet at all.[68] As for the adoption of Buddhist concepts to discuss poetic theory and craft, Huihong's approach to poetry diverges from *Canglang shihua* in interesting ways, and a close study will reveal that Buddhist thought was being used by poets in the Northern Song very differently than it came to be used later on. *Night Chats* reflects how Buddhist ideas were starting to enter the conversation on poetics long before such things became self-conscious and explicitly promoted through phrases like "using Chan as an analogy for poetry," as would be seen in works such as *Canglang shihua*.

The downside to considering *Night Chats* as a *shihua* is that it can result in the downplaying or problematization of the anecdotal elements of the text. Anecdotes without references to poetry, such as those about the antics of Huihong's uncle Yuancai, the story of

[68] Jiayin Zhang, "Theory and Anecdote in Chinese Poetics," p. 10, describes Fan Wen's *Qianxi shiyan* 潛溪詩眼 and Ye Mengde's 葉夢得 *Shilin shihua* 石林詩話 as two *shihua* that reflect a more critical approach to the discussion of poetry (rather than anecdotal) that focused on composition and aesthetic appreciation. These writers were roughly contemporary to Huihong (and in fact, Huihong seems to have met Fan Wen at least once), and this trend towards theory can be seen to some degree *Night Chats* as well, but Huihong still used the anecdotal approach extensively.

a shipwrecked Daoist and his strange pets, or Huihong's pun-filled exchange at dinner with a newly promoted official, would simply not be represented or may be seen as distractions from the real focus, poetry.[69] Even stories containing lines of poems or featuring poets could easily be seen as superfluous if the later more structured and theory-focused conventions of *shihua* are retroactively applied.

The theoretical and systematic bent of works like *Canglang shihua* is sometimes seen as a sign that the *shihua* form had reached a certain level of maturity by the Southern Song—that it had developed into a more sophisticated poetry criticism.[70] This bias towards theory over anecdote can be seen as early as the Southern Song, but it has been perpetuated in modern times. These biases tend to see the systematic and theoretical *shihua* as more sophisticated. In contrast, Stephen Owen argues that as *shihua* became more systematic and organized, they lost much of the "original aesthetic values" and "original color" of the genre.[71] Rather than see the development of *shihua* as one of progress or decline, it may be useful to simply acknowledge that the *shihua* of the early Northern Song and those of later periods were very different, reflecting changing ideas about poetics and new approaches to the challenge of discussing poetics.

Night Chats as biji-shihua hybrid

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[69] In the few instances where *Lengzhai yehua* is mentioned in English scholarship, the poetry criticism aspect is emphasized over its anecdotal content. See George Keyworth, "Transmitting the Lamp of Learning," pp. 470-480; Also, Natasha Heller, *The Cultural Construction of the Chan monk Zhongfeng Mingben*, pp. 312-313.

[70] This is the conclusion that Jiayin Zhang comes to in "Theory and Anecdote in Chinese Poetics," (see the Abstract, p. ix).

[71] Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p. 360.

In many respects, *Night Chats* resembles the *biji* and *shihua* of Huihong's time. But neither category is able to capture Huihong's work sufficiently. Using these categories may in fact obscure rather than illuminate the distinct qualities of this text. The *biji-shihua* amalgamation quality of *Night Chats* has not been lost on those who study the work closely. Some scholars and editors try to describe it in ways that capture this quality, although still emphasizing one aspect over the other. Huang Shihua, editor of the *Night Chats* edition included in *Quan Song biji*, emphasizes the *biji* quality by calling the work "a *biji* with characteristics of a *shihua*" 詩話性質的筆記.[72] In contrast, Lu Quangang gives predominance to the *shihua* aspects, calling *Night Chats* "a *shihua* in style of a *biji* " 筆記體的詩話著作.[73] But Huihong himself avoided using *biji* and, more significantly, *shihua*, in his title, preferring to call the work his *yehua*, his "chats held late into the night." At best we can say the text is a hybrid of *biji* and *shihua*, not to be judged by conventions of one or the other. As *biji* is the broader category, I use *biji* or "miscellany" to refer to *Night Chats* for convenience, with the understanding that, like Ouyang had done before him, Huihong was doing his own thing with these notebook-style writings.

A close study of this text and its author will help to show the approaches writers had to these forms in the Northern Song and will emphasize the various modes of discussing poetry that were practiced before theoretical statements became the norm.

1.3.5 On *Night Chats from Chilly Hut*

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[72] Huang Shihua, "Dianjiao shuoming," p. 27.

[73] Lu Quangang 路泉剛, "*Lengzhai yehua* yanjiu," p. 83.

Night Chats has received critical attention since it first went into circulation, and early impressions heavily influenced later scholarship on the work. Excerpts from *Night Chats* are frequently cited in the miscellany and *shihua* works of the Southern Song, but if any critique is given, it is to point out factual errors, sometimes accusing Huihong of deliberate fabrication.[74] Despite these negative comments, *Night Chats* continued to be read, quoted, and reprinted. Its appeal was vividly described by Ming dynasty bibliophile Mao Jin 毛晉, who wrote:

> Although [*Night Chats*] is full of trivial bits and pieces, [reading it] is like chewing on pomegranate kernels when thirsty: the delicious sour juice trickles into my mouth and down my throat. That is why it continues to be passed down from generation to generation." 雖微瑣零雜，如渴漢嚼榴子，喉吻間津津有酸漿滴入。所以歷世傳之無窮也.[75]

But such positive comments are rare. In the *Siku quanshu* abstract for *Night Chats*, Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724-1805) acknowledges Huihong's skill as a poet and his discussions of poetics in *Night Chats*, but most of the abstract is focused on repeating criticism about factual errors and exaggeration. The preference for poetic theory over anecdotes or recorded conversations of questionable origin couldn't be more apparent than in his concluding line, "But Huihong was good at poetry and his discussions of poetics are often quite reasonable: We should take

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[74] For example, Wu Zeng 吳曾 records several *Night Chats* accounts in his miscellany and he is quite relentless in his critical remarks, noting "I used to avoid Juefan [Huihong] because he always tells lies" 予嘗以覺範不學，故每為妄語; *Neng gai zhai manlu* 10.24. Hu Zi 胡仔 (fl. 1167) is also critical of Huihong in his *shihua*, chastising him for recording poetry with emotional content when, as a Buddhist monk, he is supposed to "forget emotion and cut off love" 忘情絕愛; *Tiaoxi Yuyin conghua* 苕溪漁隱叢話, *qianji* 前集 56.385.

[75] Mao Jin's comments are recorded in his postscript in the last *juan* of the *Jindai Mishu* 津逮秘書 edition of *Night Chats*, qtd. in Zhang Bowei, *Xijian ben Song ren shihua si zhong*, p. 98.

what we can from what he says. And as for all the hearsay, we can set it aside and not discuss it." 然惠洪本工詩，其論詩實多中理解，所言可取則取之，其託於聞之某某，置而不論可矣.[76]

Rather than bring a fresh perspective, the brief summaries of *Night Chats* that began to appear in the late twentieth century along with new publications of miscellanies tend to regurgitate much of the *Siku quanshu* assessment and the criticism of the early commentators: detailing factual errors and expressing skepticism about the veracity of entries on well-known figures.[77] In addition, we start to see derogatory speculations about Huihong's motives for writing *Night Chats*. Huihong is accused of plagiarizing and fabricating content in order to boost his reputation.[78]

These early representations of *Night Chats* fall short in several ways. Most significantly, while they do not address Huihong's monastic identity, they invariably mischaracterize Huihong and hold him to a different standard than non-monk miscellany or *shihua* writers. The idea that Huihong's purpose for writing was to advance his reputation is problematic. Huihong might have had controversial reputation with regards to his monastic status and personality (explored in chapter two), but his reputation as a talented poet

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[76] SKZM 120.1038c-1039a.

[77] We see this in Guo Shaoyu's discussion of *Night Chats* in *Song shihua kao*, pp. 14-15, as well as in Chen Xin's overview of the work in his short introduction to *Lengzhai yehua*, pp. 1-2.

[78] Guo Shaoyu, *Song shihua kao*, p. 14. Chen Xin says much the same thing in his "Dianjiao shuoming" 點校說明 to *Lengzhai yehua*, p. 2 The accusation about fabrication seems to have primarily been based on a poem, recorded in the entry entitled "Shi shuo yanbo piaomiao chu" in *Night Chats juan* 3, WSB p.30, that it is attributed to Huang Tingjian. Some commentators suspect this poem was written by Huihong himself. Another poem recorded by Huihong and attributed to Huang Tingjian, "Zeng Huihong" is seen to have a similar dubious origin.

respected by literati was already established when writing *Night Chats*.[79] Writing a miscellany in order to build a reputation may make sense as a motive for obscure officials, but it is a stretch to apply it to someone in Huihong's position. Furthermore, at the time of writing, many of the figures featured in Huihong's accounts, such as Huang Tingjian and Chen Guan 陳瓘 (1057-1124), did not have the renown they would come to have, and, in fact, were usually out of favor, living in exile with their works proscribed.[80] In retrospect, we know that Huihong's reputation as a poet was enhanced by his association with them, but it is questionable whether Huihong could have known this at the time of writing.

Huihong undoubtedly wished to demonstrate his talents and insights through the entries in *Night Chats*, and he may have hoped to promote certain individuals (in his case, poet-monks like himself, as explored in chapter five), but such motivations were typical of *biji* and *shihua* writers. Why is Huihong especially chastised for using the miscellany to promote himself and his ideas?

Critics hold Huihong to a different standard than literati when it comes to errors and poetic license as well. It was not unusual for *biji* or *shihua* to contain errors and different interpretations of events and poetry. In fact, one of the conventions of these forms was for writers to devote space to pointing out the errors in comments made by their peers and

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[79] Quoting Zuxiu 祖琇, Zhou Yukai points out that by this time Huihong was already "well-known to officials in the capital by means of his poetry" 以詩鳴京華搢紳間. Zhou makes this argument in his rebuttal to the accusations that two poems attributed to Huang Tingjian, one of which is recorded in *Night Chats*, were in fact written by Huihong. See Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 92-93.

[80] As we will learn in chapter two, Huihong tended to befriend officials when they were out of favor. His association with them at the time couldn't have helped his career. On the contrary, such associations often got him into trouble.

predecessors and providing different interpretations.[81] The mistakes pointed out by the critics of *Night Chats* mostly fall into the category of mistaken attributions or simply reflect differences of opinion, elements that could be found in any *shihua* or *biji* of the time.[82] And yet critics of *Night Chats* seem especially vehement in their attacks on the veracity of Huihong's accounts. Is it the case that the work contains more mistakes and unverified accounts than other *shihua* or *biji*? Perhaps, but critics are quick to attribute such mistakes and accounts to intentional fabrication on the part of Huihong. We can't help wondering if there was something particularly offensive about Huihong's infractions or if it was the case that they objected to a monk giving questionable accounts about literati. If the author of *Night Chats* were not a monk, or if he were a monk with a different reputation, would the critics be so unforgiving?

The early studies do not address the significance of Huihong's monastic background explicitly, nor do they explore the Buddhist influence on Huihong's poetics and aesthetic thought, or his depictions of monks and Buddhist social life. These aspects are strangely absent from any discussion of *Night Chats* before the twenty-first century.

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[81] Such intertextual critiques were the result of citation of networks covering a range of topics found in *biji* and *shihua*. With reference to *biji*, Daiwie Fu calls these networks, "imagined *biji* communities"…"formed through the widespread printing and distribution of Song *biji* texts, [in which] authors knew that their own *biji* would be read and commented on by later *biji* authors, while they themselves were also busy commenting on earlier *biji*." See Fu, "The Flourishing of *Biji* or Pen-Notes Texts," p. 116.

[82] See the examples Guo Shaoyu provides of the criticisms made by Southern Song miscellany writers and found in the SKZM, (Guo, *Song shihua kao*, pp. 14-15). Chen Zili recounts similar critiques in *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, pp. 138-139.

There have been some interesting studies undertaken using individual *Night Chats* entries that explore literary, religious or social questions.[83] But extrapolating Huihong's interests and opinions by looking at only a single entry doesn't well explain what Huihong was doing in this diverse text. Huihong's underlying concerns are best revealed when the disparate entries are considered together, when his remarks on poetry are understood as in the same category as anecdotes about obscure monks and when the brilliant remarks of Su Shi are seen to have something in common with the shenanigans of Yuancai. While each entry has a distinct topic and point, Huihong's underlying interests and concerns are revealed when the entries are considered together.

We see the beginnings of a more extensive exploration of *Night Chats* in three M.A. theses produced in East Asia beginning in 2007.[84] These studies address the literary and social context of the text and discuss Huihong's poetic theories, poetry methods, and anecdotes. They also acknowledge and explore, for the first time, the influence of Chan thought in the text. Although lacking in critical analysis and sometimes handicapped by the

[83] Most recently, two articles in the 2017 edition of the *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* use entries from *Night Chats* in their studies. In "Poems with Contested Meanings," pp. 420-438, Ronald Egan includes as an example Huihong's recording of the circumstances that brought about a controversial poem by Huang Tingjian. In "The Past Lives of Su Shi: Stories of Truth and Adaption," pp. 248-278, Zhu Gang and Zhao Huijun include in their analysis an account recorded in *Night Chats* that suggests Su Shi was a reincarnation of a certain Chan monk.

[84] Zeng Wenshu completed his thesis, "Lengzhai yehua wenyi sixiang zhi yanjiu" 冷齋夜話文藝思想之研究 (A Study of the Literary and Artistic Thought in *Lengzhai yehua*), in 2007. Lu Quangang produced his thesis, "*Lengzhai yehua* yanjiu" 冷齋夜話研究 (A study of *Lengzhai yehua*), in 2011. A few years later, in 2015, Tang Juan completed "Huihong *Lengzhai yehua* yanjiu" (A study of Huihong's *Lengzhai yehua*). None of these researches seem to have been aware of the work the others had done.

traditional preoccupation with factual accuracy or by a modern scientific bias against stories of a supernatural nature, these studies show *Night Chats* to be a rich and complex text.

However, perhaps out of an effort to find a unifying theory or theme in the work, there is a tendency in these studies to overgeneralize. This is particularly evident with regard to the influence of Buddhism on Huihong's poetics and anecdotes. The most recent thesis, published in 2015, for example, argues that Su Shi 蘇軾(1037-1101), Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086), and Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105) are given the most attention and presented as models in the work because they all practice "adopting Chan to discuss poetry" 以禪論詩.[85] While there is plenty of evidence that the poems and some of the comments made by these poets contained Chan thought, Huihong is clearly drawn to their work and accounts for various reasons. Nor was Chan the only strain of Buddhism at work in these poets' writings and in Huihong's theories, a point that becomes evident when we unpack entries in *Night Chats* on poetics more closely, as I do in chapter three. Moreover, it is problematic to uncritically apply a phrase like "adopting Chan to discuss poetry" to Northern Song poets, as if it were a widely established concept at the time. A similar problem is revealed in an earlier thesis that tries to show that Huihong's poetry theories, poetry methods and anecdotes were influenced by *wenzi chan* as well as the Northern Song ancient style

[85] Tang Juan, 唐娟 "Huihong *Lengzhai yehua* yanjiu,"pp. 25-26.

prose movement. But the researcher's understanding and application of "wenzi Chan" is based on later meanings of the phrase.[86]

Zhou Yukai's student, Lu Quangang, produced a thesis on *Night Chats* in 2011 that is less ambitious than the others in terms of broad arguments, but he avoids some of the pitfalls seen in the other works. In terms of the Buddhist significance of the text, rather than argue for a pervasive Chan influence reflected in the poetics and anecdotes, Lu devotes a chapter to highlighting accounts that demonstrate the intellectual and social engagement with Chan by Song literati.[87] His discussions primarily gives further evidence of what is already know about Song literati, rather than closely analyze the text to reveal anything specific about Huihong's approach, and he does not focus on Huihong's representation of Buddhist monks, a topic I address. With regards to poetics, besides providing a table of the different terms of poetic methods and ideas within the text, Lu briefly lays out four ways Huihong contributed to the Song poetic discourse through *Night Chats*: Huihong had several unique views about poetics, he brought his own perspective into critiques of poems, he contributed to the exegesis of allusions and controversial variants, and he recorded contemporary accounts of

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[86] Zeng Wenshu, "*Lengzhai yehua* wenyi sixiang zhi yanjiu." See especially the section in chapter three, entitled, " 'Miaoguan yixiang' de sixiang yuanyuan: 'wenzi chan'" (The origin of the idea of "wonderful observations and transcendent thought" is "literary Chan"), pp. 67-71.

[87] See Lu's chapter, "*Lengzhai yehua* yu Songdai shifeng he chanfeng"冷齋夜話與宋代士風和禪風 in "*Lengzhai yehua* yanjiu," pp. 46-75. Lu's discussion of the content of *Night Chats* is covered in two chapters, one that focuses on how the text reflects the widespread interest in Chan of the Song literati and their interactions with monks, and one that discusses the work's literary merit, its contribution to poetics and anecdotes.

poems and poets.[88] More analysis is needed, however, to understand how Huihong built on existing ideas to promote his aesthetic perspective.

With these longer studies of *Night Chats*, more attention is paid to the anecdotes—those accounts of individuals and the circumstances that brought about certain poems or lines of poetry. It is these lighthearted stories that until now have been dismissed or overlooked, in favor of Huihong's more theoretical pronouncements on poetry. But there is still a tendency to approach the accounts using a misleading dichotomy between fact and fiction. If a story is found to be lacking in verifiable facts, it may not be dismissed as traditional commentators were apt to do, but instead, it is critiqued for its "literary value," constructed by western ideas of creative story telling. As Manling Luo has pointed out, the preoccupation with literariness in medieval Chinese storytelling can be traced back to ideas put forth by Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936).[89] Rather than understand the mixture of fabrication and fact in anecdotes as intentional and part of the process of oral transmission, the writer is evaluated for his creativity or factual accuracy. In discussing Huihong's anecdotes, two of the thesis writers use Lu Xun's categories of "records of the strange" "(*zhiguai* 志怪) and "records of individuals" (*zhiren* 志人).[90] Lu Xun used these categories to discuss anecdotes from the Six Dynasties.[91] Both types

[88] Lu, "*Lengzhai yehua* yanjiu," pp. 85-87.

[89] Manling Luo, *Literati Storytelling in Late Medieval China*, p. 8.

[90] Zeng Wenshu, "*Lengzhai yehua* wenyi sixiang zhi yanjiu," pp. 114-128, and Lu Quangang, "*Lengzhai yehua* yanjiu," pp. 89-90.

[91] Lu Xun coined these terms in a 1924 lecture entitled "Liuchao shi zhi zhiguai yu zhiren" 六朝時之志怪與志人, included in the modern work entitled *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilüe* 中國小說史略.

of accounts can be found in historical miscellanies from later periods.[92] But in the case of *Night Chats*, discussing his accounts as either those that portray "the strange" or those that portray (notable) "people" imposes a false distinction and obfuscates Huihong's real interests. Such distinction-making, or "discrimination," is just the kind of thing Huihong mocked, as will see in the chapters to follow.

English language scholarship mentioning *Night Chats* only deals with Huihong's more theoretical or technical discussions on poetics, and only excerpts from a few of these entries have been translated. The anecdotes about individuals and social life have gone largely unnoticed. That *Night Chats* is represented predominantly as work of poetry criticism stems from the fact that the published articles and references to the work (coming out in China) have focused solely on the poetic ideas or representation of poets.[93] Besides acknowledgement of the influence of Buddhism on some of the discussions on poetics, the work is mistakenly seen as lacking in any religious significance, especially when compared to *shihua* in which the poetry-Chan analogy is more prevalent and overt.

Huihong brought his unique background, social circle and avant-garde ideas into his miscellany. He applied his Buddhist insights into ways of judging and appreciating poetry

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[92] Manling Luo, "The Construction of Mosaic Memory in Medieval Historical Miscellanies," pp. 265-266.

[93] Chinese articles on the poetics in *Night Chats* include: Zhou Yukai's 2003 article on the poetry methods of "swapping the bones" and "appropriating the embryo" entitled "Huihong yu huangu duotai fa: yizhuang wenxue pipingshi gongan de chong pan"; Mo Lifeng's response, "Zai lun 'duotai huangu' shuo de shouchuangzhe"; Zhou Meng 周萌, "Huihong *Lengzhai yehua* he *Tianchu jinluan* chengyin Tang Wudai shiseng zuopin ji xingji kaobian;" Guo Qingcai 郭慶財, "Huihong de wenzi chan yu jufa lun" 惠洪的文字禪與句法論.

and people. Much of his education was no different from that of typical scholar-official authors of *biji* and *shihua*, but his background as a controversial monk meant that he had a different perspective than his literati colleagues, not to mention the need to juggle different sorts of expectations. Only by means of a thorough and detailed study can we tackle the multifarious elements of the work and understand the unique ways the author challenged views on poetry and social norms.

1.4 Introducing Huihong: A Brief Biography[94]

Huihong was born in 1071 in Xinchang 新昌county of Yunzhou 筠州 (present day Yifeng county in Jiangxi). His family name was Peng 彭. There is some evidence to suggest that his given name was Cheng 乘.[95] He lost both his parents at the age of fourteen, was

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[94] This short biography is compiled using several different Song biographies of Huihong including Huihong's "Silent Sound's Own Preface" 寂音自序 in *Shimen wenzi chan j.* 24, (J 23: B135.696a25-b28; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1437-39); Zuxiu's 祖琇 "Biography of Chan Master Mingbai Huihong" 明白洪禪師 in *Sengbao zheng xu zhuan, j.* 2 (Z 79:1561.562b20- 563b12); and Zhengshou's 正受"Chan Master Silent Sound Huihong of Qingliang in Yunzhou" 筠州清涼寂音慧洪禪師 in *Jiatai pu denglu, j.* 7 (Z 79:1559.333a12-c9). I have also consulted Zhou Yukai's chronology of Huihong's life and works, *Song seng Huihong xinglü zhushu biannian zongan.* For this short biography, facts are included that are consistently in all of these biographies of Huihong. There are many details about key events in Huihong's life that are debated or unclear. Some of these will be addressed in chapter two. See Appendix B for a table of key events and dates in Huihong's life.

[95] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 5. Zhou makes a convincing case that Huihong's lay name was Peng Cheng 彭乘. Firstly, the Song anecdote collection *Moke huixi* 墨客揮犀 by an unknown author includes an excerpt from a *Night Chats* passage about Huihong's uncle in which is inserted the following annotation: "Yuancai had the surname Peng, his name was Ji, and he was Cheng's uncle" 淵材姓彭名幾，乘之叔也. Zhou argues that the "Cheng" mentioned here is a self-reference to Huihong (as the author of the *Night Chats* entry) because a third party would not directly refer to someone using their formal first name. (The existence of this annotation, not recorded in the current versions of *Night Chats*, has caused some scholars to attribute *Moke huixi* to a certain Peng Cheng, but Zhou argues that the annotation was originally written by Huihong in one of his versions of *Night*

briefly adopted, then brought into the monastery under the care of a Master Jing 靚/靚 of Yunbao Temple 雲寶寺 on Sanfeng Mountain 三峰山.[96] He ordained in the *Linji* Chan tradition by the time he was twenty, becoming a dharma heir of Master Jing's teacher, Zhenjing Kewen 眞淨克文 (1025-1102). Besides his ordination name "Huihong" 惠洪, he is also known as "Dehong" 德洪. "Chilly Hut" (*Lengzhai*), from the title of his miscellany is one of his many self-bestowed sobriquets.

Huihong was a prolific and eclectic writer. We know of twenty separate works, totaling nearly 200 *juan* ("fascicles"/ "chapters"), of which 104 *juan* are extant. His works include Buddhist writings, such as biographies of monks, Buddhist treatises, and commentaries on scripture. There are also the literary writings, including hundreds of poems, that comprise his *Shimen wenzi chan* 石門文字禪 in thirty *juan*, and informal works, of which *Night Chats from Chilly Hut* is one. His reputation as a poet developed early on and he

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Chats, then the entry with the annotation were recorded in *Moke huixi* by its compiler. This makes sense because *Moke huixi* includes excerpts from several miscellanies, not just *Night Chats*.) Second, Zhou points out that during the times Huihong's monastic credentials were confiscated, he would have had to revert to his lay name (at least officially). Most of *Night Chats* was written during this period, so it makes sense that Huihong could have referred to himself as Cheng in one of the entries. There are other Song references to a Peng Cheng, but nothing is known about him. Zhou points out that the fact that a monk would have been expected to revert to his lay name when forced to give up his monastic status is overlooked by scholars working on the relationship between the identity of Peng Cheng and Huihong.

[96] Zhou Yukai gives evidence that Huihong was briefly adopted by a family with the surname Yu 喻. But the orphan was soon asked to leave, apparently because he couldn't become a legitimate heir since he was not a member of their kin group. Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 10. In some biographies, including "Silent Sound's Own Preface" (寂音自序), Huihong's autobiographical preface, Huihong's surname is listed as Yu 喻, a discrepancy that recent scholars attribute to the adoption by the Yu family.

was praised for his eloquence by monks and non-monks alike. From Huang Tingjian, who was nearly thirty years his senior, Huihong picked up certain ideas about poetics that he recorded in *Night Chats*. Some of these later become closely associated with the Jiangxi school of poetry. Huihong was also greatly influenced by the writings of Su Shi, and Su is mentioned more than any other figure in *Night Chats*. Zhang Shangying 張商英 (1043-1122) grand counselor for a brief period in 1110, is said to have described Huihong as "a truly exceptional figure among all under heaven; a remarkable man among the sages of the Song" 蓋天下之英物。聖宋之異人.[97] But throughout his adult life, Huihong had an uncanny tendency to get into trouble with those in authority and the law, resulting in four incarcerations, a two-year exile to Hainan Island, and the confiscation of his monastic credentials. Nevertheless, by the time he passed away in 1128, he had regained his monastic status. Considering his devotion to poetry, socializing, and political embroilments, it might be easy to brush Huihong off as a reluctant monk, a want-to-be literatus. And some of his contemporaries did just that. But close readings of his works and correspondence show that he was dedicated to the monastic path and concerned about the preservation of Buddhism for future generations.

[97] Huihong records Zhang's statement in "Da Zhang Tianjue tui Chuanqing shu," 答張天覺退傳慶書; J 23: B135.720c26; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 29.1640. Zuxiu repeats Zhang's praise in "Biography of Chan Master Mingbai Huihong,"; Z 79: 1561.563b3-4.

1.5 Introducing Huihong's *Night Chats from Chilly Hut*

1.5.1 Title

The majority of titles of Song miscellanies consist of two parts: the first part is the author's sobriquet (*hao* 號) and the second part is a term indicating that the work is an informal collection or record. This second term tends to emphasize either informal orality by including designations such as "chats" (*hua* 話; *tan* 談) or "sayings" (*yu* 語), or that the writings are considered spontaneous and sundry by using designations such as "notes" (*ji* 記) "records" (*lu* 錄), or "annals"(*zhi* 志).[98] This two-part combination was a convention for miscellany titles by the time Huihong was compiling *Night Chats* in the early 12th century.

Following convention, the title *Lengzhai yehua* (Night Chats from Chilly Hut), consists of two parts, Huihong's sobriquet "cold hut/studio," *lengzhai* 冷齋, and an oral designation, "night chats/remarks" *yehua* 夜話. But in each case, Huihong had choices. Each term in the title reflects something about how he saw this collection. In combination, they represent an aesthetic that embraces the interaction and conflict between Buddhist monasticism and socio-literary pursuits.

Lengzhai "Chilly Hut"

[98] Besides *yehua*, terms with an oral association used in Song miscellany titles include *bitan* 筆談 (brush talks), *tanlu* 談錄(records of talks), *qinghua* 清話 (pure chats). Terms emphasizing the informal content and manner of composition used in miscellany titles include *zaji* 雜記 (miscellaneous notes), *yelu* 野錄 (untamed records), *manlu* 滿錄(casual records), *bilu* 筆錄 (brush records), and many more. The term that has come to designate miscellany as a category, *biji*, appears in a few Song miscellany titles as well, but it was not used more than other options at this time.

The "chilly hut" in Huihong's title is one of Huihong's self-styled sobriquets that also represents a place.[99] Like many Song monks, Huihong created nicknames for himself styled on names of dwellings where he stayed. When these building-style nicknames appear in poems, they could refer to the poet himself (as his sobriquet), to the place where he was living, or to both.[100] As part of a miscellany title, the meaning of "chilly hut" as referring to Huihong and as representing a location should both be acknowledged.

Huihong probably began to call himself "Chilly Hut" after giving that name to the place where he stayed in Baizhang 百丈 in 1105.[101] A poem from this time contains the earliest mention of "chilly hut" in Huihong's writings. In this poem, chilly hut appears to refer to Huihong's cold chambers in the mountains: "Numerous gullies and pine-winds, a moon high-up, / In the chilly hut, during the pure night, I recall the fullness of your

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[99] Chen Zili, in *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 137, incorrectly explains the origin of *lengzhai* as pulled from the line in Huihong's poem that reads: "Ying Shangren shoulu *Lengzhai* wei shi xishu qi wei," but, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, this line was written after *Night Chats* was completed and the *lengzhai* is referring to the work *Night Chats*. Chen's mistake stems from the fact he failed to identify *lengzhai* as one of Huihong's sobriquets. See Chen's list of Huihong's sobriquets, pp. 8-14. In contrast, Zhou Yukai includes *lengzhai* in his discussion of Huihong's sobriquets in *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 2-4.

[100] Sometimes a monk would name himself after a specific hut or dwelling, but eventually it became common to use these sorts of names even when they didn't refer to any specific location. In such cases, the name would follow the monk; he would use it to refer to whatever room/dwelling that he happened to be at the time of writing. When the nickname appears in poems, it could refer to the poet himself (as his sobriquet), to the place where he was living, or to both poet and dwelling. For example, in Huihong's poem "Xi hui Li Gongruo"喜會李公弱, there is the line "Lengzhai stirs up the furnace and listens to the night chats" 冷齋撥爐聞夜語, (J 23: B135.588b21-22; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 3.192). Here "lengzhai" can refer to both Huihong and to his cold hut. The image is of Huihong in his chilly hut stirring up the fire as he listens to the night chats of his friend.

[101] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 106. Huang Qifang, "Shi Huihong wukao," p. 204, suggests that Huihong's sobriquet may have originated from his poem entitled "Lengran zhai" 冷然齋, but Zhou has convincingly refuted this origin in *Song seng Huihong*, p. 3.

appearance" 萬壑松風一軒月，冷齋清夜想丰姿.[102] The term translated as "hut," *zhai* 齋, can be found in the sobriquets of several Song literati and in some miscellany titles. It is sometimes translated as "studio" because the room portrayed is often portrayed as the place where the scholar engages in literary or artistic pursuits. But when Huihong uses *zhai* in his poems, it is to refer to the rustic dwelling where he slept, ate, meditated, and wrote, not a separate room reserved for writing. Huihong qualifies the noun *zhai* with the adjective *leng*, "cold" or "chilly," to emphasize the tone of austerity.[103]

We have no reference or description of Huihong's chilly hut other than what is found in Huihong's poems. In the nine poems where the *lengzhai* figures, the hut is portrayed as an isolated and simple dwelling located in the mountains. As a sobriquet, *lengzhai* captures Huihong's monastic identity. All but two of the poems depicting a chilly hut are either written to fellow monks, describe a monk, or contain references to Buddhist practice. Huihong's "chilly hut," whether referring to himself or to his room, is meant to invoke the ascetic ideal of a monk.

Along with the emphasis on austerity and isolation, chilly hut is associated with friendships and social interaction in Huihong's poems. The image of the chilly hut is contrasted with the warmth that comes with having company. For example, in a poem to a

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[102] "Du Gude zhuan ba shou" 讀古德傳八首, no. 1, (J 23: B135.642.a6-7; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 15.943).

[103] For a monk, using *zhai* to refer to his dwelling may also be significant in that the term was used by Buddhists to refer to monks' restricted daily meal that was both vegetarian and eaten before noon. "Cold vegetarian meal," although a secondary meaning of *leng zhai*, adds to the ascetic aesthetic invoked by these words.

fellow monk, Huihong writes, “My freezing ears delight in hearing your affectionate words, / The chilly hut suddenly turns into spring’s warmth” 凍耳欣聞軟語，冷齋忽變春温.[104] In another poem, he emphasizes the feeling of isolation after a friend/relative (?) has departed: “In the cold hut, for the remainder of the night, who will join me overnight? / There will be no one to sit before the lamp and read this poem” 冷齋後夜誰同宿，莫向燈前讀此詩.[105] Another poem describes the warmth that a visiting monk brings to his cold hut: “By sitting in meditation you cause the chilly hut / to suddenly become filled with springtime warmth. / Tomorrow morning when you leave me, I will clasp your arm on your way out the door” 坐令冷齋中，忽然變春温。明朝別我去，掣肘徑出門.[106] The cold hut is made hospitable by the presence of friends.

Huihong’s choice to use “chilly hut” in his miscellany title was not arbitrary. He had several other sobriquets he could have used, including “Bright Understanding” (Mingbai 明白), “Old Yan” (Laoyan 老儼), and “Silent Sound,” (Jiyin 寂音).[107] Like “chilly hut,” these

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[104] “Zeng Cheng Shangren si shou, ” 贈誠上人四首, no. 1, (J 23: B135.641a30-b1; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 14.936).

[105] “Yu Huishu zhi Fengxin,” 與晦叔至奉新, (J 23: B135.622a26-29; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 10.694).

[106] “Song Yan Shangren wang Linping jian xi Kuoran” 送琂上人往臨平兼戲廓然, (J 23: B135.605a3; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 6.443).

[107] Like “chilly hut,” the first two of these are adopted from the names of dwellings. In 1107, Huihong named himself “Bright Understanding” or “Bright Understanding Hut” (mingbai an 明白庵) after his Buddhist hut (*an* 庵) at Bei Jingde Chan Monastery 北景德禪寺 in Linchuan. Years later, in 1120, he built another dwelling with this name in Changsha. See Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 3 and p. 258. “Old Yan,” or “Master Yan” (Yanshi 儼師) was a sobriquet adopted in 1112 from the name of a room in Kaiyuan Temple 開元寺 in Qiongzhou where Huihong stayed on his way to exile. See Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 167.

nicknames each reflect an aspect of Huihong's monastic life. But Huihong opted for the name he associated with the conditions of a monk living in the mountains.

Yehua "Night Chats"

In his miscellany title, Huihong symbolically invites friends to his chilly hut for late night chats. *Yehua* and a related term, *yeyu* 夜語 (night conversations) are frequently used by poets to express the conversations one has with friends that last late into the night. The location of these conversations is the poet's room, where his visitor has come to stay the night. In Huihong's poems, the room is portrayed as cold, meager, or remote, making these cozy chats welcome.[108] The topics of the chats are not stated, but Huihong's poems contain references to his guest's poetry, Buddhist practice, or to their friendship. While the topics may vary, it is clear the conversations were seen as informal and welcome.

The informality of the conversations is captured in the word *hua*, "chats." This word was adopted by Ouyang Xiu to title his informal work on poetics, his *shihua*. Ronald Egan has pointed out that *hua* was not meant to imply that the work was limited to accounts of conversations but used to create an "air of casualness." *Hua* gives the impression that "the

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[108] For example, there is Huihong's lines in his poem "Xi hui Li Gongruo": "In the chilly hut, we stir up the stove and listen to the nighttime words, / The snow-like ashes burn away, making red-hot the wine pot" 冷齋撥爐聞夜語, 雪灰消盡紅金斗, (J 23: B135.588b21-22; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 3.192). Also, the first half of Huihong's poem "Tangsheng neng shi shouwen qi shi xi zeng zhi" 唐生能視手文乞詩戲贈之, (J 23: B135.636b6-8; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 13.878):
草蕪門徑過從少 The path was overgrown with grass and few friends visited,
那料秋來夜話同 Who would expect that we could have been reunited to have a nighttime chat in autumn?
屋漏移床時發笑 The rafters are leaking, [so] we move our beds, every so often bursting into laughter.
粥稠當飯巧於窮 The porridge is thick, it will serve as our meal, we're clever at being poor.

entries are composed much as talk is uttered, even when they are not actually records of conversations."[109] The same is true when the word is used in miscellany titles.

Considering the number of entries dealing with poetry in *Night Chats from Chilly Hut*, Huihong may have gotten away with designating the work as a *shihua*, in the manner of Ouyang Xiu before him.[110] But Huihong did not choose to limit the content of his work to poetry. In choosing *yehua*, he was allowing for more diversity of subject matter. As will be shown, Huihong was interested in "chatting" about people and their social dynamics in addition to poetics. The term *yehua*, never before used in a miscellany title, allowed for the literary, social, and spiritual topics Huihong enjoyed discussing with his friends.[111]

As a title, *Night Chats from Chilly Hut* brings together contrasting images. The two words "chilly hut" and "night chats" together represent a juxtaposition of the ascetic and isolated space of the Buddhist monk on the one hand, with the leisurely, literary, and social space of the literatus on the other. Warmth and camaraderie of conversation with friends are placed in the ascetic inhospitable monk's hut.

Reading "chilly hut" as Huihong's sobriquet, the title presents us with a monk's night chats. This monk is not asleep or meditating, he is up late chatting with his literary friends, engaging in literary gossip even. When we read the content of this work closely, we will find

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[109] Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, p. 77.

[110] Others followed Ouyang in using *shihua* in their titles, such as Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) whose *shihua Wengong xu shihua* 溫公續詩話 is quoted by Huihong in *Night Chats*.

[111] From a search for titles in *SKQS*, Huihong was the first to use *yehua* in his miscellany title. Among Southern Song and Yuan miscellanies, there is Yu Yan's 俞琰 *Shuzhai yehua* 書齋夜話 and Shi Maoliang's 石茂良 *Birong yehua* 避戎夜話.

that the monastic perspective and experience represented by the chilly hut is not forgotten amidst the chatter. It may not be as obvious as we might expect, it may not be identifiably "Buddhist," if we see Buddhism as something separate from culture, but it most certainly stems from Huihong's years of living as a monk facing attacks on his identity and his resulting Buddhist-aesthetic sensibility.

1.5.2 Topics

In addition to the fact that the author was a monk, one of the most interesting aspects of *Night Chats* is the choice of topics. Huihong did not compile entries on the topics that interested the majority of earlier miscellany writers. There are few accounts of the uncanny or of court life that make up of the bulk of miscellanies. Generally, topics in *Night Chats* relate to the literary, social, and religious world as Huihong experienced it. He predominantly deals with two broad areas: poetry and people. In the area of poetry, there are entries on poetics—poetry ideals, composition methods, critiques of Tang and Song poetry, discussions of philology and textual variants, and accounts of circumstances that led to the creation of poems or lines of poetry. There are also entries giving accounts of poets—their interests and interactions, artistic struggles and inspiration, poetic successes and failures, and the use of poetry for utilitarian purposes such as correcting or teasing others.

The poetic ideals Huihong advocates are often presented in the context of problems that in he saw as preventing the production or evaluation of superior poetry. Broadly speaking, Huihong condemns practices that limit the scope of the poet's imagination or restrict ingenuity in composition. This meant that literary taboos, conventions, and expectations should not concern a poet or his audience. Instead, Huihong advocates

approaches that reflect artistic creativity and ingenuity brought about from a transcendent perspective and manifesting in language meant to point to something beyond the page, not simply to be read literally.

Huihong was not trying to record a comprehensive theory of poetics in *Night Chats*.[112] There is but a loose relation between the concepts and methods discussed, a mixture of theory and practice. He explores a range of ideas, some quite fragmentary, others more developed, that reflect his artistic concerns, and those of his contemporaries. Huihong often cites the comments of poets like Su Shi and Huang Tingjian, and elaborates on their terminology, provides new examples, and adds his own interpretations. Some of the qualities Huihong looks for in poetry, such as resonance, genuineness, and naturalness, were valued among poets since the Tang, but like other *shihua* of the period, Huihong's entries on these subjects reflect an increased willingness to articulate ideals and problems of poetic composition and evaluation. Beyond the sheer quantity of entries on poetics, noteworthy is Huihong's analytical approach and his tendency to record poetic terminology and ideas with strong Buddhist connotations that were beginning to enter poetic discourse.

In his depiction of people—individuals other than poets or poets when engaged in non-poetic activities—Huihong is likewise interested in examples of unconventional and transcendent thinking and behavior. We see his promotion of these qualities as he explores

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[112] This is not to say that an aesthetic theory can't be assembled from Huihong's informal writings on poetics which, in addition to entries found in *Night Chats*, are found in his *Tianchu jinluan* 天廚禁臠 and *Shimen wenzi chan*. Chen Zili undertakes just such a comprehensive approach in *Shi Huihong yanjiu*. In my representation of *Night Chats*, I avoid the temptation to systematize and synthesize Huihong's ideas in a way that would give the false impression that he was aiming to express a cohesive theory that spans across entries.

individuals' character, personality, wit, social dynamics, relationship to material objects, aesthetic pursuits, style of living, interaction with other-worldly beings, response to embarrassing situations, hypocritical or outlandish behaviors, and signs of rare integrity.

There are approximately 200 different named individuals in *Night Chats*, many of whom appear in more than one entry. The majority of these individuals lived during the Northern Song—they were Huihong's contemporaries or those from the previous generation—but there are also appearances of people from the Five Dynasties, the Tang dynasty, and a few individuals from earlier periods. These people are remarkably diverse in terms of social identity, social status, and degree of fame. In terms of social identity, literati appear most frequently, followed by Buddhist monks. Laymen, Taoists, hermits, emperors, servants, women, merchants, fortune tellers and beggars also make appearances. As for their social status and renown, we find elite poets, high ranking officials, and eminent monks juxtaposed with struggling poetry students, low-level prefects, and unknown novice monks. Huihong records tales and conversations that supplement common depictions of well-known figures and introduces interesting accounts of obscure folk. He focuses on the unusual interests, ideas, behavior, personalities, and relationships of people as they went about their daily lives. He does not emphasize the worldly status or achievements of an individual, (such as an official appointment or promotion, in the case of officials, or an abbacy position or renown, in the case of monks), unless it is done in order to highlight behavior that is in some way incongruous to the status of that individual.

Buddhist ideas and the social life of Buddhists are a part of this text, but Huihong does not straightforwardly explore or teach Buddhist doctrine, scripture, or even record biographies of monks. Huihong's background as a Buddhist monk meant that his social circle

and views on Buddhism diverged in some interesting ways from typical non-monk miscellany writers. He gives greater voice to the perspectives and experiences of laymen and Buddhist monks within the literati milieu. His anecdotes challenge conventions and expectations regarding social and aesthetic values. He questions the way discriminations are made between monks and officials, between people of high and low status, between the ridiculous and the sensible, and between monasticism and the pursuit of poetry. But even as he breaks these down, there is an awareness of social and religious expectations and conventions at work that creates an interesting tension. The result is ten *juan* of recorded conversations, observations of behavior, anecdotes, and informal discussions that reflect an unusual Chan monk's perspective on the literary, religious and social culture of the Northern Song.

1.5.3 Organization

There is no indication that *Night Chats* was ever organized by topics. Nevertheless, we do find that it is not completely random in terms of organization. Entries having something to do with poetry make up approximately seventy percent of the work, with 113 out of 162 entries relating to poetry.[113] Approximately ninety-one percent of the entries in the first seven *juan* have something to with poetry. *Juan* four and *juan* five are entirely made up of poetry entries, with *juan* four containing references to both pre-Song poets and Song poets, and *juan* five focusing on Song poets, especially Su Shi, Huang Tingjian and Wang Anshi. The poetry entries in *juan* six and *juan* seven predominantly deal with poet monks

[113] This percentage is slightly lower than what is stated in the abstract to *Night Chats* in the SKZM which estimates eighty percent of the work relates to poetry; 120.1039a.

(*juan* six), or accounts of monks and literati exchanging poems and discussing poetry (*juan* seven). There is ample poetic material in *Night Chats* to fill a lengthy *shihua*.

The last three *juan* mainly consist of anecdotes and discussions about topics other than poetry, with only thirty-two percent of the entries in these three *juan* containing poems or poetics. *Juan* eight predominantly features humorous accounts of eccentrics or unusual events. *Juan* nine continues in this vein, but has more anecdotes featuring monks. Poetry makes a comeback in the final *juan*, with several entries that we might consider to be poetry criticism. But the majority of entries in this *juan* are anecdotes about individuals, monks and non-monks, demonstrating integrity or foolishness.

In terms of the length and format of the entries, like most miscellanies, there is variety. The loose structure was part of the appeal of the miscellany. The entries generally fall into one of three types: those in which Huihong discusses a certain idea or issue; those that record a conversation between two or more people, and those that feature an account or anecdote. Overlap is seen within these discussions, conversations and anecdotes. Huihong may comment on a conversation or anecdote, or include comments made by others when he is trying to make a point in his discussions. There was no convention about what made an entry "complete." The author could go into as little or as much detail as he wished on a given topic, and sometimes an entry could contain more than one topic. The result is entries of varying length. In *Night Chats*, the shortest entry, consisting of one sentence of context followed by a plum blossom quatrain by Wang Anshi, is just thirty-four characters

(approximately fifty words in English translation).[114] The longest entry, an account of a poetry exchange between Huihong and Chen Guan, is 483 characters (over six hundred words in English translation).[115]

1.5.4 Dating

The entries in *Night Chats* read like they were written over a span of many years.[116] Most autobiographical references in the work can be dated from after Huihong's 1090 ordination through 1021.[117] If Huihong recorded accounts soon after they occurred, he would have been working on *Night Chats* all throughout this period. But it is equally likely that he added accounts long after they occurred.

We can't determine exactly when Huihong began recording entries for *Night Chats*, but we know that he had a full draft complete in 1121. He likely continued to make revisions

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[114] Huihong, "Du mei shi shu fa song sheng shi" 賭梅詩輸罰松聲詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.46. Citations to *Lengzhai yehua* throughout this dissertation are given for the Wushan ban 五山版 edition of the text collected by Zhang Bowei in *Xijian ben Songren shihua si zhong*, pp. 54-55. The title of the entry is provided in *pinyin*, followed with "*Lengzhai yehua*" and the *juan* and page number. For translations of the titles and the location of the entries in *Quan Song biji*, see Appendix A.

[115] Huihong, "Chen Yingzhong ci ji shi zhurou shi yu," 陳瑩中此集食豬肉鰣魚, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.87-88.

[116] One indication that Huihong wrote the entries over a span of years is the fact that he refers to Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) using both his pseudonym Jinggong 荊公 and his posthumous titles Wengong 文公 (in use from Wang's death until 1113) and Shuwang 舒王 (in use beginning in 1113).

[117] One of its earliest datable autobiographical events recorded in *Night Chats* is an exchange between Huihong and the old monk Jingfu 景福 on the poetry and asceticism of Jingchun 景淳 that occurred when Huihong was just seventeen, in 1087. ("Seng Jingchun shi duo shen yi" 僧景淳詩多深意, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.59-60). But the exchange was clearly a reminiscence written years afterwards because Huihong notes that it wasn't until later, after he'd become a monk himself that he began to appreciate Jingchun.

after this point.[118] Earlier completion dates have been suggested, but they do not correspond to the latest datable entries in *Night Chats*.[119] An external textual reference that corroborates the 1121 completion date is a passage in *Yanzhou shihua* 彥周詩話 (Yanzhou's Remarks on Poetry) by Xu Yi 許顗 (12th c.). Xu describes and exchange he had with Huihong about *Night Chats* when they were both staying at a temple in Tanzhou, a meeting that occurred in 1121.[120] Furthermore, the only extant reference in Huihong's writings to *Night Chats* appears in the poem written in 1122 quoted at the beginning of this chapter.[121] The title of the poem, "Ying Shangren shoulu *Lengzhai* wei shi xishu qi wei" 英上人手錄〈冷齋〉為示戲書其尾 (Master Ying showed me his handwritten copy of *Lengzhai* and I playfully wrote this [poem] at the end), indicates that a complete version was circulating by this time.[122]

Earliest Printing

While a detailed print history of *Night Chats* is beyond the scope of this study, a few words may be said about the earliest date a printed copy could have been in circulation.[123]

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[118] Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 275; Chen Zili, *Shihuihong yanshi*, p. 137.

[119] For example, Chen Xin assumes the work was completed in 1117 because the final entry refers to the death of Cai Bian 蔡卞 ("Dianjiao shuoming," *Lengzhai yehua*, p. 1). But the entries in *Night Chats* are not chronological, and there are entries included that can be dated after 1117.

[120] Xu Yi, *Yanzhou shihua* 彥周詩話, p. 388. Zhou Yukai and Chen Zili have both determined that Huihong and Xu Yi were together in Tanzhou in 1121; Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 275; Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 137.

[121] Zhou estimates the poem was completed in 1122. See *Song seng Huihong*, p. 293-294.

[122] Master Ying, Huiying 惠英 (style name: Yingru 穎孺) was a disciple of Huihong who compiled and copied many of his works, including *Night Chats*. See Lu Quangang, "Lengzhai yehua yanjiu," p. 11.

[123] For a discussion of the relationship between Song miscellanies and print history, see Hilde De Weerdt, "Continuities between Scribal and Print Publishing in Twelfth-Century Song China—The case of Wang Mingqing's Serialized Notebooks." See Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The*

We know that there were print copies of *Night Chats* in circulation by the early Southern Song and it is likely that the first printings occurred in Huihong's lifetime. In *Yanzhou shihua* (Southern Song), Huihong's friend Xu Yi refers to a contemporary print edition of *Night Chats* and suggests the possibility that it originated even before Huihong had made his final revisions. He records an exchange with Huihong that took place in Tanzhou, a meeting that likely occurred in 1121, when Huihong was still making edits on *Night Chats*.[124] At the time, Xu Yi objected to Huihong including a scathing attack on the poetry of Li Shangying 李商隱 (813-858; courtesy name Yishan 義山). (Huihong had written, "I call it a total calamity for writing when [the development of poetry] reached Li Yishan" 詩到李義山，謂之文章一厄). Xu thought he had convinced Huihong to delete the statement. But at the time of writing about the exchange in *Yanzhou shihua*, he notes that the print edition (*yinben* 印本) available to him still contained the offensive passage, and Xu assumes that it must therefore have been published prior to his exchange with Huihong.[125] This suggests that there may have been

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Commercial Publishers of Tianyang, Fujian (11th-17th Centuries) for an extensive look at printing from the Song to the Ming.

[124] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 275, calculates that the meeting between Huihong and Xu Yi took place in 1121 when both were in Changsha.

[125] The full account reads,

> Hong Juefan was at Shuixi, Little Nantai Temple in Tanzhou. Juefan was writing *Lengzhai yehua*. There was the statement, "I call it a total calamity for writing when poetry reached Li Yishan [Li Shangying]. Because the allusions are so obscure, [such poetry] came to be known as the Xikun style." When I came to this [statement], I frowned and went silent. After [Huihong] pressed me for an explanation, I [quoted Li's lines]: 'The grandeur of the setting sun is without limit only right at the point when it is about to set." Juefan said, "I understand what you mean," and at that time he deleted [the criticism]. The current print edition still includes [this passage], so it must be an earlier version." 洪覺範在潭州水西小南臺

print editions circulating prior to 1121, but that Huihong continued to make revisions afterwards.

1.5.5 Editions

Editions of *Night Chats* produced in the Northern Song are no longer extant, but several later editions are available, and these can be collated with citations of the work in Song dynasty *shihua*, miscellanies, and *leishu* 類書 (encyclopedia) making possible a fairly accurate and complete version of the original contents.

There are eleven extant editions of *Night Chats*, according to the *Zhongguo congshu zonglu*.[126] The most well-known of these are two Ming dynasty editions are the *Baihai* 稗海 and Mao Jin's 毛晉 *Jiguge Jindai Mishu* 汲古閣津逮秘書, and the edition recorded in the *Siku quanshu*. These editions all contain ten *juan* 卷 (scrolls/chapters/fascicles) with approximately 150 entries.[127] The *Jiguge* and *Baihai* editions are the most well-known

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寺。覺範作《冷齋夜話》，有曰：「詩至李義山，為文章一厄。僕至此蹙額無語，渠再三窮詰，僕不得已曰：'夕陽無限好，只是近黃昏。'覺範曰：'我解子意矣。'即時刪去。今印本猶存之，蓋已前傳出者。Xu Yi, *Yanzhou shihua* p. 388.

[126] Bian Dongbo, *Songdai shihua yu shixue wenxuan yanjiu*, p. 24. Also see Lu Quangang's extensive overview of editions, "Lengzhai yehua yanjiu," pp. 11-17.

[127] There are references to editions with six, ten, and thirteen *juan* circulating in the Southern Song. In his *Songdai biji yanjiu*, pp. 4-20, Zhang Hui provides a table giving the number of chapters and category designations of numerous Song miscellanies as they appear in several works from the Southern Song and the *SKQS*. In the table on p. 6, *Night Chats* is listed as having six chapters in Chao Gongwu's *Jun zhai dushu zhi* and in the *Wenxian tongkao*文獻通考, ten *juan* in the *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題 and SKZM, and thirteen in the *Songshi*. Some extant editions include a compilation of extra entries discovered in other works circulating in the Song. For example, the *Quansong biji* edition includes an appendix of twenty-seven entries, pp. 85-99. Lu Quangang discusses the validity of these "lost" entries at length in "*Lengzhai yehua* yanjiu," pp. 28-45.

because they were used as the source text in modern annotated editions published by Zhonghua shuju and Daxiang in 1988 and 2006 respectively.[128] A Japanese Wushan ban 五山版 woodblock edition believed to be dated to the Southern Song or the Yuan dynasty, is considered the earliest and most complete edition available.[129] This edition contains 162 entries spanning over its ten *juan*.

Wushan published Chan works and literary collections that dated from the last years of the Kamakara period (1185-1333) through the Muromachi period (1336-1573), roughly corresponding to the Southern Song until midway through the Ming Dynasty. Zhang Bowei brought the Wushan ban edition of *Night Chats* to light when he included it in his 2002 collection *Xijian ben songren shihua sizhong* 稀見本宋人詩話四種 (Four Rare Song *shihua*).[130] In this dissertation, I use as my source text the Wushan ban edition as it appears in Zhang's work and all citations refer to that edition.[131]

There is debate over whether the origin woodblock text used for the Wushan ban edition originated in the Southern Song or the Yuan dyansty. Zhang Bowei agrees with the findings of Kawase Kazuma 川瀨一馬 (1906-1999) who argued that the Wushan ban edition

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[128] Zhonghua shuju published a collection of three miscellanies including *Night Chats*, annotated by Chen Xin. Daxiang used the Baihai edition with notes indicating discrepancies with the Jindai edition, in the *Night Chats* included in their multivolume work *Quansong biji*.

[129] The current location of the Wushan ban edition is in the Iwasaki collection 岩崎文庫 of the Toyo Bunko 東洋文庫 (Asian Studies Library) in Tokyo, where it is reproduced in *Zengaku Tenseki Sokan* 禪學典籍叢刊 (Classics of Zen Buddhism), *j.* 5, edited by Shiina Koyo 惟名宏雄 and Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山. See Zhang Bowei, *Xi jian ben Songren shihua sizhong*, p. 5.

[130] Zhang Bowei includes a typed version of the Wushan ban woodblock edition.

[131] Appendix A contains a list of the entry titles in *Lengzhai yehua* with translations and the page number where they can be found in Zhang's collection and in the *Quan Song biji* edition.

is a copy of a Song critical edition (*fu Song ben ban* 覆宋本版) from 1223.[132] This date is derived from a publisher's note in the Wushan ban edition which reads, "republished in the early spring of the Guiwei year" 癸未春孟新刊. But there were Guiwei years in both the Song and the Yuan dynasties. Zhang seems to advocate the earlier Song date by default, after disproving the argument of another Japanese scholar, Shiina Kōyū 惟名宏雄 (b. 1934) who identified a Yuan edition included in a pictorial catalogue as the source of the Wushan ban edition.[133]

More recently, Bian Dongbo, who has made an extensive study of the woodblock editions of *Night Chats* housed in Japan, has come to a different conclusion.[134] Bian agrees with Zhang that the Wushan ban edition is the most accurate and complete available today, but he points out an interesting textual issue that suggests the edition originated in the Yuan dynasty rather than the Song. One of the entry titles refers to emperor Shenzong as "Song Shenzong" (Emperor Shenzong of the Song). Similarly, in the body of another entry, emperor Taizu is referred to as "Song Taizu." The addition of the dynasty to an emperor's name would not have occurred until after the dynasty was over.[135] Bian's point is supported

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[132] Zhang Bowei, Songdai shihua yu shixue wenxuan yanjiu, pp. 3-4.

[133] Shiina made the case that the Wushan ban edition is a copy of a Yuan edition captured in the *Jingjiatang wenku Songyuan ban tulu* 靜嘉堂文庫宋元版圖錄, but Zhang points out several reasons this could not be the case. See Ibid.

[134] Bian Dongbo 卞東波, "Lengzhai yehua riben kanben kaolun" in *Songdai shihua yu shixue wenxuan yanjiu,* pp. 24-46.

[135] Bian Dongbo, "Lengzhai yehua riben kanben kaolun" in *Songdai shihua yu shixue wenxuan yanjiu*, p. 33. The first example is from "Song Shenzong zhao jin zhong bu de jia tun yin wu Taizu yuanlüe"宋神宗詔禁中不得牧豭豘因悟太祖遠略, *Lengzhai yehua* 1.12. The second is from "Li Houzhu wangguo ji," 李後主亡國偈, *Lengzhai yehua* 19-20.

by the fact that the same *Night Chats* entry is quoted in a southern Song *shihua*, but the emperor is recorded as "Taizu," not "Song Taizu."[136] Furthermore, Bian points out that there are some variant overlaps between the Wushan ban edition and a Yuan dynasty woodblock edition housed in the Taiwan National Library, overlaps that are not shared with the *Baihai* or *Jiguge* Ming dynasty editions. Bian concludes that the Wushan ban edition was produced based on a Yuan edition from 1343, but that it was not an identical replica.[137] Overall, Bian's evidence suggests that the Wushan ban more likely recorded a Yuan edition rather than a Southern Song edition. Even had it been produced in the Song Guiwei year (1223), we are still talking about a version that is nearly a century later than the Huihong's original. Fortunately, the text was cited and recorded extensively in Song *shihua* and miscellanies, providing plenty of early sources for comparison, and editors have provided notes to that effect.

1.5.6 Entry Titles

With the exception of the *Baihai* edition, all of the extant editions of *Night Chats* discussed above include titles for each of the entries. It is extremely unlikely that these titles were a product of Huihong's own brush. According to the abstract in the *Siku quanshu zongmu*, these titles were not included in the original. As the abstract points out, they often include words, names and a language style that don't correspond to what is found in the

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[136] Ibid. The Southern Song *shihua* is Hu Zi's *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua* 苕溪漁隱叢話.

[137] Bian, *Songdai shihua yu shixue wenxuan yanjiu*, p. 33. He also points out that there are also many differences in variants and layout between the Wushan ban edition and Taiwan National Library's Yuan edition, but whether those differences were due to the text being an earlier Song version or not, we have no way of knowing.

entries themselves.[138] It has become customary in Chinese scholarship to refer to entries in *Night Chats* by these titles, despite the fact that they were probably not in the original. Because the Wushan ban edition includes the titles, I have included them in my citations.

1.6 General Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters and a conclusion. In brief, chapter one introduces the dissertation and the characteristics of *Night Chats*. Chapter two discusses the background of the author of *Night Chats*, focusing on the relationship between Huihong's political troubles, his monastic identity, and his interest in poetry. Chapters three, four, and five each focus on a different theme in *Night Chats* examined in light of Huihong's monasticism: aesthetic theory and poetry criticism (chapter three), depictions of people and personality (chapter four), and the promotion of poet-monks (chapter five). A detailed description of the central chapters follows.

Although Huihong has been the focus of several previous studies, much about his life remains obscure. Chapter two uses biographical sources, some of Huihong's poems, and select autobiographical entries from *Night Chats* to explore the formation of his distinct monastic identity and outlook. The chapter aims to clarify the complicated story of Huihong's "inexplicable misfortunes"—his contested monastic name, multiple incarcerations, and exile—and explain why he was so prone to political and legal

[138] SKZM 120.1038c-1039a. The abstract provides several examples of discrepancies between the given titles and the content of the entries, discrepancies that would not have occurred if Huihong had written the titles, such as giving the wrong name of the person discussed in the entry.

entanglements. We also discover that in dealing with the challenges to his identity, Huihong applied a Buddhist non-discriminatory sensibility, often expressed in poetry. This picture of Huihong helps to explain his interest in using the informal miscellany to creatively challenge assumptions about poetic norms, social roles, and monasticism.

Today *Night Chats* is primarily known for preserving comments on poetics uttered by certain eminent Song poets. Those who study the Buddhist influence on Song poetic discourse are also aware that some of the poetic discussions contain Buddhist terminology and ideas. But Huihong's entries on poetics rarely reflect a passive recording of other poets' comments and his Buddhist perspective manifests in more than just poetic terminology. In *Night Chats*, Huihong actively selects content and constructs accounts to reflect his own approach to poetry and uses the miscellany to promote new methods of composition and standards of poetry criticism. Chapter three explores four areas of poetics in *Night Chats* where Huihong's Buddhist perspective or monastic identity are significant: aesthetic theory, composition techniques, approaches to poetry criticism, and technical issues such as variants and philology. We discover that through selecting and adapting the ideas of contemporary poets for his miscellany, Huihong promoted his Buddhist non-discriminatory aesthetic, whereby both the critique and composition of poetry required transcending taboo and literal expression. In the process of illuminating Huihong's approach to poetics, this chapter shows that several popular poetic concepts associated with the Jiangxi school, including the "poetic eye" (*shiyan* 詩眼) and "appropriating the embryo and swapping the bones" (*duotai huangu* 奪胎換骨), had Buddhist roots and meant something different in Huihong's time. Moreover, Huihong's monastic background meant that he used Buddhist ideas to discuss poetry in a very different way than what was found later in Yan Yu's influential *Canglang shihua*. These

findings help to clarify developments in poetic ideas and emphasize the variations and changes in the way Buddhism was used in poetic discourse.

Whereas Huihong's entries on poetry have long been acknowledged as valuable, his anecdotes about Song individuals have received scant attention. When the anecdotes are acknowledged, the discussion is often framed using the traditional categorizations "records of people" or "records of the strange," an approach that inevitably turns the analysis into a debate between factual accuracy and fictional creativity. In chapter four, I show that just as Huihong promoted poetry that transcended taboos and conventions, his anecdotes avoid depictions found in historical miscellanies or supernatural accounts in favor of accounts of monks, officials, Buddhist laymen and Daoists that challenged assumptions about correlations between social position and character, competence and convention. Huihong's anecdotes cover a diverse and complex range of human personality and behavior that reflect an approach to social critique shaped by his non-discriminatory aesthetics and background as a Buddhist monk.

Chapter five narrows in on one type of individual portrayed in *Night Chats* of special interest to Huihong, and rarely depicted to such a degree in miscellanies by literati: the poet-monk. We see how the Buddhist, aesthetic, and social values explored in the previous chapters come into play in his depiction of poet monks. Huihong uses anecdote to create a positive image of the poet-monk that contests narrow views about the poetic output of monks circulated by literati in the Northern Song. In contrast to the impression that monks were limited in their poetic range, either due to lack of ability or the restrictions of monastic life, often entertained by literati writers, Huihong depicts monks writing on a broad range of themes and expressing themselves in warm and colorful language. This chapter provides a

perspective on monks' poetry rarely available, given that Huihong was one of only a few monastic poetry critics in the Northern Song. He gives greater freedom and legitimacy to the voice of poet monks from within his community.

The majority of studies on middle period Chinese literature use primary sources written by literati, not by Buddhist monks. Moreover, historical records and poetry, not anecdotes and miscellanies, are still the most widespread sources for cultural history. By focusing on Huihong's *Night Chats,* an unusual miscellany written by a Buddhist monk from the 12th century, this study aims to provide a perspective on culture and society not accessible from more mainstream texts and writers. We learn about the distinct and significant ways a Buddhist monk used notes and anecdotes to shape poetic discourse and social critique of his day.

Chapter 2

"Inexplicable Misfortunes": Huihong's Political Ordeals and Monastic Identity

2.1 Monk as Context

Song dynasty writers found in miscellanies a place to disseminate information and ideas that did not fit into formal genres of literature and poetry. It is usually by means of prefaces that we gain an understanding of the author's stated and unstated intentions for engaging in miscellanies. But to truly understand the appeal of the form, we must also consider the authors' individual reputations, interests, occupations, and life experiences. This is especially true when the author is atypical, as is the case with Huihong and his *Night Chats*. Although we do not have a preface for *Night Chats*—neither Huihong nor anyone else produced one—we do have an abundance of biographical materials. The story that these tell contextual his *Night Chats* and help to explain why a monk would go out of his way to produce a lengthy literary miscellany.

In writing *Night Chats,* rather than writing from the perspective of the official class, as was the case with most miscellanies, Huihong was writing as a monk. This simple fact has big implications. Aspects of his background may have overlapped with non-monk writers—he was well-educated, socially engaged, and like many officials, his career was impacted by shifting court politics—but writing *Night Chats* with the background of a monk brought certain differences in perspective and priorities. The picture is complicated by the fact that

Huihong's monastic life was repeatedly challenged and interrupted by political and legal embroilments. Being a monk was, for Huihong, not a simple matter.

This chapter explores the nuances of Huihong's monastic identity by looking at his peculiar, often misunderstood, series of misfortunes and his poetic response to those misfortunes. Specifically, we look at the issues surrounding his monastic name, his legal ordeals and the subsequent incarcerations and exile. These ordeals threatened Huihong's reputation and destabilized his monastic identity. This study will both shed light on long debated aspects of his biography, as well as set the stage to understand how Huihong's entries in *Night Chats* on poetics and accounts of social interactions were colored by his Buddhist perspective and monastic experience. This monastic context for *Night Chats* has hitherto been overlooked.

Exploring Huihong's ordeals and coping mechanisms to help understand his miscellany is an approach I've adapted from Peter Bol's "author as a context." In his study of Zhang Lei's 張耒 (1054-1114) miscellany, Bol proposes to read the *biji* in the context of the author's philosophical writings. In the case of Zhang Lei, Bol demonstrates that the *biji* in some way reflects the "practice" of the author's philosophical and even political ideas.[1] Instead of philosophical writings, I am looking at biographical experiences that were formative in shaping Huihong's understanding of what it meant to be a monk in the volatile political climate of the Song. We will then see how this understanding of monasticism

[1] See Peter Bol, "A Literati Miscellany and Sung Intellectual History: The Case of Chang Lei's *Mingtao tsa-chih*," pp. 128-129.

manifests in the poetics, social critique and representation of poet monks that make up *Night Chats*.

We have access to numerous biographical sources and autobiographical references in Huihong's writings. Huihong's issues with monastic identity, his excessive political and legal ordeals, and his poetic coping strategies help to explain why this monk was interested in the topics and aesthetic approaches found in *Night Chats*. The main sources I've used in this study include Huihong's autobiography entitled "Silent Sound's Own Preface" 寂音自序, Southern Song monk Zuxiu's 祖琇 "Chan Master Mingbai [Hui]hong" 明白洪禪師, and the extensive research undertaken by modern scholars Zhou Yukai and Chen Zili.[2]

2.2 Names and Monastic Identity

2.2.1 "Appropriating the Name" and Issues of Nomenclature

Long before Huihong's political troubles began, his monastic identity was already in jeopardy, unbeknownst to anyone. This was due to a divergence from normal procedure in the way he acquired his ordination name at the very beginning of his career as monk. The irregularity would eventually be used against him and, combined with other accusations, cause him to be stripped of his monastic credentials and thrown into jail, the first of a series of such ordeals. After his release, Huihong would manage to get re-ordained under a new

[2] Huihong, "Silent Sound's Own Preface" 寂音自序, (J 23: B135.696a25-b28; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1437-39); Zuxiu, "Biography of Chan Master Mingbai Huihong" (Z 79:1561.562b20-563b12); Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong xinglü zhushu biannian;* Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*.

name, but his original name stayed in circulation. Late in life he succeeded in getting his original status reinstated. But because more than one name was used in writings by and about Huihong and because there was a stigma attached to his original name, biographies are not consistent in their name for Huihong or in their representation of what transpired with regard to his changing names. To date, there is no consensus among scholars about what really happened. The discussion below aims to clarify the facts while revealing the impact the problem had on Huihong. The confusion we may experience in tracing the story of Huihong's name cannot compare to the difficulties Huihong himself must have experienced as a result of his precarious name situation.

A well-established Chan monk had several names, and Huihong was no exception. A monk must have a "dharma name" (*faming* 法名), the formal name received upon ordination, (I use "ordination name" to refer to this name.) Without this name, a monk did not have monastic status.[3] In addition to his ordination name, a monk would often have a style name (*zi* 字), an honorary name (*cihao* 賜號), bestowed on him by an official or emperor, as well as one or more self-styled sobriquets (*zihao* 自號). Huihong's style name was Juefan 覺範, and, following the custom of referring to monks by the second character of their ordination name followed by their style name, Huihong was often referred to as Hong Juefan 洪覺範.[4]

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[3] When a monk became ordained and was given a monk's name, it legally meant he held a monk's role in society, and in theory this would entitle him to receive the protection and benefits that came with such a position.

[4] As Zhou Yukai has pointed out, the first character of a monk's ordination name could be omitted, but his style name was never abbreviated. Thus, we find many references to Tang and Song monks with names of three characters: the first character is the second character of their ordination name and

His honorary name was Baojue Yuanming 寶覺圓明. He came up with many sobriquets over the years, including Jiyin 寂音 (Silent Sound), Lengzhai 冷齋 (Chilly Hut), and Mingbai 明白 (Bright Understanding).[5]

Due to his political and legal entanglements, Huihong's ordination name became ripe with controversy, resulting in contradictory records in Song biographies. Simply put, because Huihong ordained more than once, he was known by two different ordination names, Huihong and Dehong 德洪.[6] But the details are more complicated.

The issue with Huihong's ordination name originated in the unusual circumstances of his ordination, in 1090.[7] In his 1123 autobiography, "Silent Sound's Own Preface," Huihong records,

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the following two characters are their full style name. See Zhou Yukai, "A Brief Discussion on Dharma Names and Style Names," in *Song seng Huihong*, p. 441.

[5] Huihong's sobriquet "Lengzhai," used in the title of his miscellany, was discussed in chapter one, p. 44

[6] Some early biographies also refer to Huihong with the graph *hui* 慧 instead of *hui* 惠. For example we find this variant in Zhengshou's biography of Huihong in *Jiatai pu denglu* (Z 79:1559.333a12) and in Xiaoying's discussion of Huihong in *Yunwo jitan* (Z 86: 1610.671a20-b14). Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 3 and Chen, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 6, suggest that this deviation is not significant, the two *hui* characters commonly being interchangeable in monks' names. But the prevalence of this variation in works produced soon after Huihong passed away may indicate a wish by biographers to avoid using the controversial "Huihong" 惠洪 name. "Dehong" is used to identify Huihong in *the Foguang da cidian* and the name given for the author of Huihong's works included in the Buddhist canon. It has become standard in Chinese and English scholarship to use the name Huihong 惠洪 rather than Dehong.

[7] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 15. I have followed Zhou in the dating of events in Huihong's life.

> At age nineteen, I took the canon examination at Tianwang Temple in the eastern capital, obtained ordination, and appropriated the name 'Huihong.'
> 十九試經於東京天王寺，得度，冒惠洪名.[8]

Huihong shows no sign of concern over the deviation from normal ordination protocol indicated by the phrase "appropriated the name" (*maoming* 冒名), but repercussions from this "appropriation" would haunt him in later years. Nineteen years after ordination, in 1109, he would be accused of forging his ordination name, and when a more serious crime of implication in a political scandal was added to his sentence, he was imprisoned. When released a year later, he could no longer use his ordination name with impunity, and he was stripped of his monk status. Zhang Shangying, prime minster at the time, helped him get re-ordained by special permission, and his name was changed, probably to Dehong 德洪.[9] At this time, Military Commissioner Guo Tianxin 郭天信 also submitted a memorial requesting

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[8] J 23: B135.696a27-28; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1437. See Appendix C for my translation of the full text of "Silent Sound's Own Preface." Huihong records his age at ordination as nineteen, but Zhou Yukia, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 15, argues that based on the dates available for the events leading up to his ordination in the capital, this would have taken place in 1090, making Huihong twenty at the time. In a personal discussion with Zhou in March 2015, he suggested that Huihong may have been using a different way of recording ages, i.e. "nineteen" meant that he had completed his nineteenth year; he was a "full" nineteen, or twenty years old, in modern reckoning. The 1090 date for his ordination fits the dating of the other key events in Huihongs life. Note that scholars who have solely based their chronology of Huihong's life on Huihong's "Own Preface" will give a 1089 date for Huihong's ordination.

[9] Zuxiu states: "Grand Counselor Zhang Wujin [Shangying] made a special memorial to the emperor requesting [re-]ordination, and changed the name to the current one" 見丞相張無盡。特奏得度。改今名; Z 79:1561.562c9-10. The "current" name in his biography refers to Dehong, the name Zuxiu uses at the beginning of the biography to introduce Huihong.

an imperially bestowed name for Huihong, which, according to some accounts, is where Huihong obtained the honorary name, Baojue Yuanming.[10]

Various theories have been suggested as to the precise meaning of "appropriating" an ordination name and why Huihong got his name this way. The earliest interpretation comes from Zuxiu. His account of Huihong's political troubles lifts many phrases verbatim from "Silent Sound's Own Preface," but in the description of what transpired with his name he departs slightly but significantly from Huihong. Zuxiu states that the monk "borrowed the name 'Huihong' from the Tianwang Temple's ancient registry to become a fully ordained monk" 假天王寺舊籍惠洪名為大僧.[11] He chooses to use the word "borrowed" (*jia* 假) in place of Huihong's "appropriated" and provides a simple explanation of the origin of the name.[12] This is significant because it suggests that Zuxiu did not see anything intrinsically wrong in how Huihong obtained his name, a perspective supported by the fact that no one

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[10] Z 79:1561.562c9-10. In "Silent Sound's Own Preface," Huihong refers to Guo's request for a name but does not specify which name was given. In current scholarship, there are different opinions about when the name Baojue Yuanming was bestowed upon Huihong. Huang Qijiang records that it was Guo Tianmin 郭天民 who bestowed it upon the monk posthumously in 1128. See Huang, *Beizong fojiao*, p. 358. But Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 5, points out that in the *Songshi*, Guo Tianmin is the same person as Guo Tianxin, the official explicitly referred to by Huihong as requesting an imperially bestowed name on his behalf after being re-ordained.

[11] Biography of Chan Master Mingbai Huihong," *Sengbao zheng xu zhuan, j.* 2 (Z 76: 1561.562b23). I've translated *daseng* 大僧 as "fully ordained monk." According to the *Foguang da cidian*, p. 876, a novice monk who had taken the ten precepts was called a "little monk" (*xiaoseng* 小僧); a monk who had taken the complete precepts of a bhikṣu, and thus fully ordained, was called a "great monk" (*daseng*大僧).

[12] In his course on Chan and poetry at Sichuan University, "Chanzong yu shige" 禪宗與詩歌 (March 30, 2015), Zhou Yukai interpreted Zuxiu's statement to mean that Huihong sat the exams with a borrowed name, i.e. the name of some other candidate who was already in the books but who didn't appear for the exams. The unlawful practice of using someone else's name to take an exam or register for something is still seen today in China, represented with the four-character phrase "appropriate someone's name and replacing them" (*maoming dingti* 冒名頂替).

close to Huihong questioned his monastic credentials at his ordination or for nearly twenty years after.

As to why Huihong had to appropriate or borrow a name in the first place, we can only speculate. Zhou Yukai suggests it came down to money. Huihong was an orphan, without the financial means or sponsorship needed to register for the ordination exams.[13] Levering and Murck have a different interpretation, explaining that Huihong was seen to "appropriate" the name because at the time, the character *hui* 惠 was one of the characters in an empress's name, but neither scholars gives a source for this interpretation.[14] The Taiwan scholar Wu Jingyi mentions the same point and gives as a source the annotation of Huihong's *Shimen wenzi chan* by Japanese monk Kakumon Kantetsu 廓門貫徹 (d. 1730). According to Wu, Kakumon states that monks were granted ordination with the generation name *hui* 惠 in honor of the late Empress Huigong 惠恭, but only under special circumstances, so he suspects that Huihong [by not getting this permission] appropriated it when he used it for

[13] Ibid.

[14] Murck, "The Chan Monk Juefan Huihong" in *Poetry and Painting*, p. 205; Levering, "Dahui Zonggao and Zhang Shangying: The Importance of a Scholar in the Education of a Song Chan Master," p.124. Neither Murck nor Levering give their specific source for this detail. There doesn't appear to be any indigenous Song text that explains Huihong's appropriation as using a taboo character. (This explanation is not mentioned in the biographies of Huihong found in *Jiatai pu deng lu*, *Wudeng huiyuan*, *Fozu lidai tongzai* or in "Silent Sound's Own Preface.") Huihong scholars Chen Zili and Zhou Yukai do not mention this interpretation.

ordination.[15] But Wu disproves this explanation, pointing out that at the time Huihong obtained his name, *hui* would not have been considered a taboo character.[16]

Although Huihong borrowing a name didn't bother the people involved in his ordination or cause anyone within his circle to question his monastic credentials between 1090-1109, the fact that in 1109 he was found guilty of appropriating his name suggest that technically his action was against the law. He had not, after all, followed normal procedures in getting ordained.[17] But without other accusations, it is unlikely Huihong would have received the punishment that he did. (The details of Huihong's trial and imprisonment are discussed in Part Three of this chapter below.)

In addition to the ambiguity around the name Huihong, Song sources are not in agreement as to when Huihong's other ordination name, Dehong 德洪, was adopted. In the biographies and collections of his works, our monk is sometimes referred to as Huihong 惠洪

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[15] Qtd. in Wu Jingyi 吳靜宜, *Huihong wenzi chan*, pp. 34-35. Wu cites Kakumon's annotations in *Zhu Shimen wenzichan*, but no page number is given, and I was unable to locate the reference to Huihong's name in this work.

[16] Consulting the *Shiji*, Wu states that Empress Huigong only used the *hui* 惠 character in her name from 1110 to 1137, after which it was changed to Xian 顯. See Wu Jingyi, *Huihong wenzichan*, p. 35. Huihong obtained his name in 1090, long before Huigong ever used the character in her name. Even Huihong's accusation and consequential jail sentence in 1109 occurred before *hui* would become a taboo character.

[17] Huihong passed his canon exams and had the support of his teacher, Zhenjing Kewen, but normal requirements for ordination would include obtaining parental permission and paying a fee to apply for the ordination certificate. See Ogawa Kanichi's article on the ordination requirements in the Northern Song, "Hoku Sō jidai no kōdosei to Shibucho" especially p. 16 and p. 27. Huihong would have avoided these requirements if he managed to take the place of another absent registered monk. This breach likely wouldn't have bothered the monastic community as much as the officials in charge of collecting the fees.

and sometimes as Dehong 德洪.[18] Some Song biographies deal with Huihong's two ordination names simply by listing them both at the outset and avoid providing details. Other sources disagree as to when and how Huihong's two names were adopted.

The contradictory accounts found in primary sources have given rise to debate among current scholars about Huihong's two ordination names. There are generally two narratives about what transpired. One narrative, favored by Zhou Yukai, is based on "Silent Sound's Own Preface" and several Southern Song biographies of Huihong written soon after his death.[19] These record that the monk's initial name was Huihong, that this was the name he appropriated at his ordination (1090), but that this name was replaced with Dehong upon his re-ordination (1110).[20] The second narrative, maintained by Chen Zili and Hsiao Li-hua, holds that Huihong's original name was Dehong, but that he later changed it to Huihong, with different opinions about when that change took place.[21] A few Song sources claim that Huihong changed his name to Huihong after he came back from exile (1114), an argument that both Chen and Zhou dismiss.[22]

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[19] For Zhou Yukai's discussion of the various approaches to Huihong's name, see *Song seng Huihong,* pp. 1-2.

[20] Zuxiu records Huihong's name as Dehong (Z 79:1561.562b21), but states that he got this name after he was ordained a second time (Z 79:1561.562c10). Chao Gongwu (1105-1180) agrees that Huihong's name was changed to Dehong when he got re-ordained, (see *Jun zhai dushu zhi* 19.1034), as does the Yuan Dynasty monk Nianchang 念常 (*Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載*, j.* 19, T 49: 2036.683a26). Zhengshou avoids the problem of Huihong's name all together by recording his name as Huihong 慧洪 in the title of his biography, then not specifying any other ordination names throughout the text; Z 79: 1559.333a12.

[21] Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu,* pp. 4-5. Hsiao Li-hua, 'Wenzi chan' shixue de fazhan guiji,' p. 183.

[22] Southern Song writers Wu Zeng and Wang Mingqing 王明清 state that Huihong was originally called Dehong and changed his name to Huihong only after returning from exile3; Wu Zeng, *Neng*

In my view, the first narrative, that Huihong ordained with the name Huihong and received the name Dehong on his second ordination is the most credible account for three main reasons. First, this account is corroborated in biographies written by Southern Song monks, some of whom, such as Zuxiu, could have known Huihong. In contrast, the sources recording that his original name was Dehong and he didn't get the name Huihong until much later are mostly minor anecdotal type works written by Confucian officials.[23] Second, if Huihong's original name was Dehong, how can we explain Huihong's clear statement about "appropriating the name Huihong" upon ordination? Chen Zili explains that Huihong was accused of "appropriating" his ordination name because his real name had actually been Dehong all along.[24] But Zhou points out that for Huihong to call himself Dehong for so many years while his ordination certificate had a different name (Huihong) would have aroused suspicion.[25] More significantly, before ordaining the first time, a monk would not already have an ordination name, so Huihong couldn't have already been called Dehong at the time of his ordination, then appropriated the name Huihong, as Chen suggests. Third, Huihong

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gai zhai manlu 12.96; Wang Mingqing, *Yuzhao xinzhi* 玉照新志 5.3a. Zhou Yukai dismisses Wang's account of Huihong as unreliable given that he also claims that Huihong served as an official, a statement for which there are no corroborating records and no mention in Huihong's autobiography. See Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 1.

[23] Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 1-2.

[24] Chen, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 5-6. Although she doesn't go into details, Hsiao Li-hua also describes Huihong as originally called Dehong. See *'Wenzi chan' shixue de fazhan guiji*, p.183.

[25] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 2.

had several close friends who addressed him as Huihong in their poems before his second ordination, but his contemporaries avoid using Dehong.[26]

Whether Huihong was called one thing or another may seem arbitrary, but a monk's name represented who he was, personally, socially, spiritually, even legally. Although monks used many names, their ordination name was usually clear-cut, even in the case of obscure monks. The ambiguous and contradictory information regarding Huihong's ordination names reflects something more than divergent sources. It suggests that for a monk to lose his original ordination name was highly problematic, and re-ordaining under a new name didn't necessarily resolve the problem.

Despite the multiple attacks on his monastic identity, resulting in periods where he didn't technically have monastic status, Huihong was persistent in his attempts to maintain a reputation as a monk. In this he was supported by his friends and disciples. Some records show that near the end of his life he submitted a letter requesting that his original monastic status be reinstated.[27]

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[26] For example, Huang Tingjian has poems entitled "Zeng Huihong" 贈惠洪 and "Yong Huihong yun"用惠洪韻, and Huihong's good friend Xie Yi 謝逸 has a poem "Song Huihong Shangren" 送惠洪上人. Chen Zili points out that there are a few examples of writings in Huihong's *Shimen wenzi chan* that contain self-references to the name Dehong dated prior to Huihong's first imprisonment, i.e. before he became re-ordained and supposedly given the name Dehong, according to the first narrative. "Dehong" is used in six pieces in Huihong's *Shimen wenzi chan*, some written prior to his re-ordination and some after. Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 1-2, argues that a few occurrences of the name Dehong in our current version of *Shimen wenzichan* is insufficient evidence to argue that the monk referred to himself by this name because *Shimen wenzi chan* was compiled and edited by Huihong's disciple Jueci 覺慈, and the self-references may have been changed to Dehong out of consideration for the reputation of their teacher, given that the name "Huihong" would still have been associated with issues of forgery.

[27] Xiaoying, *Yunwo jitan* (Z 86: 1610.671a19-b16). The end of the first *juan* of this work includes an extensive account of Huihong's political troubles. The table of contents gives this section the

Huihong doesn't seem to have ever accepted the name Dehong. After becoming re-ordained, he tended to shy away from using either one of his ordination names, preferring instead to refer to himself with his style name, Juefan, Hong Juefan (an abbreviation of his ordination and his style name), or one of his many sobriquets.[28]

2.2.2 Expanding Monastic Image with Sobriquets: "Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*"

Huihong's shifting circumstances and creative approach to his monastic identity can be traced by looking at his sobriquets. Huihong created at least seven nicknames for himself over the course of his life, including two we have already seen, "Lengzhai" and "Jiyin."The others are: "Mingbai" 明白 (also "Mingbai An" 明白庵or "Lao Mingbai"老明白), "Yan" 儼 (also "Laoyan" 老儼, "Yanshi" 儼師), "Yunxi" 筠谿, "Shimen Jingshi" 石門精舍(often abbreviated as "Shimen" 石門), and "Ganlu mie" 甘露滅.[29]

Several of these sobriquets reflect the Song custom of creating sobriquets using words for types dwellings, such as hut/studio (*zhai* 齋), chamber (*xuan* 軒), hall (*tang* 堂) or small

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subheading, "Jiyin huo qian" 寂音獲譴 (Huihong's capture and charges) Z 86: 1610.659c5. Keyworth has translated this passage in "Transmitting the Lamp," pp. 219-222. Note, even within Xiaoying's paraphrase of Huihong's letter, he writes his name as Huihong 慧洪.

[28] In the only known surviving Song manuscript of Huihong's calligraphy, preserved in the *Fengshutie* 鳳墅帖 (Phoenix Villa Calligraphy Model), pp. 89-138, Huihong signs his name with "Hong Juefan" and "Hong Lengzhai," and he refers to himself within one poem as "Juefan."

[29] Zhou Yukia, *Song seng Huihong,* p. 2-4, lists and discusses these sobriquets. In Chen Zili's discussion of Huihong's sobriquets, he fails to mention three of these, "Lengzhai," "Yunzhou" and "Shimen," but he adds two creative self-references, "Hainan zhuke" 還南逐客 (The Hainan Exile) and Wugou Cheng 無垢稱 (Unsullied Epitaph). Given that Huihong used these terms only once in poetry, they should not be considered sobriquets.

cloister (*an* 庵).[30] But many of Huihong's sobriquets reflect something more than a location or style of dwelling. Huihong created certain sobriquets that allowed him to present himself as a monk when he was stripped of his ordination credentials, or when he found himself in unconventional circumstances.

As an example, take Huihong's sobriquet "Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*" (*ganlu mie* 甘露滅). After Huihong was banished to Hainan Island in 1111, an ordeal discussed in part three below, Huihong adopted this Buddhist phrase as a sobriquet.[31] We know this because of his poem entitled, "Upon first Crossing the Ocean, I call myself 'Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*'" 初過海自號甘露滅.[32] In addition to "Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*," two other creative self-refences are included in the poem, "a bearded Buddha" (*chui xu fo* 垂鬚佛) and "a monk with hair" (*you fa seng* 有髮僧). These are all attempts by Huihong to overcome the contradiction between his non-monastic appearance during exile and his continued self-identity as a monk. Huihong's poem reads,

本是甘露滅	I have always been "Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*"
浪名無垢稱	A drifting name, an untainted epithet.
欲知遭鎖禁	Knowing I face the restriction of lock and key,
正坐忽規繩	I sit in meditation and pay no attention to the norms.
海上垂鬚佛	At sea: a bearded Buddha,

[30] Zhou Yukai has shown that this practice was based on the custom of Tang monks who styled themselves after the names of mountains where they dwelled. See Zhou's essay, "Lüetan Tang Song sengren de faming yu biaozi" 略談唐宋僧人的法名與表字 (A Brief Discussion on the Monastic and Style Names of Tang and Song Monks), in Appendix Six of *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 441-445.

[31] Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 168.

[32] J 23: B135.616c14-c16; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 9.617.

軍中有髮僧	Among the troops: a monk with hair.
生涯何所似	What manner of life is this?
崖略類騰騰	The gist of it is something like leisurely and carefree![33]

The phrase "Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*" is from a line in the *Weimojie jing* 維摩詰經 (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra*): "Obtain the sweet-dew *nirvāṇa* and accomplish the path of awakening" 得甘露滅覺道成.[34] *Ganlu*, "sweet dew," is a translation of the Sanskrit *amṛta,* meaning "deathless," while the Chinese word for *nirvāṇa, mie* 滅, means cessation. Thus, the phrase *ganlu mie* attempts to capture the concept of awakening as transcending both birth and death. It must have been an appealing reminder for Huihong, as he faced exile to the treacherous shores of Hainan.

In the poem, Huihong reminds himself that fundamentally, at his core, he has always been the *nirvāṇa* of sweet dew. As a name, it is "drifting" but "untainted." It drifts with him, even to such places as Hainan. His reputation may be tarnished, but this name remains unsoiled.

Calling himself "Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*" may seem presumptuous, but, facing confinement, Huihong is not interested in heeding "norms." He describes himself as "a bearded Buddha" and as "a monk with hair." Although in appearance he doesn't look like a monk—he's been forced let his hair and beard grow—Huihong wants to remind himself (and

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[33] "Yalüe"崖略, translated here as "the gist of it" is a term borrowed from a line from the *Zhuangzi* outer chapter entitled "Zhi bei you" 知北遊: "As for the Dao, it is deep and difficult to express. I will outline for you gist" 夫道窅然難言哉，將為汝言其崖略.

[34] *Foshuo Weimojie jing,* (T 14: 474.519c20). Hereafter, abbreviated "*Weimo jing.*"

the reader) that beneath his hair and whiskers he has the heart of a monk, even a Buddha.[35] Looking at his situation this way, a period of confined exile is transformed into a life leisure and ease.

Besides expressing an undaunted spirit in the face of hardship, a common poetic trope, this poem reflects Huihong's interest in challenging assumed correlations between appearances and deeper reality, between conventional ideas and a Buddhist perspective of non-discrimination. These are themes that are repeatedly expressed in anecdotes and discussions on various topics in *Night Chats*.

2.2.3 Monastic Identity in *Night Chats*

Huihong had to defend some of his sobriquets in addition to dealing with attacks on the legitimacy of his ordination name. Referring to himself as "Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*," in particular, seems to have caused consternation.[36] There is an entry in *Night Chats* in which Huihong provides his rationale for using this name. Rather than simply laying out his reasons, Huihong records an exchange he had with Chen Guan on the topic, demonstrating a combination of reason and wit typical of the anecdotes in *Night Chats*.[37] The full entry reads,

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[35] According to Zhou, Song seng Huihong, pp.168-169, some later writers would refer to Huihong as "A Bearded Buddha" 垂鬚佛.

[36] The title of one of Huihong's poems reads, "I gave myself the name Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*. There were many who asked me about it, so I wrote this poem" ("Yu zihao Ganlu mie, suo zhi wen zhe duo, zuo ci" 余號甘露滅，所至問者甚多，作此); J 23: B135.627b2; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 11.759. In the poem, Huihong writes, "Venerable Yan transforms himself into sweet dew *nirvāṇa*, / there's no harm in wearing a monk's sash with long hair and a beard" 老儼化身甘露滅，不妨鬚髮著伽梨.

[37] Zhou Yukai estimates that the exchange occurred between Huihong and Chen Guan in 1116, several years after Huihong returned from exile. *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 219.

> Chen Liaoweng [Chen Guan] criticized me saying that I shouldn't take the name Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*, that to do so was verging on arrogance.
>
> He said,
>
> "That which obtains sweet-dew *nirvāṇa* and accomplishes enlightenment is the Thus Come One's consciousness. You are an ordinary person, and associate with people like me who are as far away from the Buddha lands as earth is from heaven. How can you appropriate this superior name for yourself?"
>
> I replied,
>
> "By trying to stop me from calling myself 'Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*' it is as if you are saying that honey can't be called sweet or that gold can't be called yellow. The World Honored One used his great Skillful Means to understand all living beings and cause them to understand their root. But his subtle meaning was inexpressible, so he spoke of 'sweet dew *nirvāṇa*.' '*Nirvāṇa*' means quiescent cessation. 'Sweet dew' is the medicine for extending life. It is the embodiment of quiet cessation that is deathless. Everyone possesses it, so why am I alone not allowed to use it? You are currently forced out of work, yet you are still unwilling to call me 'Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*.' If you were to become grand counselor, would you then deign to adorn me with a superior official title?"
>
> Chen Yingzhong [Chen Guan] was taken aback. He tried to think of some kind of retaliation, but nothing came to him, so he just laughed.
>
> 陳了翁罪予不當稱甘露滅，近不遜，曰：「得甘露滅覺道成者，如來識也。子凡夫，與僕輩俯仰，其去佛地如天淵也，奈何冒其美名而有之耶？」予應之曰：「使我不得稱甘露滅者，如言蜜不得稱甜，金不得稱色黃。世尊以大方便曉諸眾生，令知根本，而妙意不可以言盡，故言甘露滅。滅者，寂滅；甘露，不死之藥，如寂滅之體而不死者也。人人具焉，而獨僕不得稱，何也？公今閑放，且不肯以甘露滅名我。脫為宰相，寧能飾予以美官乎？瑩中愕然，思所為折難予，不可得，乃笑而已。[38]

Both Chen Guan and Huihong use textual exegesis to make their respective argument, but Huihong exposes Chen's dualistic thinking and deflects his criticism by teasing him about his current lowly status. Quoting the line from the *Weimo jing*, Chen argues that Huihong doesn't have the right to call himself "Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*" because the phrase represents the

[38] Huihong, "Chen Yingzhong zui Hong bu dang cheng Ganlu mie" 陳瑩中罪洪不當稱甘露滅, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.54-55.

enlightened Buddha's consciousness, and Huihong is just an ordinary person. Chen even uses the verb, "to appropriate" *mao* 冒, when referring to Huihong taking the sobriquet, the same word that was used when Huihong was sentenced for taking the name Huihong in ordination. Could this be an underhand jab at Huihong? In any case, the implication is that Huihong does not have a right to this name.

In response, Huihong points out that sweet dew *nirvāṇa* is an expedient phrase, that it represents something that everyone possesses, and therefore to deny anyone the right to associate themselves with it is simply illogical, like claiming that honey is not sweet, etc. He has exposed Chen's tendency for dualistic thinking, for making the distinction between an ordinary person and a buddha.[39] Huihong could have stopped here, but he can't resist teasing Chen further. At this time Chen had recently been demoted, forced out of work.[40] He had no position at all. For someone without any position, Huihong jokes, aren't you acting rather arrogantly yourself by refusing to call me Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*?

One of the functions of Huihong's sobriquets is to represent himself as a monk despite his appearances or controversial circumstances. In *Night Chats*, he uses anecdote to highlight the arbitrary nature of names and status. Besides the account above, we will find examples of stories about a wide range of monks that challenge narrow views of

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[39] Chen Guan appears in seven entries in *Night Chats*, several of which are autobiographical accounts of exchanges Huihong had with Chen. Their exchanges are often characterized by this type of Chan banter. Chen's tendency to make mundane discriminations that Huihong often takes pride in pointing out to his friend.

[40] To be "forced out of work" *xian fang* 閑放, literally, "to be at leisure"because one has been dismissed from work, is a serious punishment. Chen was associated with the Yuanyou faction that was repeatedly at odds with Cai Jing, resulting in demotion and exile.

monasticism. Eminent monks are shown to have failings, whereas obscure, nameless monks demonstrate uncanny insight. In a more general sense, we see Huihong portraying individuals, both monks and non-monks, whose actions or appearances don't align with assumptions about their social roles. Their merit as individuals is not measured by conventional social values, but by Huihong's aesthetic and Chan outlook.

2.3 Huihong's Political and Legal Ordeals

2.3.1 "Inexplicable Misfortunes"

The complications regarding Huihong's ordination name represent only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Huihong's political ordeals. It may not have been unusual for socially active monks to find themselves implicated when their office-holding friends became embroiled in political scandals, but Huihong himself seems to have been particularly prone to such misadventures. During his lifetime, he was jailed at least four times and exiled to Hainan Island for nearly two years.[41] In each case, Huihong's culpability is dubious. While he seems to have had a special knack for inciting the suspicion of authority figures, he was also living in a particularly volatile political climate. His ordeals didn't begin until after the reformists gained control of the court for good during the reign of the increasingly pro-Daoist Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1100-1126). Reformist leader and grand councilor to Emperor

[41] There is evidence that Huihong was imprisoned twice in Taiyuan prison in 1114, making the total number of incarcerations five, but one of these imprisonments only lasted a few days, and seems to have been a formality only. The situation is discussed in the section on his third incarceration, below, p. 95.

Huizong, Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047-1126), implemented severe policies against the anti-reformist Yuanyou officials, many of whom were Huihong's friends.

Huihong describes his ordeals in detail in the first half of his autobiographical preface, "Silent Sound's Own Preface."[42] This piece was written by Huihong in 1123, upon completion of his commentary on the *Fahua jing*.[43] Besides providing basic biographical information, Huihong includes a chronological narrative of the accusations against him and his political troubles, interspersed with brief descriptions of his movements. Huihong concludes the piece, however, by sharing his perspective on his misfortunes. He labels them as "inexplicable misfortunes" (*qihuo* 奇禍). As will be discussed, his perspective is influenced by his Buddhist outlook.

While there are numerous pre-modern and modern biographies of Huihong, it is surprisingly difficult to find a consensus on what exactly happened to Huihong and why. The political narrative is often obfuscated by other aspects of Huihong's biography. Below is a concise narrative of the circumstances of Huihong's incarcerations and exile, followed by a discussion of the factors that brought about such extreme misfortune.

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[42] "Jiyin zixu," *Shimen wenzi chan, j.* 24, (J 23: B135.696a25-b28; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1437-39). Unless otherwise noted, all quotations within this section ("Huihong's Political and Legal Troubles") from Huihong's "Own Preface," translated in full in Appendix C.

[43] *Fahua jing* is short for *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經; *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūt*ra; the "Lotus Sutra" in English. Huihong's commentary was combined with Zhang Shangying's in *Fahua jing helun* 法華經合論 (Combined commentary on the *Lotus Sutra*).

2.3.2 Incarcerations and Exile

After ordination, Huihong lived for nearly two decades without any incident with regard to his status or court politics. During this time, he became an established monk and literary figure. Soon after being ordained, he convinced his teacher, Zhenjing Kewen, of his high level of Chan insight by responding to a challenging *gong'an* with a *songgu* verse (Lauding Old Cases 頌古).[44] In 1099, he left Kewen's monastery, allegedly for "not following the rules" 違禪規.[45] But Huihong continued to build his reputation. He served as abbot of Beichan 北禪 Monastery in Linchuan 臨川 for two years, and eventually he was invited to become abbot of Qingliang Temple 清涼院 in Jinling (Jiangning 江寧府).[46] It is at

[44] Chan *gong'an* ("public cases") are encounter dialogues between a master and a disciple that have subsequently been commented on by later masters. "Lauding Old Cases" (*songgu)* are verses composed in response to the *gong'an*. They are the poetic counterpart to the prose form of evaluation of a gong'an known as "Raising Old Cases" (*niangu* 拈古); See Natasha Heller, *Illusory Abiding*, pp. 257-258. (I have borrowed Heller's translations for *niangu* and *songgu*). For gong'an, see Morten Shlütter, "Koan," in Buswell, *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, pp. 526-529.

Both Zhengshou and Huihong record the circumstances around Huihong's verse; (Z 79:1559.333a16-a18; Z 87: 1624.267a16-a22). Huihong's version includes the original verse that he eventually matches and records that the discussion took place between himself and a guest (*ke* 客), not Kewen. Zhengshou's version has the exchange occurring between Huihong and Kewen and provides details that indicate Huihong's mounting reputation at the time. The original verse was by Tang monk Lingyun Zhiqin 靈雲志勤 and the record includes the reactions by his teacher, Weishan 溈山, and another Tang monk, Xuansha 玄沙. In response, Huihong comes up with his own verse, a match of Lingyun's verse. Based on Zhengshou's account, Kewen at first feared that Huihong's extensive learning would be an obstacle to his awakening. But after Huihong came up with his verse and demonstrated that his learning and his understanding were both excellent, Kewen's concerns were put to rest.

[45] While most biographers avoid the reasons Huihong left, Xiaoying states that he was expelled for violating Chan rules" 因違禪規，遭刪去; *Luohu yelu, j.* 1 (Z 83: 1577.383b9).

[46] J 23: B135.696b3-4; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1437.

this point that he was faced with the first of a series of political troubles that would continue for the next ten years.

1109 C.E.: First Incarceration[47]

Huihong's first incarceration centered on his appropriated name. But he was also implicated in the political crimes of others, a circumstance that would occur several times in later years. Huihong describes the situation that led to his first incarceration as follows:[48]

> After I arrived [at Qingliang Temple], crazy monks falsely accused me of forging my ordination certificate and for being involved with the likes of the "crazy monk" Fahe and his slander scandal. I was put in the prison for the imperially accused for one year and sentenced for appropriating the name Huihong. 入寺為狂僧誣以為偽度牒，且旁連前狂僧法和等議訕事，入制獄一年，坐冒惠洪名.

Huihong is accused of two crimes, forging his ordination certificate and being mixed up in a scandal involving a monk called Fahe 法和 (dates unknown). Huihong clearly considers himself to be innocent of both crimes. His accusers are described as "crazy monks"(*kuangseng* 狂僧), undermining their accusations. Earlier in the text he had fully admitted to having "appropriated" (*mao* 冒) his ordination name, but here he records that he was accused of forging (*wei* 偽) his certificate. We know that he had indeed borrowed his ordination name, but, regardless, he obviously considered his ordination certificate to be

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[47] Scholars disagree regarding the year of Huihong's first incarceration, some dating it to 1105 and others to 1109. Zhou Yukai (*Song seng Huihong*, p. 145), Chen Zili (*Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p.40), and Huang Qifang ("Shi Huihong wukao," p. 201) all give a 1109 date for Huihong's arrival at Qingliang Temple and his subsequent incarceration. Considering the documentation Zhou gives for Huihong's movements during 1105, it does not seem likely he could have been put in jail at this time. Huihong does not specify a date in "Silent Sound's Own Preface," but only states that it was a "long while"(*jiu zhi* 久之) after quitting his abbacy at Beichan Monastery, which can be dated to approximately 1105; J 23: B135.696b3.

[48] J 23: B135.696b3; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1437-38.

authentic. After all, his status as a monk had not been questioned since leaving home nineteen years before.

Fahe had been the previous abbot of Qingliang Temple. The "crazy monk" designation may have been used during his involvement in the scandal. Zhou Yukai has suggested that the scandal in question may have been related to the proscription of Su Shi's works and the denunciation of the Yuanyou party. There are records of Su Shi visiting Qingliang temple and sending poems to Master Fahe starting in 1094, so Fahe was likely implicated in the court scandal that followed.[49] There is no record that Huihong had ever met Fahe, but perhaps Huihong being Fahe's successor was enough of a link to suggest that he would have been sympathetic to Fahe's position.

In Zuxiu's wording of the episode, he follows Huihong closely, but adds a few telling details, emphasizing Huihong's innocence.

> Before a month had passed [as abbot of Qingliang], he was falsely accused by crazy monks for having an ordination certificate with an appropriated name. He was also implicated in a scandal. He was thrown into the prison for the imperially accused, and after a long period of deliberation, he was finally accused with the crime of appropriating his name. 未閱月為狂僧。誣以度牒冒名。旁連訕謗事。入制獄。鍛鍊久之。坐冒名。[50]

According Zuxiu, once Huihong was in prison, much time was spent deliberating (*duanlian* 鍛鍊) about his charges, but in the end, Huihong was sentenced with the crime of "appropriating a name."

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[49] Zhou Yukai makes this suggestion in his annotation of Huhong's poem "Jinling churu zhiyuan"金陵初入制院 in *Shimen wenzi chan xiaozhu* 石門文字禪校注, forthcoming.

[50] Z 79:1561.562c7-9.

Huihong's arrival as the new abbot of Qingliang seems to have instigated his problems. The impression given, especially by Zuxiu, is that monks at Qingliang had something against Huihong so they went looking for accusations serious enough to get him out of the way. Perhaps they resented Huihong taking over as abbot. They discovered he had appropriated his name on his ordination certificate, and they used this information to accuse him of not being a legitimate monk. But even if Huihong's name appropriation was considered a crime, it would not have been sufficient to land him in the "prison for the imperially accused" (*zhiyu* 制獄) for a year. This was not a light punishment. This prison was dedicated specifically for criminals accused by imperial order for political crimes.[51] It appears that the combination of the dubious origin of Huihong's ordination name and his association with a monk allegedly involved in a serious scandal were enough to cause him to be found guilty of major wrongdoing and sent to prison.

Huihong spent nearly a year in jail, from the fall of 1109 until the fifth month of 1110. He was then released thanks to a universal pardon decreed by Emperor Huizong.[52] During his time in jail, Huihong was often ill, but he produced many writings and received occasional letters and visits from friends.[53] Although he was eventually released, his problematic ordination certificate had been confiscated, meaning he could no longer use the

[51] Zhou Yukai, in discussion with author, March 2015, Sichuan University.

[52] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 150.

[53] For a description of Huihong's term in jail, including the works he completed, see Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 145-150 and Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, pp. 40-42. One of the poems Huihong wrote upon first being thrown into jail is discussed below.

name Huihong or legally live as a monk.[54] With no name, no protection, and no rights that went along with monastic status, what was he to do? Huihong continues:

> I donned the clothing of a *Ru* scholar and entered the capital. Grand Councilor Zhang Shangying submitted a special memorial and I was able to be re-ordained.[55] Military Commissioner Guo Tianxin submitted a memorial requesting an [imperial bestowed] master's name. 著縫掖入京師，大丞相張商英特奏，再得度；節使郭天信奏師名.

Huihong disguised himself in the clothing of a Confucian official and went to find his friend Zhang Shangying, who by that time had begun his short stint as grand councilor, a position left open when Cai Jing was dismissed.[56] Zhang helped Huihong get re-ordained with a new monastic name.[57] As discussed above, this new name was most likely Dehong. Huihong recovered his monastic status. Additionally, another high ranking official, Guo Tianxin 郭天信, requested an imperially bestowed title.[58] However, at this point Huihong avoided any

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[54] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, 150. According to the *Songshi*, on the fifth month of 1110, (while Huihong was in prison,) Huizong ordered that monk certificates be revoked for three years. (See "Huizong benji er" 徽宗本紀二 of the *Songshi* 宋史.) Therefore when Huihong was released, he would neither have had an ordination certificate 度牒 nor any monastic identification papers 僧牒.

[55] The term translated as "clothing of a Ru scholar" is *fengye* 縫掖 which literally means a single layered garment with wide sleeves, the clothing worn by Confucian intellectuals and students.

[56] According to Ari Levine, "The Reigns of Hui-Tsung (1100-1126) and Ch'in-Tsung (1126-1127)," p. 582, Zhang Shangying filled the position of grand counselor left open after Cai Jing was dismissed (for a third time) in the sixth month of 1110. It was during this time that he helped Huihong get re-ordained.

[57] Zhang's request was considered a "special memorial" (*tezou* 特奏) because there had been a recent edict to stop the bestowal of ordination certificates for three years, according to Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 42, and Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 151.

[58] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 4-5; p. 155. Citing several Song biographies of Huihong, including Zuxiu's, Zhou records that the title bestowed at this point was "Baojue Yuanming." Other scholars believe that the Baojue name was bestowed posthumously, but according to Zhou, this is based on a misunderstanding.

name associated with his recent ordeal, instead choosing to adopt the sobriquet, Master Jiyin 寂音尊者, "Tranquil Sound" or "Silent Sound."[59] But Huihong's entanglements with politics and the law had only just begun.

1111: Second Incarceration

Less than a year after being released, in the fall of 1111, Huihong's ties with Zhang Shangying and Guo Tianxin, previously so useful to him, began to cause problems. Both men were demoted as a result of rising opposition to their moderate approach to the New Policies. Cai Jing replaced Zhang as grand counselor, and Zhang was thrown into the Kaifeng Jurisdiction Prison.[60] Huihong writes that he was "sentenced with having close ties with Zhang and Guo, and in the tenth month of 1111, banished over the sea [to Hainan]" 坐交張、郭厚善，以政和元年十月二十六日配海外.[61] Other sources indicate that before he was sent south, he was first "thrown into the Kaifeng jail, stripped of his monastic documents, and given corporeal punishment."[62]

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[59] According to Zuxiu, Huihong began calling himself "Jiyin" after he was given the honorific Baojue Yuanming, once he'd been re-ordained under the name Dehong; Z 79:1561.562c10. Knowing Huihong's appreciation for contradiction and irony, "Silent Sound" is probably the most accurate translation of Jiyin. This ironic name choice may reflect the beginnings of an attempt on Huihong's part to be more careful in what he said, for fear it could cause further problems. It wouldn't be the first time that Huihong reflected on the connection between his propensity for talking and his political troubles, as discussed in Part 3.c below.

[60] Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 43.

[61] J 23: B135.696a25-b28; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1438. Huihong records that his banishment occurred on the 26th day of the tenth month of 1111. Nianchang states in *Fozu lidai tongzai* that Huihong was about to take up an abbacy at Huanglong Shan 黃龍山 when he was brought into custody for his close ties to Zhang, who had just been demoted; T 49: 2036.683a28.

[62] Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 43. Zhou Yukai provides a similar account, giving the date of the jail sentence as the seventh month of 1111, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 164-165. Like Chen, Zhou concludes from several sources that Huihong received physical punishment and was branded as a

According to an appeal Huihong wrote many years later paraphrased by Xiaoying, the accusations against him during this time were compounded by his association with Chen Guan, a Yuanyou sympathizer and political opponent of Cai Jing.[63] Huihong describes how Chen had composed a document entitled "Record in Praise of Yao"(尊堯錄), and when Zhang Shangying was still grand counselor, Zhang mentioned it in a memorial to the throne. But this did not go over well with Cai Jing's supporters. When Zhang was demoted from his position as grand counselor, Huihong was accused of helping Chen write the document.[64]

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criminal before being sent to the garrison in Zhuya in Hainan Island. Huihong doesn't mention this short stint in jail in "Silent Sound's Own Preface."

[63] Huihong's appeal letter is paraphrased in Xiaoying's *Yunwo jitan, j.* 1; Z 86: 1610.671b1-5. The pertinent passage reads,

> In 1126, [Huihong] submitted a statement to the Ministry of Justice which read…In the first year of Zhenghe [1111], Zhang Shangying submitted a memorial to obtain Chen Guan's 'Record in Praise of Yao.' At the time, eunuch Liang Shichen 梁師成 (d. 1126) was allied with Cai Jiao 蔡交. When he saw that the grand counselor [Zhang] was promoting Cai Jing's enemy, Chen Guan, he plotted all kinds of false charges against him. Within the month, Zhang was facing dismissal. Suspecting that Huihong had provided Chen Guan with assistance, [Liang became outraged and inveigled the Kaifeng Governor (尹) Li Xiaoshou 李孝壽 to take Huihong into custody and put him into prison. There, Huihong underwent unfair interrogation [until he confessed to helping Chen]. He was banished to Jiyang Military Prefecture [a.k.a Yazhou, in Hainan Island.]
>
> 靖康元年。 嘗詣刑部陳詞曰…政和元年，商英奏取陳瓘所撰尊堯錄。是時內官梁師成與蔡交結，見宰相薦引蔡京仇人陳瓘，百計擠陷。旬月之間，果遭斥逐。猜疑是慧洪與陳瓘為地，發怒，諷諭開封尹李孝壽勾慧洪下獄，非理考鞫。特配吉陽軍。 [Text retrieved from CBETA, punctuation revised.]

[64] Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 161, speculates that Huihong's involvement with the "Record in Praise of Yao" may have only been to bring the work to the attention of Zhang in the first place, given that Huihong had visited Chen in Lianzhou at this time. Zhou clarifies that the extreme interrogation in Kaifeng prison caused Huihong to eventually confess to helping Chen. The account is also discussed in Chen, *Shi Huihong Yanjiu*, p. 43 and in Lin Boqian's article, "Huihong fei 'langzi heshang' pp. 41-42. Lin, notes that the "Record in Praise of Yao" was directed at Cai Bian's "True

There is no textual evidence that Huihong had a hand in writing the "Record in Praise of Yao" or was party to the politics behind it. But he was very close to the officials who were involved, officials who were enemies of Cai Jing. These associations, along with the bad impression carried over from previous convictions, must have brought on his exile.

1111-1114: Hainan Exile[65]

In "Silent Sound's Own Preface," Huihong provides specific dates for the stages of his exile. He was sentenced on the 26th day of the tenth month of 1111, and he received a pardon on the 25th of the fifth month of 1113. He arrived first in Qiongzhou 瓊州 on Hainan Island the 25th day of the second month of 1112. Due to the assistance of the prefect of Qiongzhou, Zhang Zixiu 張子修, he managed to delay going to his exile destination of Yazhou 崖州, also referred to as the Zhuya military prefecture, for several months. At this time, Huihong wrote to his dharma brother Xizu 希祖 about Zhang's kindness and his newfound interest in studying the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*.[66] Huihong arrived in Zhuya in the fifth month of 1112, and he was pardoned nearly a year later. During his travels to and from

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Record of Shenzong" 神宗實錄, and emphasized the contributions of Wang Anshi while minimizing those of Shenzong (p. 42).

[65] For a detailed account of Huihong's movements and writings during exile, see Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 165-174. Compare with Chen Zili's description in *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, pp. 43-47. My narrative of the key events below is based on Huihong's "Silent Sound's Own Preface," which provides specific dates, and supplemented with Zhou Yukai's research.

[66] Huihong, "Song Li Zhongyuan ji Chaoran xu,"送李仲元寄超然序 (J 23: B135.691a26; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 23.1399). Xizu, dates unknown, style name Chaoran 超然, does not appear to have a biography in the lamp histories, but he is mentioned frequently in Huihong's works. Like Huihong, he was a disciple of Kewen, the same generation as Huihong, so Huihong calls him his "brother."

Zhuya, Huihong visited places where Su Shi had spent time in his exile nearly two decades before.[67] Huihong picked up little known accounts of Su Shi during these travels and later recorded a few of them in *Night Chats*.[68] He also wrote several poems at this time in the guise of Su Shi, or as Huihong called them, poems to "supplement the omissions of Dongpo" 補東坡遺.[69]

After his pardon in 1113, Huihong made a leisurely return to the mainland. On his way, he stopped again at Qiongzhou to visit Zhang. After a long journey involving several delays, traveling from Qiongzhou across the ocean to Quanzhou (current day Fujian), on to Leizhou 雷州 and to several other destinations, in the fourth month of 1114, Huihong eventually arrived in Yunzhou where he stayed at Hetang Temple 荷塘寺.[70] It was nearly

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[67] On his way to the military prefecture of Zhuya, he passed through the Wan'an military prefecture 萬安軍, where, according to *Night Chats*, he met a shipwrecked Daoist who showed him three strange pets and asked Huihong to write a poem about them; "Daoshi xu san wu" 道士畜三物, *Lengzhai yehua* 8.74. Wan'an Military Prefecture is on the way from Qiongzhou to the Zhuya Military Prefecture.

[68] See "Dongpo shudui" 東坡屬對, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.51 and "Dongpo liu ti Jiang Tangzuo shan, Yang Daoshi xi xuan, Jiang Xiulang ji jian" 東坡留題姜唐佐扇楊道士息軒姜秀郎几間, *Lengzhai yehua* 1.17.

[69] This project is discussed in part four of this chapter. "Dongpo" 東坡, meaning "East Slope," is Su Shi's self-styled sobriquet. See Ronald Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*, pp. 210-211, for a discussion of the circumstances that led him to create this name. It was common for Su's contemporaries and later writers to refer to Su by this nickname or "Su Dongpo."

[70] For Huihong's movements after exile until his next incarceration, see Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 172-192. Although his association with Chen Guan had been a factor in his sentence to exile, this did not stop Huihong from continuing an active friendship with him, at least through literary means. At the Tianning Temple in Leizhou, Huihong got to see Chen Guan's calligraphy, for which he wrote a colophon. A few months later, in the spring of 1114, he went to Hengyang 衡陽, where Dhyana Master Daoquan 道權 showed him Chen Guan's poems, and he wrote an inscription at the end (See Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 177.)

two years from the time Huihong was first sentenced to exile (tenth month of 1111) until he returned from Hainan (eleventh month of 1113).[71]

1114 C.E. Third Incarceration

After his return to the mainland, before half a year had gone by, Huihong found himself in difficulties for a third time. He writes that on the tenth month (of 1114), he was once again sentenced to prison, this time in Bingmen 并門.[72] Bingmen, a rare designation for Bingzhou 并州, also refers to Taiyuanfu 太原府, the location of the Taiyuan prison. The reasons for this incarceration are not well documented. According to Zhou Yukai, Huihong's sentence had to do with being implicated in the crimes of a certain Liu Qingyu.[73] Poems written at the time indicate that Huihong was concerned he wouldn't get enough to eat and while he was inside, he suffered from extreme cold.[74]

When several other pieces by Huihong referring to this imprisonment are consulted, his run-ins with the law during this time appear more complicated. Although the specifics of their conclusions differ, both Chen Zili and Zhou Yukai demonstrate that Huihong was actually held in prison twice around this time. In brief, Zhou argues that in the eight month of 1114, Huihong was first recalled to the Taiyuan prison, but he didn't actually arrive until the beginning of the tenth month.The cause of this imprisonment is not specified; Huihong only

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[71] J 23: B135.696b7-b10; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1438.

[72] J 23: B135.696b11; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1438. Note, *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* edition has *bingmen* 併門 while the *Jiaxing dazangjing* edition uses the character *bing* 并.

[73] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, 197-198.

[74] The poem written in prison upon experiencing extreme cold weather is entitled "Yu zhong baohan dongsun shenyin" 獄中暴寒凍損呻吟, (J 23: B135.593a8; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 4.257).

says that he was pursued to make a verification (*lai zhui dui yan*來追對驗), suggesting that he was required to present himself to give an account of his actions or to testify.[75] This minor incident is rarely counted as one of his incarcerations. Huihong was released a few days later, but before two months had passed, he was retained while staying at a "isolated hostel"孤館, and on the 23rd of eleventh month, he was locked up in the Taiyuan prison. He was released soon after.[76]

1118: Final Incarceration

After his release at the end of 1114, Huihong passed approximately three and a half years in relative peace. During this time, he traveled around a great deal, returned to his native prefecture Yunzhou, continued to write poetry, and completed several Buddhist works, including his explanation of the *Lengyan jing* (*Śūraṅgama Sūtra),* a treatise on the *Huayan shiming lun* 華嚴十明論, and the initial draft of his *Chanlin sengbao zhuan*.[77]

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[75] See Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 192, for the initial sentence and p. 197 for his actual entry into the Taiyuan jail. For the former, Zhou cites Huihong's record "Ji Fuyan Yan Chanshi yu" 記福嚴言禪師語, J (23: B135.697c12; *Zhu shimen wenzi chan* 24.1448), in which Huihong says, "On the 28th of the fifth month, a large prison was built at Taiyuan, and they sought me out to make a verification" 五月二十八日，太原造大獄，來追對驗. It is not clear what this verification consisted of. Zhou argues that the "fifth month" here is a mistake for the "eighth month," based on his consideration of other dated sources. The incarceration in the tenth month, mentioned in Huihong's "Silent Sound's Own Preface" must refer to his actual arrival at Taiyuan jail.

[76] "Yushou Wei Lianfang shou…" 御手委廉訪守… J 23: B135.593a14; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 4.259. Zhou discusses the situation in *Song seng Huihong*, p. 197-198. C.f. Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 50. Chen indicates that Huihong must have been released by the first month of 1115, based on a preface in which Huihong records that he left Taiyuan to return to Nanzhou in 1115 and on a passage in *Night Chats* in which he relates that he passed through the capital during the Lantern Festival (in the first month of the lunar new year).

[77] See Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 209, 221, and 238. The *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* may have originally been called *Bai chanshi zhuan* 百禪師傳. Zhou, p. 238, records a story about Dahui

In 1118, Huihong was forty-eight years of age. In the fall, he was about leave Xi'an and go back to Xiangshan 湘上 to live out his old age at Yunyan 雲嚴 Temple, when he once again found himself facing imprisonment.[78] He describes the situation:

> …I was falsely accused once again, [this time] by crazy Taoists who claimed I was in cahoots with Zhang Huaisu's camp. Even though the officials all knew that [my accusers] had mistaken Zhang Shangying for Huaisu, the case had to be carried out to completion, so I was sentenced to Nanchang prison for over one hundred days. Fortunately, I met with two imperial pardons, and upon release I accordingly returned to Nantai in Xiangshang. 又為狂道士誣以為張懷素黨人。官吏皆知其誤認張丞相為懷素，然事須根治。坐南昌獄百餘日，會兩赦得釋遂歸湘上南臺.

Zhang Huaisu had been executed for treason over ten years before the accusations against Huihong occurred.[79] As described above, Huihong's close relationship with Zhang

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Zonggao's reaction to this work; Dahui is said to have ripped out nineteen biographies and burned them. Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 132, argues against the veracity of this account.

Based on a poem that Li Peng 李彭 wrote to Huihong in 1115 or 1116, Chen Zili, pp. 52-53 and Zhou Yukai, p. 224, conjecture that Huihong may have had a woman living with him temporarily. Besides this poem, however, no other sources exist to corroborate this suggestion. Chen, p. 53, points out that Huihong at this time did not officially have monk status, his monastic credential not having been restored to him after exile. Nevertheless, since the only evidence for such behavior is a few vague and indirect references in a single poem (and Huihong was known for writing poems that were not literal representations of his life), it seems unlikely. Throughout this period Huihong continued to be addressed using his monastic name by his friends and his own devotion to Buddhist pursuits did not lapse, if his other writings are any indication. Zuxiu, who does not refrain from critiquing Huihong's behavior in many respects, gives no hint of any misconduct in this area, and he comments that Huihong prided himself on his strict adherence to the precepts (峻戒節以自高), which would have included one against sexual conduct. Z 79:1561.563b10.

[78] Both Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 241, and Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 77, n.1, date this imprisonment to the 16th day of the eighth month of 1118, based on the title of Huihong's verse, "Bayue shiliu, ru Nanchang Youyu, zuo duizhi ji" 八月十六入南昌右獄作對治偈 (On the 16th day of the eighth month, I entered the Nanchang Right Prison, and wrote this verse of counteraction [for coping with affliction]); J 23: B135.655c1; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 17.1083.

[79] Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 57. Zhang Huaisu 張懷素 (d.1107?) was a rebel from Shuzhou 舒州 who had managed to gain official following through his practice of sorcery. See Xiaoying, *Yunwo jitan, j.* 1 (Z 86: 1610.665b21-24).

Shangying was one of the factors that had brought about his exile. Huihong believed that although the officials knew the accusation was groundless—because the Daoists had conflated the two Zhangs—the trial still had to be carried out according to procedure, and in the end, he was convicted. Zhou Yukai and Chen Zili have suggested that the result of trial was in part due to the authority that Taoist priests possessed under the new policies of Huizong, who promoted Daoism while suppressing Buddhism.[80] Xiaoying, however, explains that an association between Huihong and the rebel Zhang was made because after the latter's failed rebellion and exile, a document was found in his bag written in "secret" cursive script calligraphy 密草書 with a colophon by Huihong written at the back.[81] This incarceration was Huihong's last. It wasn't until many years later, around 1127, that Huihong's monastic name and status was returned to him.[82]

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[80] See Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 240 and Chen, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 57. Chen speculates that the officials in charge of the case did not dare offend the Taoist accusers because they wanted to avoid a conflict with the court. It was soon after that Emperor Huizong was persuaded by the Taoist Priest Lin Lingsu to crack down on the Buddhist institution, which he does by replacing the terminology for Buddhist temples, cloisters, monks, and nuns with Taoist terms. See Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 243.

[81] *Yunwo jitan, j.* 1 (Z 86: 1610.665b23).

[82] This event is recorded in Zuxiu's biography of Huihong in *Sengbao zheng xu zhuan, j.* 2 (Z 79: 1561.563a12) and in *Fozu lidai tongzai, j.* 19 (T 49: 2036.683b11). Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p.70-71 and Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 325 discuss the circumstances. According to Xiaoying, Huihong submitted a request to have his monastic name and status reinstated to the Ministry of Justice a year before, in 1126. In Xiaoying's paraphrase of Huihong's request, (the only extant record of this letter), Huihong summarizes the crimes he was accused of and argues that he should be granted rehabilitation. His reasoning is that Zhang Shangying and Chen Guan had both been acquitted and it was due to his ties with them that had initially brought on the confiscation of his monastic credentials in 1111. However, Xiaoying notes that due to the chaos at the court of the time, Huihong's request "was not implemented" 未果舉行; (Z 86: 1610.671a-b17). It seems to have taken about a year for Huihong to get his monastic status official back.

2.3.3 Exploring Huihong's Culpability

In "Silent Sound's Own Preface," Huihong implies that the accusations against him and the political misfortunes he experienced were largely unwarranted. When laying out the accusations, he invariably undermines his accusers by describing them as "crazy"(狂) or adds words like "false" (*wu* 誣) or "mistaken" (*wu* 誤) to their accusations. In addition to Huihong himself, some of Huihong's biographers imply that he was innocent of his crimes. Zuxiu, writing just one generation after Huihong and not adverse to making critical comments about him, admits that "several times he was accused of crimes for which he was not guilty" 數陷無辜之罪.[83] With regard to the issue of appropriating a name, Huihong openly admits to doing this when he took the canon exams in the first place, and he does not explain or justify his action, suggesting that he did not see it as intrinsically problematic. Even if the practice was not officially sanctioned, borrowing an unused name could have been common practice for those monastic candidates who lacked the means or sponsorship to take the exams in the conventional manner. It is noteworthy that no one, inside or outside the monastery, took issue with Huihong's ordination name until twenty years after the fact when he was about to take a top abbacy position.

But if Huihong was innocent of wrongdoing, how do we account for his perpetual legal embroilments? It was not unprecedented for monks to get into trouble with the law, but

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It may have taken a while for Huihong to get his status back. Both Zuxiu's biography of Huihong (Z 79:1561.563a12) and the biography of Huihong in *Fozu lidai tongzai, j.* 19 (T 49: 2036.683b11), state that his monastic credentials were returned to him around this time.

[83] Z 79: 1561.563b10.

the frequency of accusations against Huihong that were brought to trial without apparent concrete evidence of guilt is surprising. Was Huihong simply unlucky, repeatedly in the wrong place at the wrong time? Were his troubles the result of factional politics of the day and his ill-chosen association with officials who were themselves persecuted unfairly? Or was there something else about Huihong that made him prone to making enemies in powerful positions?

Huihong's plight did not come about from a single factor. His close association with Yuanyou anti-reform officials was likely a major reason why he ended up in prison and exile. During the years of Huihong's periodic "misfortunes," roughly 1109-1118, fluctuating factional politics caused officials to be demoted and reinstated, sent into exile and recalled, depending on whether they were enemies or allies of those in power. Such precariousness was simply part of the hazards of serving at court during the reigns of Huizong and his precursors. Huihong was not the first nor the last monk to be imprisoned or sent into exile as a result of befriending officials who became the enemies of those in power. The monk Daoqian 道潛 (b. 1043; style name Canliao 參寥) got into trouble for his association with Su Shi after the latter was embroiled in the Raven Terrace Poetry Trial (1079-1080). Daoqian was defrocked and eventually sent south, only to be pardoned once Su was allowed to return to the mainland in 1101.[84] Later, Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1086-1163) was defrocked and exiled for fourteen years when his associates Zhang Jun 張浚 (1097-1164) and Zhang

[84] See the article about Daoqian by Kong Fanli entitled, "Song shiseng Daoqian shengping kaolüe."

Jiucheng 張九成 (1092-1159) went out of favor at court.[85] For Huihong, his fate was tied up with officials who were enemies of grand counselor and pro-reform Cai Jing, who himself did not maintain consistent power over this period.[86]

Throughout his life, Huihong does not seem to have considered the potential for political repercussion when choosing or maintaining relationships. He befriended officials when they were in disgrace (i.e. when their enemies were in power) more often than when they were at the height of their careers. He met with Huang Tingjian in 1104, when Huang's writings had been proscribed and he was making his way to exile in Yizhou.[87] Similarly, the earliest exchanges between Huihong and Chen Guan began in 1102, when Chen was already demoted, but Huihong continued to meet and correspond with Chen throughout the official's volatile career.[88] Huihong didn't meet Zhang Shangying until 1104, when Zhang had been

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[85] Youru Wang, *Historical Dictionary of Chan Buddhism*, p. 75.

[86] See Levine, "Che-Tsung's Reign (1085-1100) and the Age of Faction" and "The Reigns of Hui-Tsung (1100-1126) and Ch'in Tsung (1126-1127) and the Fall of the Northern Sung," in *The Cambridge History of China*, pp. 484-643. Simply stated, the shifts in power during this period began in the mid Yuanyou reign (1086-1094) in which the reformists were ousted, and the anti-reformists came to power under acting regent Dowager Empress Xuanren. Under Emperor Zhezong's personal reign (1094-1100), the anti-reformists ("Yuanyou" officials) were pushed out of power and banished. There was a short period of attempted reconciliation during the regency of Dowager Empress Qinsheng, but once Huizong took full power (by 1101), the reformists maintained power for the duration of the Northern Song, under the leadership of Cai Jing.

[87] Zhou Yukai describes Huihong's meetings with Huang Tingjian in Changsha in *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 88-89. See Levine, "The Reigns of Hui-Tsung and Ch'in Tsung," in Cambridge History of China, pp. 572-578, for a discussion of the Yuanyou blacklist stele and proscription of the writings of Yuanyou officials like Huang and Su Shi.

[88] Chen was put on the Yuanyou blacklist and exiled to Lianzhou in 1103. He wrote the memorial "Record In Praise of Yao" that same year, but Huihong continued to associate with Chen even after he was exiled as a result, (allegedly) of being involved in writing the document in 1111. See the frequent mentions of Huihong's interactions with Chen in Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong.* Compare with Chen Zili's account in Shi Huihong yanji, pp. 84-88.

added to the Yuanyou blacklist and was living in exile in Jingnan.[89] Although it was Zhang who helped Huihong get re-ordained in 1110, it was also Huihong's relationship with Zhang that, a few months later, caused Huihong to be exiled to Hainan Island, once Zhang was ousted as grand counselor by Cai Jing.[90] It is clear from these examples that Huihong did not choose his friends based on their political standing or concern himself with the dangers of associating with blacklisted officials.

Huihong's associates were only named as a factor in the accusations against him in one instance—his second incarceration—but they help to explain why he ended up found guilty in later trials. It is possible that once Huihong was on the radar of the authorities as someone intimate with officials in the anti-reformist camp, he became an easy target in later scandals. Once he was found guilty of one crime, he was viewed with suspicion generally, and his problematic friendships only made him appear more likely of wrongdoing.

While Huihong's associates made him an easy target, these relationships still can't fully explain his excessive legal embroilments. More than once, his accusers were not officials or people directly connected to the court. In the first trial, the one that started it all, "crazy monks" accused Huihong of forging his ordination certificate and for associating with the abbot allegedly involved in the Su Shi scandal. Eight years later, it was "crazy Taoists" who tied Huihong's name to the rebel Zhang Huaisu. These accusations involved court

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[89] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 87.

[90] For a detailed discussion of Huihong's interactions with officials including Chen Guan and Zhang Shangying, see Chen Zili, Shi Huihong yanjiu, pp. 80-91. For his meetings with Huang Tingjian, see Chen Zili, pp. 99-102. Compare with Zhou Yukai's documentation of Huihong's interactions in *Song seng Huihong*.

politics—that was why they resulted in such heavy sentences—but the accusers were part of Huihong's religious community, monks and Taoists. That Huihong was not always on good terms with his fellow monks has been suggested by his premature departure from Kewen's monastery, mentioned above.

What was it about Huihong that caused such vehement opposition against him from certain fellow religious practitioners? Huihong's outspoken personality and his unabashed display of literary talent colored Huihong's monastic reputation and may have made Huihong rather unpopular with certain people, including some in the religious community.

With regard to his personality, to put it bluntly, Huihong often comes across as an irreverent smart aleck. As we saw with his response to Chen Guan's objection to the Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa* sobriquet, Huihong enjoyed exposing peoples' narrow-minded thinking, oversight, and prejudice. He often did so by using clever literary allusions, jokes, or Buddhist principles, and while this endeared him to some, others could have taken offense. We see many examples of Huihong's sharp wit in *Night Chats*.

Commenting on Huihong's gregariousness, Zuxiu wrote,

> In company with elite gentlemen, his discussions would go on and on. Even in large crowds, he was sure to be the life of the party. 與士大夫游。議論袞袞。雖稠人廣座。至必奮席.[91]

Even Dahui noted Huihong's loquaciousness. The first two lines of his poem about Huihong read,

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[91] Z 79: 1561.563a18.

頭如杓面如楪　　With a noggin like a ladle, and a face like a platter,
口無舌說無竭　　His mouth without a tongue, yet his talking never stops.[92]

Huihong himself linked his misfortunes to his injudicious speech. In 1120, a few years after his final incarceration, he wrote "Inscription and Preface for the Hut of Understanding" 明白庵銘並序, an essay on an inscription he had composed for his temple dwelling at the time. He begins by admitting, "My worldly bonds are heavy, and my accumulated habits bind me up. I'm fond of discussing the past and the present, order and chaos, rights and wrongs, and successes and failures" 予世緣深重夙習羈縻，好論古今治亂是非成敗.[93] He goes on to describe how he first built a hut in 1107 in Linchuan called "Hut of Understanding" 明白庵 with the intent to use bitter conditions to cure himself of this bad habit (literally, "seek a cure for myself by means of suffering" 欲痛自治). But a provocative poem sent by Chen Guan stirred him into breaking his silence again, with disastrous consequences.

> [Chen's poem] caused the dam to break again and my words to gush out in torrents. But it was just because of this that I was accused of wrongdoings and narrowly escaped nine deaths. I [now] regret that I didn't recognize subtle signs or use the Dao to overcome my habits, so I collect myself, prepare a 'beginner's mind,' and write this inscription… 於是隄岸輒決。又復衮衮多言。然竟坐此得罪。出九死而僅生。恨識不知微。道不勝習。乃收招魂魄料理初心。為之銘曰…[94]

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[92] "Venerable Silent Sound," 寂音尊者 in *Dahui Pujue Chanshi yulu* 大慧普覺禪師語錄*j.* 12 (T 47: 1998A.859c18).

[93] *Linjianlu houji* (Z 87: 1625.279c15).

[94] Z 87: 1625.279c16.

Huihong views his inability to keep his mouth shut as the major reason people made so many accusations against him. The "nine deaths" is a hyperbolic expression, but in fact, death was not out of the realm of possibility for convicts who ended up in prison or exile for long periods of time, like Huihong experienced.

Huihong's literary talent went hand-in-hand with his gregarious and loquacious personality. As much as he was praised by others for his literary abilities, having too much fame in this area or showing off could be problematic for a monk, especially a monk like Huihong who was known to write poetry on topics taboo for a celibate monk.[95] Huihong's personality and literary talents contributed to his reputation as a controversial monk. His friends enjoyed Huihong's sharp wit, but often as not, his personality rubbed people the wrong way. His exposé of literary talents was highly problematic in certain situations. Along with the political climate and Huihong's ties to Yuanyou officials, his controversial personality and display of talents tended to incite prejudice against him. These factors don't *quite* explain away his misfortunes, but they go a long way to making them seem less inexplicable. To Huihong, however, part of their inexplicableness was due to the fact that for him, they demonstrated how negative experiences brought about insight, if looked at from the right perspective. For Huihong, this perspective was largely rooted in non-discrimination, and poetry was a space where such a perspective could be realized.

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[95] Z 87: 1625.279c22-24. Huihong was all too aware of the contradictory expectations for monks when it came to their poetry. He illustrates this problem in some of the anecdotes on poet monks in *Night Chats*, as discussed in chapter five.

2.4 Huihong's Response to Misfortunes: Non-Discrimination in Poetry

Huihong wrote a wide variety of types of poems and verses responding to his ordeals. It was largely through poetry that Huihong found he could bring a transcendent perspective to his worldly hardships and overcome attacks on his monastic identity. A repeated theme in these pieces is an expression of the Buddhist perspective of non-discrimination, or related concepts such as non-duality. Non-discrimination refers to the state of mind where one does not get make distinctions between objects, or between subject and objects, a handy perspective to have when one must overcome contradictory situations, such as Huihong experienced. We saw above how the Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa* poem allowed Huihong to create personas that transcended the conventional image of a monk, challenged narrow views of monasticism, and allowed Huihong to uphold a monastic identity despite being stripped of his credentials and sent into exile with soldier convicts. Below are several more examples of his use of poetry to explore the liberating effect of a non-discriminatory perspective to view his various challenging circumstances.

As we have seen, Huihong spends much of his *Own Preface* detailing his misfortunes. They read like a series of unfortunate events. Huihong seems to be airing his grievances. But then he tells us that he is writing this preface upon completing a commentary on the *Fahua jing*. He explains,[96]

> In the summer of the fourth year of Xuanhe [1122], I began to detail this commentary [on the *Fahua jing*], and on the 4th day of the third month of the following year, I completed it. I pause my brush to reflect on the many worldly hardships I've experienced, and my numerous thoughts are like cold ash. Currently,

[96] J 23: B135.696b15-17; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1438.

> I am fifty-three. Endeavoring to describe Bodhidharma's Four Practices, I write four *gāthās*…
> 以宣和四年夏釋此論，明年三月四日畢。停筆坐念涉世多艱，百念灰冷。時年五十三矣。追繹達摩四種行，作四偈.

It turns out he has detailed his ordeals in order to reflect on them in light of his current insights, ostensibly arisen from his close study of the *Fahua jing*. He expresses these insights through *gāthā*, Buddhist verse.

In his four verses he interprets his ordeals through the lens of Bodhidharma's "Four Practices" (*sixing* 四行).[97] He comes to terms with his negative karma by embracing it. He avoids embitterment by banishing dualistic thoughts. His verse on "The Practice of According with Conditions" 隨緣行, for example, reads:

此生夢幻	This life: a dream, an illusion,
緣業所轉	Following wherever karma conveys me.
隨其所遭	Going along with whatever happens,
敢擇貴賤	Who am I to choose between rich and poor?
眠食既足	When sleep and food are already enough,
餘復何羨	Why hanker after extra blessings?
緣盡則行	Once the conditions come to an end, I'll be on my way,
無可顧戀	With nothing to look back upon with regret.

[97] Bodhidharma's four practices are "not seeking" (*wu suo qiu xing* 無求行), according with conditions (*suiyuan xing* 隨緣行), responding to retribution (*baoyuan xing* 報冤), and honoring the Dharma (*cheng fa xing* 稱法).

Huihong's verse entitled "The Practice of Responding to Retribution," 報冤行 is even more explicit about dealing with karma:

僧嬰王難　A monk who incites troubles at court,
情觀可醜　Is disgraceful in the eyes of the world.
夙業純熟　Past karma can be purged completely,
所以甘受　On this basis I willingly accept it.
受盡還無　Having accepted it all, there is nothing left,
何醜之有　So what is there still to detest?
轉重還輕　Transforming heavy [karma] so that retribution is light,
佛恩彌厚　Is the result of Buddha's kindness, pervasive and deep.

The verse expresses that karma is not something that can be avoided. Huihong expresses his insight that karma can be purged if one can endure it willingly—not hanker after good things or try to duck out of negative effects. In other words, his approach discriminating between good and bad karma.

Huihong concludes his autobiography by further emphasizing the power of a non-dualistic perspective. He quotes a few lines from an ancient text about immortals that illustrates how one "begets blessings through hardship" 所以因禍而取福也. He labels his own hardships as "inexplicable misfortunes" (*qihuo* 奇禍). His use of the word qi 奇 ,"inexplicable," "uncanny," or "strange," is significant. We might assume he means that his misfortunes were unusual or unwarranted. Such a reading is consistent with the impression given by his account, but it does not account for the insights expressed in his verses or his textual citation. The full line reveals that Huihong sees his misfortunes as inexplicable for another reason: "As for my misfortunes, they are inexplicable misfortunes,

for it was due to these misfortunes that I was able to completely probe the intentions of the Buddhas and Patriarchs" 寂音之禍，奇禍也，因禍以得盡窺佛祖之意，不能文以達意，以壽後世，則思邈之論可信也. Huihong wants to emphasize that he has come to see his misfortunes not as obstacles or hindrances to his monastic career, but as a miraculous catalyst. He claims that they are precisely the means by which he has come to understand the dharma and, specifically, allowed him to develop the ability to transcend mundane distinction making.

Of particular interest is a sophisticated poem Huihong wrote while sitting in prison, during his first incarceration. The poem is a regulated verse style poem entitled "Upon Entering the Imperial Penitentiary at Jinling" 金陵初入制院.[98] Huihong adopts the identity of Baozhi 寶誌, a notorious 5th century monk who had been incarcerated in Jiankang prison, now called Jinling prison, the same prison in which Huihong now finds himself.[99]

To understand the allusions in Huihong's poem, it is necessary to know a little about Baozhi. He was known as an eccentric who possessed supernatural abilities. He became a wandering monk, walking around barefoot, letting his hair grow. His appearance caused children to chase after him. Rumors that his supernatural stunts were attracting a lot of followers eventually caused the emperor to lock him in the Jiankang prison. The story goes

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[98] J 23: B135.627a1-4; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 11.753.

[99] The monk Baozhi (written as "保誌" in the Gaoseng zhuan), also known as Daolin Zhenjue 道林真覺lived from 418-515 C.E. Jinling is the Song name for modern day Nanjing, but in Baozhi's time, it was called Jiankang. The prison name changed with the place name.

that after being locked up, Baozhi was spotted wandering about town, but when they checked his cell, he is found still sitting there.[100]

Huihong's poem reads,

依然收付建康獄	As before, taken into custody at Jiankang Prison,
拴索瓏璁驚市人	My ropes and knots in a tangled mass shock the townspeople.
寄語小兒休嬲相	Send a message to the children: stop teasing me!
未妨大士戲分身	You can't keep a Great Hero from playing around with replica bodies.
懶於夢境分能所	I've no interest in distinctions between subject and object amidst a dream-state.
枉把情緣比客塵	It's futile to compare guest-dust with emotional ties.
笑視死生無可揀	Laughing, I regard life and death: no choice to be had,
目前刀鋸若為神	The knives and saws I see before me: what potency can they have?

In the first half the poem, rather than explicitly referring to Baozhi, Huihong weaves together the analogy between himself and the monk. The first line alerts the reader that Huihong is not simply writing autobiographically, for the prison he is currently in is called Jinling. It hasn't been called Jiankang for centuries. This is also Huihong's first incarceration, so he can't be simply referring to himself when he says he has been put in prison "as before" (*yiran* 依然). He is drawing a parallel between Baozhi's incarceration and his own. Baozhi

[100] Huihong, "Zhongshan Daolin Zhenjue Dashi zhuan" 鍾山道林真覺大師傳 in SWZC 30 (J 23:B135.728b02-729a30). Huihong records Baozhi's unusual characteristics and remarkable behavior at great length in this biography. Like Huihong, Baozhi frequently wrote poetry. At first no one could make any sense of his poems, but later they proved prophetic. Tales about him were passed around causing amazement. He was said to have performed the miraculous feat of turning noodles into a twelve-headed Guanyin, a feat that caused people to clamor to serve him. Wudi became "angry at him for confusing the masses" 忿其惑眾, and had him put in prison.

had children running after him; Huihong refers to children teasing him. He notes that no one can stop a "Great Hero," from "playing around with replica bodies." "A Great Hero" (*dashi* 大士) is a term for a bodhisattva, but here refers to Baozhi. "Replica bodies" (*fenshen* 分身) refers to the transformation bodies of a buddha or bodhisattva used to teach beings. "Playing around with replica bodies" refers to Baozhi's ability to freely roam about outside the jail while still appearing in his cell. Using Baozhi as an analogy, Huihong presents himself as a monk undaunted and unrestrained by the prison walls.

In the second half of the poem, Huihong displays an enlightened mental state more abstractly, contemplating his circumstances with the detachment of a Chan master. Understanding existence as a "dream-state" is a basic Buddhist perspective on the illusory and transient nature of the secular world. Within this dream, it is pointless to go on distinguishing between "subject and object" (*nengsuo* 能所), a Buddhist technical term used to refer to many different renditions of interdependent relationships.[101] If subject and object are one substance, what point is there in making distinctions between them?[102] Birth and

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[101] *Foguang da cidian*, p. 4296. The term can refer to sense organs and the objects of the senses, practitioner and practice, mendicant and donor, or host and his guest. The relationship between subject and object is no different than that which exists between "essence and function or cause and effect; that is why it is said that subject and object are one substance" 能與所具有相即不離與體用因果之關係，故稱能所一體.

[102] This line seems to refer to the host-guest variation of subject and object. As explained by the *Foguang da cidian*, p. 4296, "The host who knows is referred to as the subject who makes ties; the guest who is known is referred to as the object of those ties" 認識之主體，稱為能緣；其被認識之客體，稱為所緣. In other words, the host is another way to refer to the subject, and the guest is another way to refer to object. "Ties" (yuan 緣), also translated as "affinities" or "conditions" is integral to the host-guest relationship. Huihong seems to be indicating that it is not only futile to distinguish between the subject and the object, but it is also pointless to make comparisons between the guest and the emotional ties between guest and host.

death are another type of false duality. As such, what is the point of grasping at life or running away from death? In this state of mind, even the implements of torture Huihong sees before him have no efficacy. Although Huihong comes across as undaunted, he also includes plenty of details that emphasize his dire circumstances: his chains and locks frighten the onlookers as he is taken to prison, implements of torture surround him, and death could be imminent. His persona comes across as all the more impressive given these dire images.

Huihong's poem shows an ability to see his circumstances from a perspective free from dualistic discriminations. By portraying himself as Baozhi with replica bodies, he can transcend the boundary between imprisonment and freedom. Contemplating the interdependence between subject and object, he presents a persona that can even look at birth and death without a shudder. This is a poetic persona, but it was also how Huihong navigated his misfortunes.

The poem demonstrates how Huihong reacted to the attacks and restrictions brought on by political entanglements. Monks could take on personas in poetry that transcended limited views of who they were. In his poem, Huihong changes his image from one of convict, laughed at by children, to a monk with spiritual powers, free to go wherever he chooses. By taking on the persona of others who faced similar circumstances with wisdom and fearlessness, he imagines how they would respond, and thus is able to transcend, at least in poetry, the restrictions put upon him.

Adopting the personas of eminent monks was a favorite poetic technique of Huihong's. In the poem written in prison, he took on the persona of a monk known for his high level of attainment. But in addition to monks, Huihong looked to Su Shi as a role model

for dealing with unusual hardships. Like Huihong, Su had been exiled to Hainan for several year. During that time, Su made a point of writing poetry expressing a sanguine and content spirit despite dire conditions.[103] While he was in Hainan, Huihong identified with Su Shi by writing a series of poems intended to "supplement the omissions of Dongpo" (*bu Dongpo yi* 補東坡遺).[104] This unique approach is described by Zhou Yukai:

> When Huihong was in Hainan, he wrote several poems to supplement Su Shi's omissions. They were pieces [Huihong thought] Su Shi should have written but never did. These 'supplements to Dongpo's omissions' were an imitation of Su Shi's 'poems matching Tao [Qian]' 和陶詩, but with modification. They were all done in Hainan.[105]

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[103] For Su's various poetic responses to exile, see Ronald Egan's chapter "The Literature of Exile" in *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*, pp. 207-260.

[104] According to Zhou Yukai, Huihong wrote the first two poems in Hainan before he arrived in Zhuya. Zhou points out that although the title of the first poem indicates that it is a series of two poems, (*ershou*二首), only one is included, prompting Zhou to speculate that another poem by Huihong listed separately, "Ye gui shi Zhuo Daoren" 夜歸示卓道人, was originally the second in the series. (Another explanation is that the second in the series is no longer extant.) The other poems supplementing Su Shi's poetry were written during Huihong's year at the Zhuya camp (three poems) and after he was pardoned, on his way home, when he visited a few places where Su Shi had stayed (two poems). See Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 170-174. The poems are: "Guo Lingshui xian bu Dongpo yi ershou" 過陵水縣補東坡遺二首 (J 23: B135.635a15; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 13.860; "Ye gui shi Zhuo Daoren"夜歸示卓道人 (J 23: B135.635a19; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 13.861; "Bu Dongpo yi sanshou ti Wuwang fei shengren lun hou" 補東坡遺三首題武王非聖人論後 (J 23: B135.596b22; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 5.310); "Shi caigeng shi He Daoshi"食菜羹示何道士 (J 23: B135.596b29; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 5.314); "Jimao sui chu ye dazui"己卯歲除夜大醉 (J 23: B135.596c6; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 5.315); "Zao deng Chengmai xi sishi li, su Lin'gao ting, bu Dongpo yi" 早登澄邁西四十里，宿臨皐亭，補東坡遺 (J 23: B135.616c17; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 9.618); "Bu Dongpo yi zhen Jiang Tangzuo xiucai yin, shu qi shan" 補東坡遺真姜唐佐秀才飲，書其扇 (J 23: B135.652a30; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 16.1049).

[105] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, 170. Zhou has selected seven of Huihong's poems that can be categorized in this way, see *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 170-174.

It was common practice to match the rhymes words of poems by past poets, but to write poems that one imagines a poet *should* have written under certain circumstances was a new poetic approach invented by Huihong.[106]

Huihong may have been inspired by Su Shi's project of matching Tao Qian's (365–427) corpus of poems that Su undertook during his exile.[107] Huihong's admiration for Su's optimistic and determined spirit likely mirrored Su's admiration for Tao Qian's ability to find contentment in difficult circumstances. But Su's project was much more ambitious than Huihong's. Whereas Su produced over one hundred poems, there are less than ten extant poems of this type by Huihong.

Huihong used a few different approaches when writing these poems. Some are poems Huihong imagined Su *could* or *should* have written in a certain place and time, given his circumstances, but for some reason failed to do so. Other poems are *shi* poems that were based on *fu* rhapsodies or prose discussions by Su Shi.

Huihong could have written poems about his experiences following in the footsteps of Su Shi without alluding so explicitly to Su. Why identify himself so directly with Su? Considering Su Shi's poetic fame, Huihong's act of writing poems in the guise of Su Shi—presuming to make up for poems that Su Shi "omitted,"—might strike us as a tad presumptuous. Even given Huihong's not insubstantial reputation as a poet at the time, to

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[106] See Zhang Shuo's 張碩 2018 article "Lun Su Shi dui Song seng Huihong Hainan shiqi chuangzuo de yingxiang," in which he discusses the influence Su Shi had on Huihong's Hainan writings and addresses the significance of this series of poems in understanding Huihong's identity.

[107] Ronald Egan discusses Su Shi's interest in Tao Qian and his project of matching his poems in *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*, pp. 233-237.

present himself, a monk, as privy to the poetic voice of one of the most famous poets of the age, seems to suggest a great deal of self-confidence. When it came to poetry, Huihong doesn't seem to have lacked confidence, and we know that he was anything but cautious when exploring artistic choices that might incite controversy.

The Su Shi poems were for Huihong another way to deal with his ambiguous identity and transcend the limitations brought on by his exile. Just as he was able to see himself as Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa* in a poem, untainted by the lowly conditions he found himself in, and just as he viewed his imprisonment through the eyes of a monk with supernatural abilities, Huihong took on the identity of Su Shi who himself, by means of poetry turned a demoralizing exile into a sight-seeing adventure and chance to make new friends.

In *Night Chats*, we will see many anecdotes and poetry discussions that are devoted to expressing admiration for Su's poetic skill and resilient spirit. We will also see Su Shi's influence on Huihong's approach to aesthetic expression that is not constrained by discriminatory thinking stemming from mundane perspectives.

Huihong's poetic personas may have been idealized versions of himself, but for Huihong, they probably seemed more accurate than the image dictated by court rulings and by his inexplicable ordeals. By adopting a fluid image of himself within poetry, Huihong demonstrated that he was unattached to empty labels and was able to transcend discriminations, actually further legitimized himself as a monk.

2.5 Conclusion

Like other Song monks, Huihong studied scripture, held abbacy positions, taught the dharma, and wrote Buddhist works. He was serious about being a monk. But he faced numerous and diverse challenges to his monastic identity. Ordained with a borrowed name, accused of forging his ordination certificate, imprisoned on four occasions, and sent into exile—such a resumé of experiences is not normally found in the biographies of Song monks. Huihong's unusual experiences, along with his Buddhist training, helped shape his outlook on society, poetics, and monastic life, major topics that are explored in *Night Chats*.

Consolidating the sources, the most likely story regarding his ordination name seems to be that the name Huihong was "appropriated" at his ordination not because at the time he was called Dehong at the time, but because it was the name of a registered monk who didn't show up and Huihong needed a way to sit the exams without funds or a sponsor. At the time, this wasn't a problem because he was simply taking the place of someone who had already registered. Nevertheless, eventually, Huihong's enemies dug up this irregularity up and got him sentenced, suggesting that technically he had, indeed, broken a law. This infraction was compounded by other accusations, and so began a series of legal troubles.

With the exception of his name appropriation, Huihong presents himself as innocent of the specific accusations against him, a narrative that later biographers pick up. But such a string of embroilments must have had a cause. Part of the problem was his close friendships with officials who became enemies of those in power. During the volatile political climate of the early 12th century, this was enough to get any monk into trouble. But Huihong also seems to have incited suspicion within religious circles as well as in the political sphere. Monks and

Daoists were as likely as officials to bring charges against him. His reputation and his forceful personality likely played a role in creating enemies from various backgrounds. He was a loquacious, irreverent monk, inclined to go his own way, even if that meant putting his reputation in jeopardy. In addition to his outspoken personality, which he himself saw as an instigator of his troubles, his prominence itself would have caused friction in certain circles as well. He became well-known early in his monastic career as a talented Chan monk and poet, befriended by influential literati and sought after for abbacy positions. The combination of his audacious and outspoken personality with the influence he had as a well-connected monk must have threatened certain people enough to want him out of the way.

Reflecting on his misfortunes in "Silent Sound's Own Preface," Huihong presents himself as not culpable, but he brings in another perspective as well. Beyond being inexplicable because they were unwarranted, he sees his misfortunes as inexplicable because he believes it was through dealing with them that he acquired his current level of understanding of the dharma. Looking back at the poetry written during exile and imprisonment, we see that early on he had begun to look at his troubles from a Buddhist perspective. Even as his status as a monk was repeatedly challenged, he persistently looked for ways to maintain a sense of himself as a monk. He created Buddhist sobriquets, adopted personas in poetry, and trained himself to see negative experiences as the purging of karmic results. His response to dire situations, so often brought about by what must have seemed like unfair discrimination or judgement, was to explore how poetry could create a space to see things with non-discriminatory wisdom.

Considering the negative role court politics played in Huihong's life and his own propensity to be outspoken in his views, we might expect Huihong to produce a miscellany

documenting some of his experiences, telling his side of the story. Or he might have gone the route of many literati who implicitly critiqued the political situation with accounts of officials and leaders from past ages. But Huihong neither uses *Night Chats* to air his grievances nor to critique the officials and power intrigues that helped bring about the difficulties experienced by him and his friends. Huihong chose instead to write miscellany entries on things he deemed much more valuable and interesting: his aesthetic ideas, poetry of the day, and accounts of individuals and social interactions.

This is not to say *Night Chats* is devoid of any critique of men in politics. There is a general lack of confidence shown in people with high status or power. Huihong constructs anecdotes in order to make fun of certain behavior and ideas, and although humorous and lighthearted, these can imply a critique of the value society gave to social status and position. But Huihong's mockery is not politically motivated. In other words, he does not reserve his teasing for officials associated with one political camp or another. He does, however, emphasize the tendency of people in high positions to overlook and undervalue individuals of low status or those, like him, who were positioned on the periphery of officialdom.

His encounters with politics made him sensitive to the problem of discrimination, both in the secular sense of prejudice based on social position, appearance, or background, and in the Buddhist sense of discriminations made on the basis of illusory karmic conditions. In his poetic response to his misfortunes, we see Huihong developing an aesthetic of Buddhist non-discrimination. The emphasis we will see in *Night Chats* on anecdotes and poetics that challenged narrow thinking about identity, social position, and aesthetic norms, may in part be explained by his experience of being viewed as a monastic outcast, someone whose merit and legitimacy were repeatedly questioned.

Chapter 3

Aesthetics of Non-Discrimination:

Poetry Principles and Criticism in *Night Chats*

3.1 *Night Chats* as Remarks-on-Poetry

Like many poets of his day, Huihong held strong views about the craft and evaluation of poetry. More than half of *Night Chats* is devoted to recording comments and anecdotes that reveal Huihong's poetic views and those of his peers. The focus on poetry is so pervasive that in modern times *Night Chats* is generally considered to be a *shihua* (remarks on poetry). However, the significance of *Night Chats* as a work of poetry criticism has not been explored in detail.

Although the poetry portion of *Night Chats* resembles the *shihua* written by Northern Song literati, it is Huihong's predilection to bring in his Buddhist perspective and monastic background to the discussion of poetics that makes his work distinct. As Song poets struggled to find ways to express poetic ideals and issues of craft in writing, they increasingly looked to the language and perspectives of Buddhism, especially Chan.[1] Huihong played a key role in the early stages of this process. In *Night Chats*, he records and expands on

[1] According to Zhou Yukai, Song poets were more heavily influenced by Buddhist ways of viewing the world compared with poets from previous dynasties. Zhou, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 178. Beginning with Su Shi's generation, we see numerous examples of poets approaching both the natural world and prominent literati arts of poetry, painting, and calligraphy with perspectives borrowed from Chan and Huayan thought.

aesthetic principles, techniques of poetic composition, and approaches to poetry criticism that adopted Buddhist terminology or were rooted in Buddhist ideas. Huihong's monastic identity also matters in his discussions of poetry issues that have no overt connection with Buddhist thought.

Throughout *Night Chats*, Huihong advocates poetic approaches that reflect artistic creativity stemming from a flexible, transcendent perspective of the world. He condemns approaches that express limited, mundane, binary perspectives of reality. In Buddhist terms, he expands the concept of non-discrimination (*bu fenbie* 不分別/*wu fenbie* 無分別) to the aesthetic realm and applies it to issues of poetic craft and evaluation. Buddhist non-discriminatory wisdom (*wu fenbie zhi* 無分別智) is the realization of the truth of equality or balance (*pingdeng* 平等) that occurs when distinctions between subject and object or between different objects are not seen as real. Someone with such wisdom, such as a Bodhisattva, transcends worldly understanding of reality based in these distinctions and instead understands "True Suchness" (*zhenru* 真如), absolute reality.[2]

The principle of non-discrimination manifests in different ways within Buddhist thought. It is present in the idea of the Middle Way as well as in the Huayan transcendence of dualities. By applying this principle to aesthetics and to poetry, Huihong contributed to the development of Song discourse on poetics. His discussions and records reflect the new interest of literati in aesthetic principles that expressed the interchangeable qualities of

[2] See "Wu fenbie zhi" in *Foguang da cidian*, p. 5074.

artistic mediums and in qualities that transcended mere "realistic" representation.[3] Eventually, the trend to use such Buddhist concepts to talk about poetics would result in explicit analogies between Chan and poetry, most famously articulated by Yan Yu in the Southern Song.

3.2 Buddhist Poetry Principles

Several aesthetic principles with Buddhist origins can be found in *Night Chats,* but there are two that capture Huihong's distinct approach to poetry: *shiyan* 詩眼 "poetic eye" and *miaoguan yixiang* 妙觀逸想 "subliminal observation and transcendent ideas." Huihong was not the first to use these terms—they appear in poems before him—but he was the first to use them in a prose discussion of poetics. He transformed them into terms of poetry criticism. Simply put, the "poetic eye," as it appears in *Night Chats,* refers primarily to a readerly approach to poetry shaped by a Huayan non-discriminatory perception of the world. "Subliminal observation and transcendent ideas," refers to the transcendent ideas of the poet who observes subtleties from a "true" (non-discriminatory) perspective. Huihong uses these terms to explain his approach to poetry, but they reflect broader aestheticized Buddhist principles that were applied to a range of artistic pursuits, particularly painting and

[3] Egan, "The Northern Song," p. 433. Egan explains, "Buddhism's emphasis on the illusory nature of all appearances may have had some influence in this impulse to find values elsewhere than in representational aptness."

calligraphy. Such terms reflect an artistic view and expression of the world that incorporates a Buddhist understanding of reality not limited by worldly distinctions and contradictions.

3.2.1 "Poetry Taboo"

The *Night Chats* entry entitled "Poetry Taboos" (*shiji* 詩忌) contains the two principles of the "poetic eye" and "subliminal observation and transcendent ideas" (hereafter *miaoguan yixiang*).[4] This entry is the most comprehensive expression of Huihong's non-discriminatory approach to poetics. As one of the few entries in *Night Chats* containing theory and systematic examples, it has been discussed in studies on the Buddhist influence on Song poetics.[5] Through a close examination of the full entry, we will discover how Huihong adapted terms and examples already in circulation and applied their Buddhist meanings to create his distinct approach to aesthetics.

The full entry reads,

> 1
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> Everyone's poems without exception are dull because they have been robbed of vitality. When vitality is absent in people it is due to their having all manner of restrictions and taboos put upon them, and poetry is the same way.
>
> 2

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[4] Note that "poetic eye"(*shiyan* 詩眼) appears in this entry in the Wushan ban edition of *Night Chats*, the edition widely thought to be based on the earliest woodblock copy available and the source text used in this dissertation. But *fayan* 法眼 (dharma-eye) is used in place of *shiyan* in most other editions of the text, including the *Baihai* edition used in the *Quan Song biji*. The existence of the *fayan* variation indicates how closely the two concepts overlapped and were interchanged in the Song

[5] This entry has been discussed by Zhou Yukai in *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue*, pp. 108-110, as well as in his article, "Fayan kan shijie: Fochan guanzhao fangshi dui Beisong houqi yishu guannian de yingxiang," and more recently in *Fayan yu shixin*, pp. 179-182. I have drawn on his discussion in the latter for my analysis below. In English, Ronald Egan cited and discussed part of the entry in his discussion of aesthetic principles in "The Northern Song," pp. 433-434.

When you are wealthy, you can't speak about being poor, when you are young, you can't talk about being old, and when you are healthy, you can't talk about being sick or dying. If you break these rules [when writing poetry], people call it a "poetry omen"; they say it lacks vitality. But in this they couldn't be more incorrect.

3

Poetry is the vehicle for subliminal observation and transcendent ideas (*miaoguan yixiang*); how can it be limited by the measuring tools of a carpenter? For example, take Wang Wei's painting of a banana tree in the snow. Using the poetic eye to look at this, you know that his spirit and feelings are lodged in the object. But the mundane perspective is to scoff at him for not understanding winter and summer climates!

4

When Jinggong [Wang Anshi] was appointed prime minister, his doorway was packed with friends who came to congratulate him. He suddenly dipped his brush in ink and inscribed on his door:

霜筠雪竹鍾山寺 Frosted plants and snowy bamboo at the Zhongshan temple,

投老歸歟寄此生 Let me return there in retirement to live out my days.

When [Dong]po was in Dan'er, he wrote a poem in which he said:

平生萬事足 I've had my fill of all manner of experiences in my life,

所欠惟一死 The only one missing is death.

How can this be discussed with the worldly? I've tried to discuss these points with visitors, but they disagree with me.

5

I wrote a poem to record this for myself. It went something like this:

東坡醉墨浩琳琅 From Dongpo's tipsy ink, came a flood of masterpieces.
千首空餘萬丈光 Thousands of verses set free, shining brightly for ten thousand leagues.
雪裏芭蕉失寒暑 In a snow covered banana tree, winter and summer are contravened.
眼中騏驥略玄黃 In the eyes [of the expert], whether the great steed is black or sorrel is paid no heed.

眾人之詩例無精彩，其氣奪也。夫氣之奪，人百種禁忌，詩亦如之。富貴中不得言貧賤事，少壯中不得言衰老事，康強中不得言疾病死亡事，脫或犯之，人謂之詩讖，謂之無氣，是大不然。詩者，妙觀逸想之所寓也，豈可限以繩墨哉！如王維作畫雪中芭蕉，詩眼觀之，知其神情寄寓於物；俗論則譏以為不知寒暑。 荊公方大拜，賀客盈門，忽點墨書其壁曰：〔霜筠雪竹鍾山

寺，投老歸歟寄此生。〕坡在儋耳作詩曰：〔平生萬事足，所欠惟一死。〕豈可與世俗論哉！予嘗與客論至此，而客不然予論。予作詩自誌，其略曰：〔東坡醉墨浩琳琅 ， 千首空餘萬丈光 ，雪裏芭蕉失寒暑 ，眼中騏驥略玄黃。〕[6]

In the entry, Huihong presents "subliminal observation and transcendent ideas" and the poetic eye as key to the appreciation and evaluation of poetry. He begins by explaining the problem to be that poetry lacks vitality and gives the reason for the problem, namely because of restrictions and taboos. He then suggests a solution: to write poetry expressing subliminal observation and transcendent ideas. He indicates how such poetry should be read, with the poetic eye, and he provides examples in the form of couplets by Wang Anshi and Su Shi. Finally, he concludes with an original poem summing up his point. Simply put, Huihong argues that only with the poetic eye can one appreciate a poem that has been written by a poet who has lodged his subliminal observation and transcendent ideas in his poem. And a poet who does not infuse his poetry with such ideas and instead is at the mercy of taboos and restrictions, can only produce lackluster poetry, poetry without *qi*.

Huihong begins by declaring that poems are problematic because they lack *qi*, translated here as "vitality." Traditionally associated with the energy force circulating in the physical body, *qi* (vapor, breath) is a term that came to express the vitality, creativity, freshness, or style of artistic works.[7] Huihong uses *qi* and its derivatives such as "spirited

[6] "Shi ji" 詩忌, *Lengzhai yehua* 4.42-43.

[7] See the term explained in Stephen Owen's glossary in *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought,* p. 584-585. For a more extensive discussion, see David Pollard, "Ch'i in Chinese Literary Theory," p. 43-66.

vitality" (*shenqi* 神氣), "vital resonance" (*qiyun* 氣韻), and "flavor of vitality" (*qiwei* 氣味) in *Night Chats* to evaluate the vibrancy of specific poems or critique popular variant words in poems.[8] In this, he wasn't doing anything different than other writers of the time. No one would argue with Huihong about poetry needing *qi*. Where Huihong diverges from others is in his understanding of what causes a lack of *qi* in a poem and what a poem with *qi* looks like.

For Huihong, the amount of *qi* in a poem can always be traced back to whether or not the *qi* of the poet has been depleted by "all manner of restrictions and taboos" 百種禁忌. Specifically, Huihong singles out as problematic a taboo against including "poetry omens" (*shichen* 詩讖). This "poetry omen" refers to a negative word or reference to an event in a poem that could "come true."[9] Tang and Song miscellanies and Song *shihua* are filled with numerous examples of these omens that writers discovered in poems.[10] The impression that something in a poem could be a prognosis for a future event caused a taboo to develop

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[8] See "Dongpo de Tao Yuanming zhi yiyi" 東坡得陶淵明之遺意, *Lengzhai yehua* 1.14; "Song Zhijue Chanshi shi"誦智覺禪師詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.57; "Shihua wang yi jufa zi" 詩話妄易句法字, *Lengzhai yehua* 4.36; "Shi wu zi" 詩誤字 *Lengzhai yehua* 4.41. These entries show that for Huihong, a poem has insufficient *qi* when the construction is belabored, uninspired, or when unsophisticated readers switch a character with a mundane replacement.

[9] See "shichen" 詩讖 in the *Hanyu da cidian*.

[10] Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, p.179. Zhou quotes examples from the Tang dynasty collection *Benshi shi* 本事詩 (Poems With Their Actual Occasions) and from the Northern Song monk Wenying's miscellany *Xiangshan yelu* 湘山野錄. The Northern Song writer Mo Ruanyue styled records of these omens as "the school of *shichen*" and devoted two chapters of his *Shihua zonggui* 詩話總龜 to relevant works.

against using certain words or expressions in poems."[11] Huihong gives three common poetry omens that were taboo: When wealthy, you aren't supposed to write about being poor; when young, you can't write about getting old, and when in good health, don't write about illness or dying. According to Huihong, other people saw the poetry that did not heed such taboos as without *qi*. But for him, restricting poetic output out of fear of creating poetry omens is precisely what causes lackluster poetry.

To support his point, later in the entry Huihong provides couplets by two famous poets who appear to have disregarded the taboo against poetry omens. Wang Anshi expresses a longing to retire at the temple on Zhongshan just when everyone was celebrating his appointment as grand counselor. He is not only showing a disregard for the prestige that comes with the position, he is writing about retirement before he has even started his duties, potentially predicting his own dismissal. Similarly, Su Shi shows a disregard for the pleasures of existence and an unflinching acceptance of what is to come. Blatantly mentioning his own death is a clear defiance of one of the taboos Huihong mentioned. Both Wang Anshi and Su Shi defy expectation and show a disregard for conventional feelings about poetry omens.

After establishing that adhering to restrictions and taboos causes lackluster poetry, Huihong makes his most definitive statement on poetry: "Poetry is the vehicle for *miaoguan*

[11] Lines that were praised as remarkable at the time of composition are later deemed unlucky if their content came true. Huihong tells of a poem he himself composed in a dream which seemed to come true in the entry entitled *Mengzhong zuo shi* 夢中作詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 4.21.

yixiang ["subliminal observation and transcendent ideas"]; how can it be limited by the measuring tools of a carpenter" 詩者，妙觀逸想之所寓也，豈可限以繩墨哉? Poetry is not to be constrained by rules and regulations as if it must stay within the measurements and marks of a carpenter's square.[12]

Subliminal observation and transcendent ideas, *miaoguan yixiang,* is made up of two terms, *miaoguan* and *yixiang*, that individually had been used by poets in the past, but that usually appear in the context of a poem, not in a discussion of poetics. Simply stated, *miaoguan* (subliminal observation) is an ability to see the *miao* 妙, the subtle intricacies of something minute or hidden, below the threshold of ordinary observation. *Yixiang* (transcendent ideas) are the transcendent or unconventional ideas that result from seeing beneath the surface of worldly distinctions. For Huihong, good poetry is that which houses a poet's *miaoguan yixiang*.[13]

Huihong suggests the meaning of *miaoguan yixiang* only by giving an example of an unusual painting by Wang Wei 王維 (699-759). Wang is said to have made a painting of a banana plant growing in the snow. The content of the painting is an example of *miaoguan yixiang* because Wang Wei has expressed an idea that transcends mundane concerns of appropriate climate and instead, "lodged his spirit and feelings into his depictions of objects" 其神情寄寓於物. When the terms that make up *miaoguan yixiang* are examined more fully

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[12] Hereafter, "subliminal observation and transcendent ideas" will be predominantly referred to without translation, in its Chinese (*pinyin*) form, *miaoguan yixiang*.

[13] The deeper meanings of the words that makeup *miaoguan yixiang* will be discussed in detail later on. Here the aim is to understand how the basic concept is used in the context of the *Night Chats* entry.

below, it becomes clear that their Buddhist roots and literary precedents frame the problem of restrictions and taboos as one of mundane discriminations.

In the banana painting example, Huihong brings up the poetic eye. It isn't just anybody who can appreciate artistic works that express *miaoguan yixiang*; it is only those with the poetic eye. As Huihong notes, the common or mundane perspective (*sulun* 俗論) of the painting is that it reflects Wang Wei's failure to understand the implications of "warm and cold" climates, (since bananas trees do not grow in snow). Only when viewed with the poetic eye can this incompatibility be overlooked and Wang's *miaoguan yixiang* be appreciated. In other words, the ordinary perspective fixates on contradictions between the material realities of hot and cold climates while the poetic eye sees beyond such mundane distinctions and focuses on the expression of artistic spirit.

Huihong's discussion of the banana painting, featuring *miaoguan yixiang* and the poetic eye, reflects a Buddhist reframing of earlier comments that were made by Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031-1095) in his miscellany *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談 (Mengxi's Chats with the Writing Brush).[14] Shen's miscellany is the earliest extant reference to Wang Wei's painting. Like Huihong, Shen brings up the banana painting as an example to illustrate a larger aesthetic point. In the miscellany, he mentions that his family owned a painting by Wang Wei entitled *Yuan An wo xuetu* 袁安臥雪圖 (Painting of Yuan An reclining in snow) which included a plantain tree, and that it was an example of an artist "responding with his hand to what arose in his heart; completed right when the idea came, so that the principle entered the

[14] See Shen Kuo, "Shuhua" 書畫, *Mengxi bitan* 17.125-26.

spirit and divine intent was retrieved" 得心應手，意到便成，故其理入神，迥得天意. He argues that the subliminal aspects (*miao* 妙) of calligraphy and painting can only be understood by the spirit and can't be reached by evaluating mechanics, such as pointing out mistakes in color. Shen quotes Yan Yuan who criticized Wang Wei for painting flowers of different seasons together in the same painting and he brings up the banana painting as an additional example of Wang Wei's disregard for seasons. Like Huihong, Shen sees such criticism as shallow, preferring to interpret the artist's choice as a demonstration of his superior ability.

Huihong follows Shen Kuo in emphasizing the importance of the spirit of the artist and in condemning evaluation based on superficial characteristics, but in each case, he uses terminology that reflects a Buddhist perspective. For Huihong, the Wang Wei painting is an example of an artist expressing his *miaoguan yixiang* by lodging his spirit and feelings in the object.[15] The connoisseur of such works must have the poetic eye to appreciate them. Both *miaoguan yixiang* and the poetic eye relate to Buddhist idea idea of transcending a discriminatory and relativistic mindset. In contrast, for Shen, the expression of the artist is not *miaoguan yixiang*, but spontaneous insight into heaven's intent (*tianyi* 天意) and the connoisseur is someone who can "understand the profound principles and hidden creativity" 至於奧理冥造者，罕見其人." While Shen and Huihong both come to similar conclusions, Huihong has adopted terms with Buddhist origins to emphasize the inherent ability to see

[15] This discussion is based on Zhou Yukai's comparison of Shen Kuo and Huihong's use of the banana in snow painting in *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 181.

beyond mundane distinctions in his approach to the poet's output (*miaoguan yixiang*) and to a critic's evaluation (poetic eye).

Huihong's non-discriminatory aesthetic can also be seen in the very fact that he uses a painting to talk about poetry. While Shen's discussion brings up the banana painting in the context of a discussion on calligraphy and painting, Huihong uses it to illustrate a point about poetry. This blurring of boundaries between artistic mediums is the result of an idea popularized in the Northern Song that there were universal principles that governed all the literati arts.[16] Painting, conventionally seen as an endeavor of artisans, beneath the dignity of high-class literati, took on a new status among the literati in the Song, helped along by poet/painters like Su Shi. Part of the process of this transformation included identifying universal principles applied to a range of artistic pursuits, in particular to poetry, painting, and calligraphy.[17]

That Huihong raises the example of a painting to illustrate his point about poetry with no explanation reflects how deeply ingrained this idea was at the time. But it also reflects Huihong's notion of the poetic eye as a non-discriminatory perspective on aesthetics. The ability to see the commonalities of painting and poetry is a function of the poetic eye, as the term was first used in poems by Su Shi and later adopted by Huihong in his poetry. In the

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[16] Ronald Egan, "The Northern Song," p. 433. Egan cites the beginning of Huihong's poetry taboo entry to illustrate the Song emphasis on universal artistic principles and points out that "if artistic effect and 'meaning' transcended the particular media used to convey them, then the issue of how 'true to life' those particulars were could no longer be used as the primary standard by which art was evaluated."

[17] See Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting*, pp. 22-43. For a discussion of the principles that overlapped between poetry and literati painting, see Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed*, pp. 296-299.

entry, Huihong presents the poetic eye as the ability to appreciate the transcendence of mundane distinctions expressed in works like Wang Wei's painting, but in using a painting to illustrate his poetic point, he is actively manifesting the function of the poetic eye as a perspective used by talented artists, poets, painters, and calligraphers alike.

Throughout the entry, Huihong has emphasized that the points he is making about taboos, *miaoguan yixiang,* and the poetic eye are either difficult to grasp or not accepted by others. Others don't agree with him that heeding taboos depletes a poem of its vitality. Those with a mundane perspective cannot appreciate the marvelous ideas behind Wang Wei's banana in snow painting. After his explanation and examples, Huihong laments, "How can this be discussed with the worldly? I've tried to discuss these points with visitors, but they disagree with me" 豈可與世俗論哉！予嘗與客論至此，而客不然予論. Unable to express his ideas in prose, he puts them into a poem, because, after all, the poem is where transcendent ideas belong.

Huihong's concluding poem reiterates what he sees as the qualities of a good poet and a good critic. Su Shi has the qualities of an exemplary poet: his *qi* has not been robbed by restrictions or taboos. Without any inhibitions, his "thousands of verses" are "set free," and "shine brightly for ten thousand leagues." They have long-lasting resonance because the ideas have extraordinary vitality, unencumbered as they are by superficial rules and restrictions. An expert horse dealer is a metaphor for a good art critic because he is concerned with something beyond the horse's color. Paying no heed to whether the horse is black or sorrel is a reference to an exchange in *Liezi*. A famous evaluator of horses praises a man sent to buy a horse for overlooking the color because it showed that he concerned

himself with essentials, what was of real value, not superficial details.[18] Huihong has used an example from Taoist writings to reiterate the aestheticized value of non-discrimination expressed by the poetic eye. He represents the perspective of the horse buyer with the phrase "in the eyes" or "as seen by" (*yanzhong* 眼中), a use of "eye" that is clearly meant to recall the poetic eye's ability to appreciate the contravening of winter and summer in the banana in snow painting example.

The Buddhist implications of *miaoguan yixiang* and the poetic eye are not stated outright in the poetry taboo entry, but they come into play in Huihong's approach to poetry criticism. In using these terms Huihong was creating an aesthetic perspective informed by a Buddhist vision of reality. To understand Huihong's transformation of these terms into aesthetic principles applied to poetry criticism, we must examine their connection to Buddhist concepts, their usage by other poets, and their Buddhist meanings in Huihong's writing.

3.2.2 Buddhist and Literary Precedents of *miaoguan yixiang*

Huihong combined two terms, *miaoguan* 妙觀 and *yixiang* 逸想, to form the phrase *miaoguan yixiang*, used to describe what should ideally be "lodged" in a poem. Both terms are originally indigenous Chinese terms that took on Buddhist meanings before being combined and applied to poetic content by Huihong.

[18] See *Liezi*, "Shuo Fu" 說符, 8.163-164.

The original meaning of *miaoguan* is "meticulous or careful observation."[19] The term is found in texts as early as the Three Kingdoms Cao Wei period (3rd century CE), where it referred to the observation of natural scenes. Buddhists adopted the term to represent specific types of enlightened observing, or contemplation, that sees beyond dualities and mundane discriminations. *Miaoguan* appears in the Buddhist phrase "pure cognition of *miaoguan* investigation"(*miaoguan cha zhi* 妙觀察智), which is one of the four pure cognitions (*sizhi* 四智) discussed in Yogâcāra. Such cognition allows one to observe that "specific attributes" (*zixiang* 自相) and "general "attributes" (*gongxiang* 共相) of all dharmas are unobstructed and interpenetrate, in order to skillfully lead living beings with different aptitudes to awakening.[20] In other words, *miaoguan* allows one to see that the whole is in complete harmony with the individual parts and vis-a-versa. In Tiantai Buddhism, *miaoguan* refers to the "harmony of the three contemplations" (*yuanrong sanguan* 圓融三觀), the idea that the three views of emptiness, dependent arising and middle (*kong* 空, *jia* 假, *zhong* 中) are fundamentally unobstructed.[21]

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[19] "Miaoguan" 妙觀 in *Hanyu da cidian*. My translation of *miao* as "subminimal," although not without deficiencies, captures the idea much more accurately than "marvelous" or "wonderful," two common translations. These latter give the impression of something grand (big) and amazing. We might respond to something that is *miao* with a feeling of awe or wonder, but this only comes about through appreciating its subliminal and minute qualities. The translation "subliminal observation" is inspired by the philologist Peter A. Boodberg's detailed study of *miao* 妙. He concluded that "In all probability, 妙 miào is but a graphically specialized form of 眇 miǎo which … can be defined as 'too small to be seen', 'minuend to the vanishing point', in one word 'subliminal.'" Boodberg, "Philological Notes on Chapter One of the Lao Tzu," pp. 472-473.

[20] *Foguang da cidian*, "si zhi" 四智, p. 1769, and "si zhi xinpin" 四智心品, p. 1771.

[21] These three views, or "contemplations," counteract different unenlightened views. The view of emptiness sees through mistaken notions about reality. The view of dependent arising keeps one from becoming attached to the view of emptiness. The view of the middle sees both emptiness and

By Huihong's time, *miaoguan* had become closely associated with these Buddhist ways of observing. Huihong's understanding of *miaoguan* is illustrated in a quatrain he wrote entitled "Miaoguan An" 妙觀庵 (Temple for Contemplating Subliminaria). The poem reads,

閑來禪室倚蒲團 At leisure, he comes to the Chan Chamber to settle on the rush mat,
幻影浮華入正觀 Illusory shadows and floating flowers: I enter the real contemplation.
江月松風藏不得 But river-moon and pine-wind can't be kept hidden,
大千俱在一毫端 The entire trichiliocosm is lodged on the tip of his brush.[22]

Huihong enters a meditation in the Miaoguan Hut consisting of "real contemplation" (*zhengguan* 正觀) brought on by seeing the empty, impermanent nature of things (illusory shadows and floating flowers). This is "real" or "proper" meditation practice. But the image of the moon reflecting in water and the sound of wind in the pines can't be kept at bay (poetic images of illusory things) and billions of worlds (trichiliocosm) sit not atop a single hair tip, as the Huayan saying goes, but atop the tip of his writing brush. He understands the relationship between the moon and its reflection, and he gets the interpenetration between the many and the few, but he can't help thoughts of expressing his insight into poetry.[23]

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dependent arising but is not attached to either one. While the three views seem to contradict one another, the *miaoguan* approach is to see that they work in harmony. Seeing them in harmony is part of the perfect teaching (*yuanjiao* 圓教), in contrast to the distinct teaching (*biejiao* 別教). See "Miaoguan" in *Foguan da cidian*, p. 2858, and "San guan" 三觀 in the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*. "Contemplation" and "view" are alternate translations for *guan*.

[22] J 23: B135.652c04; *Zhu Shimen wenzichan* 16.1052.

[23] Zhou, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 181, uses this poem to explain Huihong's understanding of *miaoguan* as a method of looking at things and seeing beyond the false distinctions between real and illusory shadows and flowers, between the size of the trichiliocosm and a brush tip.

Huihong's *zhenguan* ("real contemplation/observation) is being aestheticized into aesthetic *miaoguan,* "subliminal observation."

Like *miaoguan*, *yixiang* was originally an indigenous Chinese term. *Yixiang* is defined as "thoughts that transcend the dust and the world.[24] While *yixiang* never became a Buddhist technical term, it became associated with Buddhist ideas of transcendence thanks to Su Shi and Huihong. Su Shi used *yixiang* in lines of a rhapsody with Buddhist imagery similar to what we saw in Huihong's "Miaoguan An" poem.

悟此世之泡幻 Awaken to the illusory bubbles of this world,
藏千里於一斑 Hide a thousand miles in a single spot.
舉棗葉之有餘 There may be more than enough to lift a jujube leaf [with a needle],
納芥子其何艱 But how difficult to hold [Mount Sumeru] on a mustard seed!
宜賢王之達觀 With the fully actualized observing befitting a sagely king,
寄逸想於人寰 Bestow these transcendent ideas to the world of men.[25]

Here, "transcendental ideas" (*yixiang*) are associated with the perspective of the world that understands its illusory nature and the non-obstruction between the many and the few, between the great and the small. Su Shi is playing with images used in various Buddhist scriptures to illustrate the kinds of transcendent thoughts he associates with *yixiang.* For example, both the *Huayan jing* 華嚴經 (*Buddhâvataṃsaka* and the *Weimo jing* 維摩經 (*Vimalakīrti Sūtra*) talk of the Bodhisattva's ability to place Mount Sumeru on a mustard

[24] According to the definition of "yixiang" in the *Hanyu da cidian*. *Yixiang* appears in writings as early as Tao Qian (132-194) who used it in his poem entitled "He Hu Xicao shi Gu Fucao 和胡西曹示顧賊曹.

[25] Su Shi, "Dongtingchun se fu" 洞庭春色賦, *Su Shi wenji* 1.11.

seed.[26] These Buddhist connotations are also evident by looking at the numerous pieces in which Huihong used the term. We find *yixiang* in many of Huihong's prefaces or praises (*zan* 贊) for Buddhist paintings, where he uses it to refer to the remarkable ideas that the painter entrusts to (*ji* 寄) or lodges (*yu* 寓) into the painting. For Huihong, *yixiang* are the aesthetic ideas of someone with a world-transcending view.

Huihong combined *miaoguan* and *yixiang* in *Night Chats* to refer to the transcendent ideas of a painter or poet based on his "true observation," his seeing beyond mundane distinctions and limited views. In the "Poetry Taboos" entry, it is *miaoguan yixiang* that spurs Wang Wei to paint a banana tree growing in the snow and Su Shi to write a poem joking about his own death. In another entry in *Night Chats*, Huihong uses the phrase to describe Su Shi's ability to take on the persona of a monk who understands non-duality, a technique modeled on Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770) who took on the persona of a girl enjoying the gardens.[27] Such ideas are not confined by restrictive conventions or taboos. Su transcends his own identity as an official and writes in the persona of the monk in order to show the monk a more enlightened way to view a situation. These kinds of transcendent ideas are, according to Huihong, valued by those with the poetic eye (*shiyan*). The poetic eye, in turn, is based on some of the same Buddhist principles as *miaoguan yixiang*.

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[26] In Robert Thurman's translation of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, the passage reads,

> The bodhisattva who lives in the inconceivable liberation can put the king of mountains, Sumeru, which is so high, so great, so noble, and so vast, into a mustard seed. He can perform this feat without enlarging the mustard seed and without shrinking Mount Sumeru. (P. 52).

[27] See "Dongpo liu Jiegong Zhanglao zhu shita," *Lengzhai yehua* 7.64-65.

3.2.3 Buddhist and Literary Precedents of "poetic eye"

By Huihong's time, "poetic eye" (*shiyan* 詩眼) was a view of poetry that embraced and encouraged the non-literal and implied meanings in poems, those aspects that suggested something beyond the words. It was closely associated with the Buddhist dharma eye (*fayan* 法眼) because the latter was used to see the reality beyond mundane appearances and delusory views of the world.[28] The idea of the poetic eye in *Night Chats* as a way to critique or appreciate artistic works may have been inspired by Huang Tingjian, but its meaning was formed by Huihong's elaboration of Su Shi's initial concept.

The poetic eye has a complicated history. From the time the term first appeared in poems in the late 12th century, it has taken on different meanings and applications. Poetic eye was used as both a writerly idea about composition and a readerly approach to appreciating and evaluating poetry. In scholarship on Song poetics, the original meaning of the poetic eye is not sufficiently examined. Meanings are often attributed to it that belong to another concept that circulated in the Song, *ju zhong yan* 句中眼 (also *ju zhong you yan* 句中有眼) "the eye within the lines." It is also given meanings that were not in play during the Northern Song, such as the notion that writers used the eye to refer to a single pivotal

[28] *Fayan* is a Buddhist term, one meaning of which is the ability to perceive the true appearance of the Buddha Dharma and all dharmas (things). It is used to "distinguish the differences between the conditions of living beings" in order to teach them. ("Fayan," *Foguang da cidian*, p. 3386). We will see that this emphasis on recognition or discernment is mirrored in the *shiyan*, but the goal there is to appreciate artistic creation rather than save living beings. Looking at the meanings of *fayan*, we can see that it was an inspiration for the development of the concept of *shiyan.*

character in a line of poetry. Things become more confusing in western scholarship when both of these eyes, *shiyan* and the eye from *ju zhong you yan* are translated as "poetry eye." Part of the problem is that writers as early as the Southern Song occasionally conflated the poetic eye and the eye within the lines, and by the Ming dynasty, the original applications and meanings of *shiyan* were no longer prevalent. Both terms have ties to Buddhist ideas, and both were said to be associated with the "dharma eye," but the Buddhist meanings are different in each case.[29]

Chinese dictionary definitions can be ambiguous when it comes to demonstrating how the poetic eye was understood by writers in the Northern Song. The dictionary definitions of *shiyan* fail to take into account the Buddhist perspective that informs the use of the term as an observation and appreciation. They conflate *shiyan* with a Southern Song interpretation of the eye within a line.[30] The *Hanyu da cidian* defines *shiyan* with two definitions, "The poet's ability for observation and appreciation" 詩人的賞鑒能力、觀察力, and "The most refined and vivid single character in a line of poetry or a poem" 一句詩或一首詩中最精煉傳神的一個字. The first definition is closer to how the term was used in the Northern Song by Huihong. As for the second definition, *shiyan* was not used to refer to the

[29] Zhou Yukai, as one of the earliest modern scholars to address the concept of the poetic eye, has done much to illuminate the concept. Besides unpacking the Buddhist association for the term, he has helped to clarify how the poetic eye was used in the Northern Song simply by discussing it separately from the other eye, the eye within the lines. See Zhou, *Fayan yu shixin*, pp. 183-184, for his most recent discussion of the poetic eye in the context of Huihong's poetry taboo entry, and pp. 201-205 for his discussion of Huang Tingjian's eye within the lines.

[30] Zhou Yukai points out similar confusing definitions for *juyan* 句眼 (the eye of the line) in *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 204.

pivotal character until at least the Southern Song, and even then, the character in question was more frequently called the "eye of the line" (*juyan*).

Huihong clarifies the meanings in the Northern Song because he records the two different eyes—*shiyan* and *ju zhong you yan*—in different entries in *Night Chats*, where it is obvious that they mean different things at the time of writing. As we have seen, Huihong brings the poetic eye into the discourse on poetics as a way of seeing, or judging, artistic works. It is the poetic vision or poetic appreciation of a reader or critic. The eye within the line as Huihong presents it, discussed later in this chapter, is a tool of composition, rather than of evaluation. It is a concept originating with Huang Tingjian. The Buddhist scope of Huihong's poetic eye, as it turns out, is closer to the way Su Shi used the term in his poems.

Su Shi's poetic eye

The Buddhist-aesthetic meanings of the poetic eye can be traced back to the original usage of the term, as it appears in two poems by Su Shi. In the poems, Su presents the poetic eye as a particular ability to make assessments or evaluation. That a Buddhist perspective of the world was involved in that assessment is only loosely implied in Su's poems, mainly suggested by context and the poetic eye's ability to transcend distinctions between painting and poetry. But, as Zhou Yukai has shown, elsewhere Su Shi used the highly religious terms "dharma eye" (*fayan*) and "the eye of the Way"(*daoyan* 道眼) to represent ways of looking at the world.[31] His poetic eye seems to have evolved from these terms, as a way to express a poet's application of such perspectives in the creative process. Huihong and others would

[31] Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 182.

build on the Buddhist nuances Su Shi suggests, and some, like Fan Wen 范溫 (11th century), would make the connection to the Buddhist perspective more explicit.

Although Su Shi doesn't give a definition for the poetic eye, looking at the term in his two poems reveals that he saw the poetic eye as the poet's ability to make skillful artistic choices during the process of transforming external scenes into poetic content. The object of Su's poetic eye is what the poet sees before him, usually natural scenes, and its function is to recognize and select from those scenes. There is a hint that the selection is based on seeing the world from a perspective that transcends mundane, non-enlightened distinctions.

It is in the first poem by Su, written in 1073, that we see the poetic eye as the ability to make selections. In the poem, Su praises the poet-monk Qingshun for building his Hovering Cloud Pavilion."[32] Su draws a parallel between the challenge of choosing a building site in a scenic area and a poet's need to choose what to include in his poem. The architect and poet alike must choose from many possible perspectives. The poetic eye is that which allows one to make a good assessment. The pertinent line reads: "Skies before me and behind me vie [to be the chosen view], / the poetic eye is adept at selection" 天公爭向背，詩眼巧增損. For Su Shi, the skill of selection, *zengsun* 增損, literally "what to add and what to leave out," is a function of the poetic eye. The connection to a Buddhist perspective is suggested in this poem by the fact that Su is talking about the discernment of a monk.

[32] Su Shi, "Seng Qingshun xinzuo Chuiyun ting" (Monk Qingshun's recently built Hovering Cloud Pavilion) 僧清順新作垂雲亭, *Su Shi shiji* 9.451-52. Guang Hui Qingshun 廣慧清順 was a contemporary of Su Shi. *Zhou, Fayan yu shixin*, p. 182, dates this poem to 1073.

The Buddhist aspect of the poetic eye is more evident in the second poem, written in 1093. In this poem, a rhyme match of Wu Anshi's 吳安詩 poem on a painting of a withered tree, the poetic eye again functions as the special evaluative skill of an artist.[33] But Su additionally meshes together an aesthetic and Buddhist perspective of nature and draws a parallel between the *miaoguan* ("subliminal observations") of poets and painters. He begins the poem by aestheticizing nature, personifying natural objects as if they were intentionally creating scenes for a poet or painter: "Heaven's water and ink naturally creates points of interest, / the silhouettes of thin bamboo and pine 'writes' the moon as it sets 天公水墨自奇絕，瘦竹枯鬆寫殘月." To this aesthetic view, Su adds a Buddhist perspective: "Generation and decay: a single snap of the fingers, thus we know that all things at the start are naught"生成變壞一彈指，乃知造物初無物. Given that everything generates and decays, it is clear that things are fundamentally empty. Since the fundamental nature of objects is the same—generating and decaying—it is easy to see that the "marvelous ideas" that painters have are no different from those entertained by poets, which is the point of Su's next line: "Painters, since ancient days are not ordinary folk, / their subliminal ideas actually have the same origin as poetry" 古來畫師非俗士，妙想實與詩同出. Su's "subliminal ideas" (*miaoxiang* 妙想) have a similar meaning to Huihong's phrase *miaoguan yixiang* used to describe the essence of poetry above.

[33] Su Shi, "Ciyun Wu Chuanzheng kumu ge"次韻吳傳正枯木歌, *Su Shi shiji* 36.1961-62.

Once the Buddhist perspective on nature and the parallel between painting and poetry is established, Su brings in the poetic eye as the means by which the skills of poet and painter are linked:

龍眠居士本詩人 Layman Longmian [Li Gonglin] was fundamentally a poet,
能使龍池飛露靂 He was able to make the dragon pool fly up thunderously.
君雖不作丹青手 Although you aren't a master of the reds and greens,
詩眼亦自工識拔 With the poetic eye, you have the skill of discernment and selection.

The phrase "discernment and selection"(*shiba* 識拔) was usually used to refer to the ability to identify and promote talented officials, but here Su adopts it to represent an aesthetic function of the poetic eye. In addition to making artistic selections (*ba*), Su's poetic eye is responsible for *shi* 識, translated here as "discernment," but incorporating the meanings of recognition, appreciation, judging. By Huihong's time, *shi* would become an important concept, used to refer to judging or evaluating poetry using a Buddhist perspective.

Su gives the example of the horse painter Li Gonglin, who "doesn't only paint the flesh, also paints the bones,"不獨畫肉兼畫骨, emphasizing Li's ability to depict something deeper than outward appearances. Later in the poem Su suggests that the ability of the poetic eye is rooted in the Buddhist idea of the interpenetration of the one and the many: "In the southeast, the mountains and rivers beckon each other, / where the myriad manifestations enter me: a maṇi pearl" 東南山水相招呼，萬象入我摩尼珠.

The poetic eye in both of Su's poems is a writerly discernment of the natural world that hints at a Buddhist view of the fundamental nature of things, employed during the process of artistic creation. The object of Su's poetic eye is the external world, the possible

content for a poem, not poetry itself. It is not a term of poetic criticism, nor does it refer to a specific component of a poem like a line or character. Su's representation of the poetic eye as an evaluative tool used by the poet would later be adopted by Huihong in his own poems and applied to the readerly function of the poetic eye as it appears in the taboo entry in *Night Chats*. Su Shi's point about the "marvelous ideas" (*miaoxiang* 妙想) of poets and painters and their skill of discerning and selecting is also adapted in Huihong's use of poetic eye in his approach to poetry criticism.

Huihong's poetic eye

It is clear from the way Huihong uses the poetic eye in his writings that he drew on Su Shi's idea of the term in many respects. Like Su Shi, Huihong's poetic eye is represented as a writerly (or painterly) vision of the external world, with the function of shaping the subtleties and subliminal aspects of that world into content for a poet or a painting. While Su only used the term in two poems, the poetic eye appears in no less than fifteen poems and one prose record in Huihong's literary collection, *Shimen wenzi chan*. Looking at how the poetic eye is used in these pieces, we can see that Huihong expanded the object, function, and application of Su's poetic eye.

Like Su Shi, the object of the poetic eye in *Shimen wenzi chan* is the natural world. In Su's poems, that the object of the poetic eye is a natural scene or landscape is implied by the context of the poem, rather than explicitly stated. He doesn't name the aspects of scene the poetic eye is selecting or discerning. Huihong follows Su in this regard in some of his poems. But in other poems, he expands the scope of the poetic eye by naming specific scenes or

objects in nature observed by the eye: "The poetic eye adores misty streams" 詩眼愛雲泉;[34] "The poetic eye adores the blue-greens of the landscape"詩眼愛空翠;[35] "The poetic eye admires the autumn waters" 詩眼豔秋水;[36] "The poetic eye is sated with the green hues of the mountains" 詩眼飽山翠.[37] Misty streams, blue-greens of the landscape, autumn waters, and green mountains: these all can be objects of the poetic eye. These lines further demonstrate that the poetic eye was responsible for turning specific natural scenes into poetic content.

In addition to providing specific objects for the poetic eye, Huihong expands its function. Beyond engaging with natural scenes by making selections and discerning/recognizing, as first expressed by Su Shi, Huihong's poetic eye "adores" (*ai* 愛), "admires" (*yan* 豔) or is "sated" (*bao* 飽) by the natural scenes.[38] It can also have an interactive relationship with nature, as in the lines: "Leaning on the railing, my poetic eye sends off the geese in their flight" 憑欄詩眼送飛鴻,[39]or "The poetic eye issues forth

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[34] "Ti Wang Lufen rongxi xuan" 題王路分容膝軒; J 23: B135.600a16; Zhu Shimen wenzi *chan* 5.373.

[35] This is from the second poem in the two poem series entitled, "Fengpei Wang Shaolan, chao qing you Nanjian, su shansi, buyue er shou" 奉陪王少監朝請遊南澗宿山寺步月二首; J 23: B135.590c11; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 3.222.

[36] From the first poem in the two poem series entitled "Ciyun Zhou Dadao yun ju er shou" 次韻周達道運句二首; J 23: B135.601b29; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 6.396.

[37] "Tong Peng Yuancai pie Tao Yuanming si du Cui sian bei" 同彭淵才謁陶淵明祠讀崔鑒碑; J 23: B135.577c29; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 1.12.

[38] In two pieces in *Shimen wenzi chan*, Huihong lifts Su Shi's exact phrase, "to add and subtract" or "to make selections" (*zengsun*) to express the function of the poetic eye.

[39] "Ciyun ti shang feng" 次韻題上封; J 23: B135.630a7-8; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 12.792.

nature's treasures" 詩眼發天藏.[40] The poetic eye "sends off" and "issues forth" visible objects. The impression is that the poetic eye allows the poet (or painter) to have an active role in the way nature is seen, even capable of designing nature. People are given more agency in the workings of nature.

This dynamic relationship between the poet and objects in nature enabled by the poetic eye reflects the influence that a Buddhist perspective of the self and the external world was having on Song poets. The traditional boundaries and differences between subject and object are broken down, allowing a variety of new ways to represent nature in poetry. This is made possible because the rigid dualities of self and other are broken down and the interdependence of the perceiver and the perceived manifests.[41]

In the application of the poetic eye, Huihong also expands on Su Shi's ideas. In Su's second poem, the poetic eye helps to reveal that the "subliminal observation" of poets and painters originates from the same source. Su raises the principle in order to praise a poet for composing poetry in the same way a skilled painter uses his brush. We see Huihong draw on Su's association between the poetic eye and the breaking down of boundaries between artistic mediums, but he applies the principle in a wider variety of ways, using the poetic eye to discuss painters, poets, and even nature itself. These variations are found in his writings on Xiaoxiang 瀟湘. In the long title of the series of poems he wrote on Song Di's eight paintings

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[40] "Ji ti Peng Siyu Shui ming lou" 寄題彭思禹水明樓; J 23: B135.597a27; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 5.325.

[41] In poetry, these ideas were partly responsible for the increase in personifications of nature, where non-human objects, such as flowers or mountains are given human emotions and intentions, according to Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, pp. 168-174.

of Xiaoxiang, Huihong represents the interplay between painting and poetry by describing Song Di's paintings as "voiceless poetry" 無聲句, and his own complementary poems as "voiced paintings," 有聲畫.[42] In other words, the entire premise of the set of poems is the idea that poetry is a form of painting with words. The poetic eye appears in the second poem of the series, entitled *A Sailboat Returning to the Distant Shore* 遠浦歸帆. The final lines read,

> 倚欄心緒風絲亂 Leaning on the railing, emotions unsettled like the zephyrs,
> 蒼茫初見疑鳧鴈 In the deep blue expanse at first I think I am seeing ducks or geese,
> 漸覺危檣隱映來 Gradually it dawns on me that they are sails flickering as they approach,
> 此時增損憑詩眼 This is the time when in making selections you rely on the poetic eye.[43]

Huihong has adopted nearly without alteration Su Shi's original idea of the function of the poetic eye as making selections of what to include and leave out (*zengsun* 增損). He has also adopted Su's idea that the poetic eye applies to painters and poets alike. But whereas Su Shi addressed a poet and emphasized the shared a creative process he has with painters, in these poems, Huihong is taking the reverse approach: he is telling a painter that it is his poetic eye that enables him to paint just like a poet composes poetry.

Huihong also expanded the application of the poetic eye to include the appreciation of nature itself. Natural scenes are appreciated by means of the poetic eye. In his prose record

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[42] The series of poems is entitled, "Song Di zuo ba jing juemiao ren wei zhi wusheng ju, Yan Shangren xi yu yue: daoren seng zuo yousheng hua hu? Yin wei zhi ge fu yi shou" 宋迪作八境絕妙人謂之無聲句演上人戲余曰道人能作有聲畫乎因為之各賦一首; J 23: B135.611a27; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 8.540-541.

[43] Huihong, "Yuan pu gui fan;" J 23: B135.611b3-6; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 8.540.

"Zhongxiao Song ji" 忠孝松記, Huihong uses the selective function of the poetic eye in his description of the actual view of Xiaoxiang looked at from on high:

> Looking below, I saw Xiaoxiang just as if a painting were unfurled before me. Thousands of miles of minute detail are captured in one glance. It is just as if Longtu Niegong has used the poetic eye to choose what to include and what to exclude, giving full expression to [this area's] natural treasures.[44] 下臨瀟湘，如開畫牒，千里纖穠，一覽而盡得之。蓋龍圖聶公以詩眼增損，發其天藏也.[45]

Here, Huihong is neither describing a poem or a painting with the poetic eye but using the poetic eye (as well as a painting scroll) to describe a spectacular natural scene. We can see Huihong's expansion on Su's association between the poetic eye and the breaking down of boundaries between artistic mediums in these writings.

We may notice that neither Su Shi nor Huihong provide the criteria for the poetic eye's engagement with nature, the principle by which it selects or appreciates natural scenes and turns them into poetry. We are only given the suggestion that the function of the poetic eye stems from a different place than ordinary observation, and by context, that it relates to a Buddhist way of looking at the world. That the seeing done by the poetic eye is not ordinary is emphasized in Huihong's lines, "Looking at mountains for long periods can become a sickness, the poetic eye can endure the sky's blues" 看山久成癖，詩眼耐空青.[46] The implication is that looking for long periods at the mountains with an ordinary eye, making

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[44] Longtu Niegong is referring to Huihong's friend, Nie Shan 聶山, style name, Ben Yuan 賁遠 (1078-1127).

[45] "Zhongxiao song ji" 忠孝松記; J 23: B135.682c1-2; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 22.1333.

[46] "Bairi you xian li qing yuan wu domino wei yun fengji Li Chengde" 白日有閒吏青原無惰民為韻奉寄李成德; J 23: B135.613c30; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 8.576.

mundane distinctions or obsessively striving to find the best view, for example, is exhausting, whereas the poetic eye can look at the expansive ("empty" *kong* 空) blues of the sky without fatigue or fixation. Another line that suggests the poetic eye is not concerned with mundane distinctions occurs in a poem Huihong sent to a friend after reading the *Huayan jing*. Huihong writes, "Leaning on a walking staff, sitting in the mountain hall, the poetic eye doesn't notice its nighttime"扶笻坐山堂，詩眼不知夜.[47] The person with the poetic eye is focused on something other than the passing of day into night. External changes do not concern him.

Finding the essence of the poetic eye is like trying to understand Buddhist principles that are explained by the absence of something rather than with a positive statement. "Non-discrimination," "non-self," "emptiness" and "ending of birth and death" are examples. Even positive principles like *nirvāṇa* and enlightenment are often explained with the negation of something rather as a thing in themselves. This convention makes sense in a religion where awakening is seen as a person's "original," most natural way of being (or non-being). Understanding comes not from an intellectual knowing of what "is" but from personally subtracting whatever is getting in the way of the original state of understanding. For Su Shi and Huihong, the poetic eye might "make selections" or "adore" the sights before it, but the implication is that it does this from an aesthetic perspective that is beyond mundane

[47] "Jingchun jian he shen miao, shi fang yue *Huayan jing*, fu he xi zhi" 景醇見和甚妙, 時方閱華嚴經, 復和戲之; J 23: B135.601a24; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 6.389.

considerations. The result of that process will be varied, but it is meant to be something original and intangible.

Huihong played with specific objects and functions of Su Shi's original poetic eye, as well as helped to establish its application as related to universal artistic processes. This rendering was made possible by the Buddhist non-discriminatory perspective that had become associated with the poetic eye. But Huihong's application of the poetic eye as a readerly approach in *Night Chats* was something new. Neither he nor Su Shi had used the term this way in their poetry. In the poetry taboo entry, Huihong transforms the eye from a process of poetic creation to a critical approach to reading and appreciating poetry. The non-discriminatory poetic eye is necessary for recognizing and evaluating *miaoguan yixiang,* aesthetic ideas that defy taboos and restrictions rooted in a mundane perspective of reality. This shift of the poetic eye to a critical readerly function reflects the burgeoning interest of Huihong and his contemporaries in finding new ways to discuss poetry. The idea to use the poetic eye as a readerly approach reflects developments in poetic discourse, led to a large degree by Huang Tingjian.

Huang Tingjian and Fan Wen's Influence

The poetic eye has traditionally been associated with Huang Tingjian more than it has with Su Shi or Huihong. But while Huang Tingjian did talk about "the eye within the lines," there is no record that he himself ever referred to this concept as *shiyan*. Moreover, his eye within the lines was an approach to composition rather than a poetic way of viewing the

world or judging poetry like Su Shi and Huihong's *shiyan*, respectively.[48] But Huihong's poetic eye may still have been influenced by Huang's ideas about an eye in relation to poetry.

Huang Tingjian used the "dharma eye" to talk about appreciating the simplicity of Tao Qian's poetry with a structure that is similar to Huihong's presentation of the poetic eye in the poetry taboo entry. In an inscription written at the end of a collection of poems by a monk, Huang praises Tao Qian's poetry for its lack of artifice, which, he suggests, is misunderstood. "Those who are skilled at composing with the hatchet (i.e. heavy-handed crafting) assume his poetry is clumsy. Those concerned with rules and restrictions fault it for being unbridled" 雖然巧於斧斤者多疑其拙，窘於檢括者輒病其放.[49] To make his point that the appearance of simplicity can often hide something profound, Huang goes on to paraphrase the *Analects*: "Confucius said, 'As for Ning Wuzi…people can match his wisdom, but they can't match his foolishness" 孔子: 甯武子，其智可及也，其愚不可及也.[50] He continues by lamenting how impossible it is to talk to people about Tao Qian's "clumsy"(*zhuo* 拙) and "unbridled" (*fang* 放) poetry. He then quotes two Buddhist passages emphasizing that our experience of things depends on whether we are using the enlightened

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[48] As a principle of composition, Huang's eye within the lines will be discussed in part three of this chapter.

[49] Huang Tingjian, "Ti Yike shi hou," 題意可詩後, *Huang Tingjian quanji*, vol. 2, p. 665. See Jiayin Zhang, "Theory and Anecdote in Chinese Poetics," pp. 76-77, for a translation of the first part of this inscription in her discussion of the poetic qualities of "crafted" and "clumsy."

[50] He is paraphrasing *Analects* 5.21: "The Master said, 'When the Way was being practiced in his state, Ning Wuzi was wise, but when the Way was not being practiced, he was stupid. His wisdom can be equaled, but no one can match his stupidity." (Trans. Edward Slingerland, p. 48.) Ning Wuzi's wisdom was that he appeared stupid and inconsequential when chaos reigned, thereby avoiding trouble.

mind or the ordinary mind. The second passage, from a Tang dynasty commentary on the *Huayan jing*, reads,[51]

> The commentary says: "If you observe things using the dharma eye, the ordinary will always yield truth; If you observe things using the worldly eye, the truth will never yield anything but the ordinary." 說者曰: "若以法眼觀，無俗不眞；若以世眼觀，無眞不俗."

The idea here is that using the dharma eye, you can find deep truths even in the things that seem to be "ordinary" or "mundane" (*su* 俗). But using the worldly eye, even the most profound truths will be seen as ordinary and therefore overlooked. Linking these passages to reading Tao Qian's seemingly "ordinary" poetry, Huang concludes, "As for [Tao] Yuanming's poetry, it is simply that one must become the same as recluses of the hills and gullies" 淵明之詩，要當與一丘一壑者共之耳. In other words, the reader must become as natural and innocent as recluses who live out in nature in order to appreciate the profound simplicity of Tao Qian, and not dismiss him for being too clumsy or uninhibited.

We know Huihong was familiar with the Huayan commentary because he includes the passage in full in his *Zhi zheng lun* 智證論. But he may have got the idea to apply the Buddhist eye to poetry from Huang Tingjian. In his poetry taboo entry, although the principle of the eye is different, Huihong sets up a contrast similar to that between the "dharma eye"

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[51] The passage is a paraphrase of Great Master Litong Xuan's 李通玄 commentary on the *Huayan jing*, entitled, *Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論 (T 36:1739.726.b7-8). The only difference in wording is where Huang writes "worldly eye" *(shiyan* 世眼), Litong has "worldly flesh eye"(*shijian rouyan* 世間肉眼).

perspective and the "worldly eye" described by Huang. Huang uses the parallel pattern, "If you observe things using the dharma eye…"; "If you observe things using the worldly eye.."to distinguish between the two perspectives. Huihong contrasts how things look "observing with the poetry eye" (*shiyan guan* 詩眼觀) to how worldly opinion(*sulun* 俗論 /shisu lun世俗論) understands them. When we consider that in most of the extant versions of *Night Chats*, "dharma eye" (*fayan*) replaces "poetic eye" in the taboo entry, we can see an even closer mirroring of Huang's wording.

Huihong obtained many of his ideas about poetry directly from Huang Tingjian. Huang was nearly three decades Huihong's senior. Although Huihong admired his poetry from afar for many years, he and Huang didn't meet until early in 1104, when Huang was on his way to exile in Yizhou. Based on autobiographical references, he and Huihong met upon several occasions during this time, and they may have traveled around Xiangxi 湘西 together.[52] Several accounts in *Night Chats* describe discussions they had about poetics during this time. It is likely, for example, that during these meetings Huihong heard about the eye within the lines from Huang. But he may also have spoken to Huang about other ways that the dharma eye could be applied to the discussion of poetry. It is also likely that Huihong brought his version of the poetic eye, influenced by Su Shi (as seen in his poems above) to the conversation. Huang Tingjian's student, Fan Wen, was present at one of these meetings,

[52] For a description of the possible meetings between Huihong and Huang Tingjian, see Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 89-92.

and Fan seems to have come out of the meeting with a poetic eye that incorporates ideas from both Huang Tingjian and Huihong.[53]

Fan Wen's adoption of the poetic eye at this time further complicates the narrative of the poetic eye's development. Unlike Su Shi, who used poetic eye in his poems, or Huihong, who used the term both in poems and in *Night Chats*, the only place we know that Fan Wen used poetic eye is in the title of his *shihua*-style miscellany: *Qianxi shiyan* 潛溪詩眼 (The Poetic Eye from Hidden Stream).[54] Much of what has been written on the poetic eye (*shiyan*) has been based on this work.[55] Fan Wen's poetic eye is interpreted to refer to all the various aspects of poetics discussed in the text, everything from the single, pivotal word in line of poetry to a more general aesthetic appreciation or recognition.[56] Yet in the twenty-nine extant entries from this work, the term *shiyan* does not appear.[57] The only "eye" that can be found

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[53] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 89. Fan Wen's precise dates are unknown, but he was the son of the scholar and historian Fan Zuyu 范祖禹 who lived from 1041-1098, making him Huihong's contemporary.

[54] *Qianxi shiyan* is the original title of Fan Wen's work, which was changed to *Fan Wen shihua* in the modern edition.

[55] See Guo Shaoyu, *Song shihua kao*, pp. 133-134, Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, p. 96, Jiayin Zhang, "Theory and Anecdote in Chinese Poetics," pp. 58-64. Zhang provides the most extensive discussion in English available on *Qianxi shiyan*; see pp. 57-88.

[56] This interpretation seems to have originated with Guo Shaoyu, who interpreted Fan Wen's *shiyan* as referring to both issues of composition and aesthetic recognition. To support the idea of *shiyan* as a composition term, he refers to passages of Fan Wen's text that discuss the importance of single key character (*yi zi* 一字) in a line of poetry or to the critical line in a poem. As a term of aesthetic recognition, he cites the passage in which Fan Wen makes a clear analogy between the Buddhists' "dharma eye" and the kind of recognition/judging (*shi* 識) that poets need to use in their study of poetry. See Guo Shaoyu, *Song shihua kao*, p. 133. Yet there is no evidence that Fan Wen himself called these aspects "shiyan."

[57] Guo Shaoyu compiled twenty-eight entries in *Song shihua jiyi* 宋詩話輯佚 and one additional entry was added by Qian Zhongshu in *Guan zhui bian* 管錐編.

in the extant entries is a reference to the "dharma eye." But there Fan Wen borrows the Chan "true dharma eye" to express the ideal recognition or judging ability of a poet, not to refer to an aspect of composition. He writes,

> Students [of poetry] should first take recognition as primary, like Chan Buddhists' and their so-called 'true dharma eye.' Only when endowed with this type of eye, can one enter the Way. 學者要先以識為主，如禪家所謂正法眼者。直須具此眼目，方可入道. [58]

This emphasis on *shi*, recognition, judging, or appreciation, was of crucial importance in the Song, and was likely influenced by Huang Tingjian's concern that poets recognize "the meaning, characteristics, and value of a text, especially texts created by great writers of the past."[59] Fan's use of Chan to explain the term is also indicative of the interest in using analogies between Chan and various aspects of poetics that would continue to develop. But in regard to the poetic eye, it is possible that Fan may have considered this Chan-influenced approach to poetry evaluation as an aspect of his poetic eye. That the term only appears as part of his title, leaves his application open to interpretation, but given that at the time of writing, neither Huang Tingjian nor anyone else was using the term poetic eye to refer to a narrow composition technique, it seems likely that for Fan the poetic eye was a more general way of viewing the composition and appreciation of poetry, not necessarily the actual elements of composition. In any case, this readerly function of the poetic eye is close to how

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[58] Fan Wen, "Xue shi gui shi" 學詩貴識, *Fan Wen shihua*, no 7, p. 1246.

[59] Yugen Wang, *Ten Thousand Scrolls*, p. 197. Much later, Yan Yu would continue the emphasis on *shi*, writing in *Canglang shihua*. He begins this work with the statement: "The student of poetry takes *shi* as the foundation. At the beginning, he must be correct and set up lofty aspirations" 夫學詩者以識為主。入門須正，立志須高; "Shi bian" 詩辯, *Canglang shihua*, p. 1.

Huihong would use poetic eye in *Night Chats* and the emphasis on recognition was an element of Su Shi's poetic eye.

Huang Tingjian is usually credited with the original ideas concerning the poetic eye. But as we have seen, Su Shi was the first to use the term, and there is no record of Huang ever using it himself. The new evaluative use of poetic eye used by Huihong and Fan Wen does seem to have developed out of discussions they had with Huang, but there is no reason to suppose he contributed more to the development than they did. In fact, Huihong's extensive use of poetic eye in his poems makes him the most likely candidate for promoting the idea at the time. Where Huang definitely did come in, however, was in encouraging the use of Buddhist concepts to be applied to the discussion of poetics. Both Fan and Huihong were familiar with his practice of using "dharma eye" to think about how poetry should be evaluated, and this likely influenced their respective conceptions of the poetic eye.

3.2.4 *Miaoguan yixiang* and the Poetic Eye in *Night Chats*

As we have seen, the poetic eye was a term used to discuss poetry through the Song dynasty and beyond, but Huihong used it in a distinct way in his poetry taboo entry. His poetic eye has the ability to evaluate a poem without giving heed to mundane distinctions and conventions. His principle of *miaoguan yixiang* is the perspective and ideas of a poet not restricted by distinctions and conventions. The poetic eye is presented not as a writerly ability, but as a readerly approach to aesthetic appreciation, capable of understanding *miaoguan yixiang*, transcendent ideas in a poem/painting expressed by an artist who sees beyond conventional reality. In contrast, someone using the worldly, unsophisticated eye

does not appreciate works written from *miaoguan yixiang* and might even go so far as critiquing the poet/artist for being illogical or breaking taboo.

Huihong was clearly inspired by Su Shi's idea of the poetic eye as the poet's ability "to add and subtract" or "make selections" (*zengsun*). He uses these exact terms in relation to the poetic eye in two pieces in *Shimen wenzi chan*. He also follows Su Shi in presenting the eye in a Buddhist context and suggesting that it functioned as a non-discriminatory perspective, transcending differences between artistic mediums and other mundane distinctions. Although Huihong was clearly influenced by Su Shi's eye, he also played with variations in its application. The biggest variation is made in *Night Chats* when he transforms it into an approach to reading poetry. Rather than potential poetic content, the object of the poetic eye is now poetry itself. The idea to use the poetic eye to focus on the issue of critiquing or judging poetry may have developed out of his conversations with Huang Tingjian. However, the development of ideas around the poetic eye perspective appear to be a collaborative and accumulative process, not traceable back to a single poet. Huang Tingjian gets credited with many ideas due to his eventual fame rather than textual evidence that traces the ideas back to him. When we turn to questions of composition in the next section, Huang Tingjian's role is more obvious. But there too, Huihong's articulation and transmission of poetry techniques associated with Buddhist ideas that were later popularized shouldn't be underestimated.

3.3 Poetry Composition:

Although Huihong emphasized avoiding restrictions and conventions in poetry, he did not disapprove of prescriptive composition techniques. There are many entries in *Night Chats* articulating traditional and new poetry methods.[60] But Huihong gravitated towards those techniques that required the poet to think outside the box and that were designed to give a poem more vitality and depth. He was interested in figuring out how the vague poetic concepts circulating at the time could be articulated and implemented. At the same time, he was wary of any reification that could lead to rigid interpretations. The methods that borrowed terminology from Chan Buddhism were particularly conducive to this kind of balance between flexibility and structure. In this section, we focus on the methods in *Night Chats* that have ties to Buddhism and that eventually evolved to become concepts in Jiangxi poetics, namely, "eye within the lines" and the methods of "swapping the bones" and "appropriating the embryo."

3.3.1 Huang Tingjian's "Eye within the lines"

In *Night Chats*, Huang Tingjian's "eye within the lines" (*ju zhong you yan* 句中有眼) is presented as an element of composition. It is represented as the single line or couplet of a

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[60] Huihong includes discussions of methods that were popular by the time he was writing, such as parallel lines (duiju 對句) and word matches, allusions (yongshi 用事), "implications" (hanxu 含蓄), carving lines (zhuo ju 琢句). Other methods were less well-known but would be adopted into Jiangxi poetics later on. For a complete list of the poetry ideas (*shilun* 詩論) in *Night Chats*, see Lu Quangang "*Lengzhai yehua* yanjiu," pp. 76-82.

Zhou Yukai has pointed out that Huihong was not the first monk to show interest in identifying concrete methods of composition. Before the rise of *shihua* midway through the Northern Song, beginning in the late Tang and Five Dynasties, monks had created lists of methods for the composition, as can be seen in poetry manuals. Zhou, "Huihong yu huangu duotai fa," p. 88.

poem that expresses something beyond literal meanings, the part of the poem that has the most resonance (*yun* 韻), the implied meaning. Huihong's examples in *Night Chats* and the literary and Buddhist associations of the phrase show that the "eye within the lines" originally referred to a full line or even a couplet of poetry. That is why I translate the *ju zhong you yan* as "eye within the lines" of the poem, not "eye within the line," as it is often rendered. The concept is more fully understood when we look at its ties with resonance and the "dharma eye" discussed in Chan. According to Zhou Yukai, besides containing the resonance of the poem, lines indicated as eyes in Song poetics often contained a "Chan trigger" (*chanji* 禪機).[61] The lines of poetry Huihong identifies as eyes within the lines in *Night Chats*, from poems by Wang Anshi, Su Shi and Huang Tingjian, do not appear in a Buddhist context nor do they contain any Chan lessons, but they are formed from techniques like allusion and personification that were developed in part by a Chan understanding of the world.

Huihong was writing about the eye within the lines when it was closely associated with the Buddhist idea of the "dharma eye" (*fayan*). But "dharma eye" is a multivalent Buddhist concept. In Chan, the dharma eye has its roots in the phrase "treasury of the true dharma eye"(*zheng fa yan zang* 正法眼藏). This phrase appears in the legend recorded in

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[61] A "Chan trigger" or "opportune point" *jifeng* 機鋒 is a phrase or dialogue that is spoken in response to the specific needs, abilities, and spiritual maturity of the listeners for the purpose bringing about sudden insight. It jabs the listeners into seeing through their attachments or ignorance. (Based on *jifeng* in *Hanyu da cidian* and the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*). Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, pp. 202-203, writes that the poetic resonance of the eye within the lines (often implying a Chan trigger) is similar to the ineffable and nimble "treasury of the true dharma eye" expressed by Chan masters, and he gives numerous examples of the phrase used in this way in poems from the Song.

lamp histories about the origin of Chan, whereby Śākyamuni Buddha holds up a lotus flower in front of the assembly and Mahākāśyapa responds with a smile, indicating he had received the wordless "mind seal." At the time, Śākyamuni is recorded to have said, "I have the treasury of the true dharma eye: the subtle (*miao*) mind of *nirvāṇa*, the true appearance of no appearance, the subtle and marvelous dharma door, not established using words, transmission outside the teachings, and I transmit it to Mahākāśyapa" 吾有正法眼藏，涅槃妙心，實相無相，微妙法門，不立文字，教外別傳，付囑摩訶迦葉.[62] It is this Chan idea of the dharma eye that is most associated with the eye within the lines. The true dharma eye represents the essence of Chan characterized by the phrases "not established in words" (*bu li wen zi*) and a "transmission outside the teachings" (*jiaowai bie chuan*). The phrase "eye within the lines" developed in Chan Buddhism during the Song to re-emphasize the role of words and texts in Chan while not contradicting these maxims.[63] The argument was that although in appearance Chan literature seemed to be using words to "establish" Chan, if the texts still retained the spirit of the "true dharma-eye," they were still capable of passing on the spirit of the Chan dharma door and the subtle mind of *nirvāṇa.*[64] The "eye within the lines" in reference to Chan, as Zhou Yukai explains, manifests in "the phrases where 'treasury of the true dharma eye' is present," as in the non-sequiturs of Chan discourse such

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[62] Qtd. in Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 201. Also see "正法眼藏" in *Foguan da cidian*, p. 1993.

[63] The earliest record of a Chan monk using the phrase "eye within the lines" is from Dahui Zonggao's teacher, Yuanwu Keqin 圜悟克勤 (1063-1135), who is recorded as saying "An eye within the lines is permissible, where the meaning goes beyond the words" 不妨句中有眼，言外有意. See *Foguo Yuanwu Chanshi biyan lu* 佛果圜悟禪師碧巖錄 *juan* 3 T48, no. 2003, p. 166a28-a29.

[64] Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 201.

as “pointing east while saying west” 指東道西, i.e., the ungraspable Chan triggers of awakening.[65]

The “true dharma-eye” of Chan was applied to the literary arts to express meanings not captured by literal expression. Huang Tingjian uses the concept to discuss the intangible resonance of good calligraphy as well as poetry.[66] When discussing Du Fu’s poetry, Huang likened the eye of Du Fu’s lines to the intent of the famous musician Peng Ze’s 彭澤 music that went beyond the strings.[67] Of calligraphy, Huang said: “[The idea of] the brush within the character (*zi* 字) is like the Chan [idea that] that within the lines there is an eye” 字中有筆，如禪家句中有眼.[68] Zhou Yukai describes the “brush within the character” to mean qualities of brushwork that give a character resonance (*yun*).[69]

Expositions of Huang’s poetry “eye” often mischaracterize the concept using later developments and interpretations. In the Southern Song, when “eye of the lines” became a major concept in Jiangxi poetry, it would eventually designate a single character, and with

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[65] Ibid., p. 202.

[66] Ibid., pp. 201-202. Interestingly, although the concept of the “eye” in “eye of the lines” was inspired by the Chan dharma eye, the phrase *ju zhong you yan* does not appear often in Buddhist texts until after Huang Tingjian, suggesting that poets helped to popularize the phrase before it became widely adopted by Chan Buddhists.

[67] The couplet, “Chosen lacuna: the eye within the lines, / Peng Ze’s intention: his intent is outside the notes” 拾遺句中有眼，彭澤意在弦外,” occurs in the second poem of the series entitled, “Zeng Gaozimian si shou” 贈高子勉四首, in *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu* 16.573. Qut. in Zhou, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 202.

[68] See Huang Tingjian, “Ti jiang ben fa tie” 題絳本法帖, *Yu zhang Huang xiansheng wenji* 豫章黃先生文集 28.9b. Zhou quotes three different places including this one where Huang Tingjian likened the eye of poetry or calligraphy to the Chan eye within the lines, *Fayan yu shixin*, pp. 201-202.

[69] Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 202.

this narrowing, the original Buddhist associations were lost. By this time, Huang's eye was also occasionally referred to as the poetic eye, *shiyan*. But based on Northern Song sources including *Night Chats*, Huang's eye does not refer to a readerly appreciation or recognition, like Huihong's poetic eye, nor is there any indication that Huang used "eye" to refer to a single character in a line of poetry. In the examples that Huihong provides, a full poetic line or even a couplet is necessary to create resonance (*yun*).

Huihong provides us with examples of the kinds of lines and couplets that were considered eyes of the lines. Based on the two entries in *Night Chats* where he records examples of couplets identified as "eyes within the lines," we can see that the eye seems to refer to the part of the poem where an interesting and unique idea is expressed by suggestion, not literally spelled out. Various techniques are used to achieve these eyes. The first entry gives examples of lines that contain a Buddhist-influenced personification technique. The entry reads,

> As for the skill of crafting phrases, when we reach Jinggong [Wang Anshi], Dongpo and Shangu [Huang Tingjian], all the possible variations, ancient and modern, have been exhausted. Jinggong wrote, "The river moon, turns the sky into daylight, / mountain peak clouds impart darkness into the dusk." Also, "A single river protecting the fields encircles the green, / The two mountains burst open the door and send in the green."
>
> Dongpo's poem, "Crabapple Blossoms," reads: "I only fear that in the depths of night the blossoms will leave while I'm sleeping, / so I hold high the silver candle to shine on their red makeup." Also, "I carry this stone back with me, / and in my sleeve, I possess the eastern sea."
>
> Shangu said: "These are all called the eye within the lines. Students of poetry don't recognize these extremely subtle words. Their resonance can never be surpassed."
>
> 造語之工，至于荊公、東坡、山谷，盡古今之變。荊公曰：〔江月轉空為白晝，嶺雲分暝與黃昏。〕又曰：〔一水護田將綠繞，兩山排闥送青來。〕東坡《海棠》詩曰：〔只祗恐夜深花睡去，高燒銀燭照紅妝。〕又曰：〔我携

此石歸，袖中有東海。〕山谷曰：〔此皆謂之句中眼，學者不知此妙語，韻終不勝。〕[70]

What is striking about these couplets, two by Wang Anshi and two by Su Shi, is the agency that is given to inanimate objects in nature. In Wang's first couplet, from his poem "Deng Baogong ta" 登寶公塔, the moonlight seems to turn (*zhuan* 轉) the sky into daytime and the clouds distribute or impart (*fen* 分) darkness into the dusk. The implication is perhaps that the moon and the clouds bring about the appearance of nighttime or daytime, rather than the rising and setting of the sun. In his second couplet, from the series entitled "Shu huyin xiansheng bi" 書湖陰先生幣, a river protects (*hu* 護) the fields by encircling the green (*jiang lu rao* 將綠繞), and two mountains push open (*ta* 排) the door sending (*song* 送) in blue-green.

In the couplet from "Crabapple Blossoms" 海棠, Su personifies the blossoms, suggesting they might fall during the night, when no one is looking, as if on purpose, like a courtesan leaving in the night. Su stands out all night watching them in candlelight, implying that by doing so he can prevent them from sneaking away. The second couplet by Su also contains a clever implication. By carrying the stone from the seashore back home in his sleeve, it is as if he is bringing back a bit of the eastern sea. But the marvelousness of the lines is that they let the reader make these connections, rather than state them outright.

[70] "Jinggong, Dongpo ju zhong yan" 荊公東坡句中眼, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.49.

Zhou Yukai sees the couplets in this entry as examples of the Song technique of personification influenced by the Buddhist concept of *zhuanwu* 轉物 (to turn/move/transform objects).[71] *Zhuanwu* is mentioned in the *Lengyan jing* when the Buddha is speaking to Ananda about perception. Explaining why people compare big and small—in other words, make distinctions with their sight—the Buddha states that it is because "they have lost their original (awakened) mind, and are consequently turned by external objects"失於本心，為物所轉. In contrast, "If they can turn objects (*zhuanwu*) they are the same as the Thus Come One"若能轉物，則同如來.[72] In other words, the idea of *zhuanwu* is that people have the potential to control how they perceive objects and not let objects dictate their experience (because ultimately objects are insubstantial, empty). Zhou explains that "from the perspective of Chan, *zhuanwu* is an aspect of the 'treasury of the true dharma eye,' whereas applied to poetry, it is what creates ineffable resonance.[73] We can see that Wang Anshi and Su Shi have been empowered to *zhuanwu* in these couplets. They are manipulating how nature interacts with the viewer, not simply describing how it appears using the ordinary, discriminating mind. Looking at the couplets in the context of their full poems, the application of *zhuanwu* has made them the most animated and suggestive lines of their respective poems. According to Huihong, Huang Tingjian identified these lines as "eyes

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[71] Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 202.

[72] *Da Foding Shoulengyan jing, j.* 2 (T 19: 945.111c26-27). See *The Śūraṅgama Sūtra, a New Translation*, p. 65, for an English translation and commentary.

[73] Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 202.

within the lines" and acknowledged that the subtlety of the words (*miaoyu* 妙語) is not easy to understand.

The eye of a poem could be created using other techniques besides *zhuanwu*-style personification. In another *Night Chats* entry, for example, the eyes of poems are couplets with clever allusions. Huihong sees Wang Anshi, Su Shi, and Huang Tingjian as exemplars of this technique.

> When using allusions to shape lines, subtlety is reached by talking about the application/function (用) of something without mentioning it by name (名). Only Jinggong [Wang Anshi], Dongpo [Su Shi], and Shangu [Huang Tingjian] understood this.
>
> Jinggong wrote: "Accompanying the wind, duck-greens, ripple by ripple rise / Playing with the sun, goose-yellows, twisting and turning dangle." This is speaking about the application of water and willows, but the poet never mentions the names "water" or "willow."
>
> In his poem, *Taking Leave of Ziyou*, Dongpo wrote: "At least it is better than meeting but not recognizing each other, / Your face has completely changed but your voice is still the same."[74] This is using an allusion instead of stating the name of something.
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> Shangu said: "A Baron of Tube City [the writer] has the appearance of someone who doesn't eat meat, / Brother Square Hole [Money] has written a letter terminating our relationship."[75] He also said: "Little meaning in his words, there is

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[74] This poem is listed under a long title that begins "Ziyou jiang fu Nandu" 子由將赴南都, *Su Shi shiji* 15.745-47. The couplet Huihogn quotes is a reference to an account recorded in the "Danggu lie zhuan" 黨錮列傳 chapter of the *Hou Hanshu* about a meeting between Xia Fu 夏馥 and his little brother in which his brother didn't recognize him until he heard his voice. See the editor's note in *Su Shi shiji*, p. 746. Su Shi is using (*yong* 用) the sentiment from the story to express his feelings upon parting from his brother, Ziyou, but he doesn't mention Xia Fu's name (*ming* 名) to do so.

[75] "The Baron of Tube City"(*guancheng zi* 管城子) is a reference to a famous comic essay by Han Yu entitled "The Biography of Brush" about Mr. Brush (pun on the surname "*Mao*"毛) who is enfeoffed as a nobleman at a place called "Tube City" (*guancheng* 官城), "Tube" (*guan* 官) being a name for a writing brush. ("Mao Ying Zhuan" 毛穎傳, *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu* 8.325). "The Baron of Tube City" therefore refers to Mr. Brush, which, in turn, is an analogy for a writer. When Huang writes, "The Baron of Tube City has the appearance of someone who doesn't eat meat" he is implying that he, the writer, has the appearance of someone who is too poor to eat meat. The second line is also an

not even that / Ice and snow gaze upon each other, there is this gentleman [bamboo].”[76] Also, “I see that people’s emotions are like a game of Chess Five / I understand that events in this world are the same as Getting Three in the Morning.”[77] ‘Chess Five’ is what we now call “Curong.” A commentary on the *Hou Han shu* says, “It is just that we often place people in dangerous places.”[78] But as for eyes within the lines, they really can’t be explained in worldly terms.

The fact is, words are indicative of a person’s inner virtue. That is why it is said, “A person of virtue will certainly have something [of significance] to say.”[79]

When Wang Jinggong wanted to remove the perpetual problems of many generations in order to rejuvenate royal rule, he wrote a snow poem which went something like this: “The impact [of snow] makes you think it will engulf all the land, / But in the end its beneficial effect is to cause spring to return. / The farmers don’t consider that it is a lucky sign of a bountiful harvest, / They only pray for clear skies for thousands of miles.”

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amusing analogy for his poverty. “Square Hole” (*kongfang* 孔方) is one way to refer to money, Song coins having a square hole at their center. “Sent a letter terminating our relationship” is also an allusion to a certain Ji Kang 嵇康 of the Three Kingdoms Period who is famous for sending a letter breaking off a relationship with someone else. Huang’s allusion therefore means: “Brother Money has sent a letter breaking off our relationship.”

[76] The first line of the couplet refers to Wang Yan from the Jin Dynasty who had a very greedy wife, so Wang never dared mention money in her presence. When he got up in the morning, if he saw any money lying around, he would tell the maid, “Take that away,” never directly saying the word “money” for fear his wife would hear and become greedy. In the second line of the couplet, “this gentleman,” is a reference to bamboo. The poem is third in the series entitled: “Ciyun waijiu xi Wang Zhengzhong san zhang feng shao xiang Nan bing hui zhi Xiangyang she yi ma jiu zhou jian guo san shou,” in *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu* 2.808.

[77] “Getting Three in the Morning” (*sanchao* 朝三) is short for the phrase: “Getting Three in the Morning and Four at Night” (*chao san mu si* 朝三暮四) from a famous story in “Qi wu lun” 齊物論 chapter of the *Zhuangzi* about a monkey keeper who feeds his monkeys chestnuts. He tells the monkeys, “Three in the morning and four at night” and the monkeys are all upset. So, he says, “Okay, four in the morning and three at night” and all the monkeys are delighted. The phrase originally implied that to cheat people all you needed was to change the names without changing the substance. Later it came to be an analogy for unlimited changes and transformations and impermanence. “Curong” 蹙融 is another form of Chinese chess, presumably more familiar to the Song readers than “Chess Five” (*gewu* 格五).

[78] The text quoted here by Huihong is not found in existing standard commentaries on the work. It is not clear how this line fits within the discussion, unless it is to shed some light on Su Shi’s lines which were an allusion to the *Hou Han shu*.

[79] This is a quote from *Lunyu* 14.4 “The Master said, “Someone with virtue will certainly have something to say. Someone who talks, doesn’t necessarily have virtue” 子曰：有德者，必有言。有言者，不必有得.

> 用事琢句，妙在言其用，不言其名耳。此法唯荊公、東坡、山谷三老知之。荊公曰：〔含風鴨綠鱗鱗起，弄日鵝黃裊裊垂。〕此言水柳之用，而不言水柳之名也。東坡《別子由》詩：〔猶勝相逢不相識，形容變盡語音存。〕此用事而不言其名也。山谷曰：〔管城子無食肉相，孔方兄有絕交書。〕又曰：〔語言少味無阿堵，冰雪相看有此君。〕又曰：〔眼看人情如格五，心知世事等朝三。〕〔格五〕，今之蹙融是也。《後漢》注云：〔常置人於險處耳。〕然句中眼者，世尤不能解。〔語言〕者，蓋其德之候也，故曰：〔有德者必有言。〕王荊公欲革歷世因循之弊，以新政化，作雪詩，其略曰：〔勢合便疑包地盡，功成終欲放春回。農家不念豐年瑞，祈欲青天萬里開。〕[80]

The entry begins with examples of allusions where the poet has expressed the function or application (*yong* 用) of something rather than explicitly naming it. Without explanation, these lines are quite incomprehensible, even to Huihong's readers. He explains some of the more obscure allusions. But even with the explanation, there is something about the lines that remains inexplicable. After discussing the lines, Huihong writes, "But as for eyes within the lines, they really can't be explained in worldly terms" 然句中眼者，世尤不能解. These are eyes within the lines, and like the true dharma eye, their marvelousness or efficacy can't be captured in words. It wasn't that Huihong was interested in allusions that were intentionally obscure.[81] In these examples, not stating the name of the thing being described lets its appearance or function speak for itself. By avoiding directly naming the object, the poets invite readers to experience the object viscerally, without making the discriminations that come to mind upon hearing the name of a familiar object. We can see how the Chan

[80] "Shi yan qi yong, bu yan qi ming" 詩言其用不言其名, *Lengzhai yehua* 4.43.

[81] See for example, Huihong's attack on Li Shangying's obscure allusions in "Xikun ti" 西崑體, *Lengzhai yehua* 4.38.

undertones of the eye within the lines made it an apt phrase for expressing something that would be lost or ineffective if described literally. Like the true dharma-eye, it is difficult for ordinary people to grasp, a refrain that seems to be repeated when discussing any aesthetic principle or composition method that has ties to ineffable Buddhist concepts.

The entry concludes with Wang Anshi's snow poem, another example of the efficacy of describing something without naming it. His poem is about snow, but he never uses the word "snow." Furthermore, Wang plays on the deceptive nature of appearances by describing the uninformed reactions of the farmers to heavy snowfall. On a superficial level, snow indicates the off season for farmers. But looking deeper, heavy snow is the harbinger of a good harvest. Without winter, there can be no spring.

It is unclear if Huihong intended Wang's poem to be another example of eye within the lines. It is certainly meant to be an example of a person with virtue having something "significant to say" and a demonstration of an adept use of poetic implication.

Besides showing that the eye of the lines referred to a full line or to a couplet, Huihong's representation also demonstrates that Huang's eye was distinct from the poetic eye (*shiyan*) as used by Su Shi and Huihong himself. As recorded by Huihong, Huang's eye within the lines was a flexible composition technique used to pursue, without restricting, the elusive ideal of resonance. It was a concept that had the Chan undertones of the "treasury of the true dharma eye" used to describe lines that expressed something beyond words. Lines with eyes created meaning by allusion and implication rather than literal expression. Such lines use various methods to achieve the ideal of "words come to an end, but meaning lingers" 語盡而意有餘.

By the Southern Song, Huang's "eye within the lines" or variants of the same phrase (such as "eye of the lines" 句中眼/句眼), was repurposed to refer to the most "vivid, fresh, or lively character" in a line of poetry.[82] Eventually, this eye was narrowed down even further to refer specifically to the third character in a pentasyllabic line or the fifth character in a heptasyllabic line.

One of the earliest records of the "eye" being used to refer to a single character is preserved by He Wen 何汶 (*jinshi* 1196) in *Zhuzhuang shihua* 竹莊詩話 who quotes an earlier, no longer extant miscellany as stating, "The fifth character of a heptasyllabic poem is the eye of the line, and the third character of a pentasyllabic poem is the eye of the line. When the ancients smelted words, all they had to do was smelt the eye of the line"五字詩以第三字為句眼，七字詩以第五字為句眼，古人鍊字，只於句眼上鍊.[83] This trend to narrow the meaning would continue in the Yuan dynasty. Mou Yan 牟巘 (1227-1311) used Huang's exact phrase, "eye within the lines," to talk about choosing potent words in a line of poetry and Fang Hui 方回 (1227-1307) used the variant "eye of the lines" 句中眼 to talk about the Jiangxi school's emphasis on smelting the third or fifth character in a line.[84] With the narrowing of focus to a single character, the concept of the eye of the lines began to take

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[82] Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 203.

[83] *Manzhai yulu* 漫齋語錄 as quoted in He Wen's 何汶 *Zhuzhuang shihua* 竹莊詩話 *juan* 1.8-9.

[84] See Mou Yan's colophon "Ba En Shangren shi" 跋恩上人詩 in *Mou shi Lingyang ji* 牟氏陵陽集, *j.* 17 in which he says, "To use a new and lively word is what is called 'the eye of the line;' it is to go off the beaten path to a place where even those familiar with the path don't go" 用字新，用字活，所謂詩中有句，句中有眼，真是透出畦徑，能道人所不到處. Fang Hui identifies Jiangxi poet Pan Dalin's 潘大臨 so-called "resonate word" (響字) "the eye of the line" (*juzhong yan*) in *Yingkui lüsui* 瀛奎律髓, *j.* 42. Both examples are quoted in Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, pp. 203-204.

on negative connotations. By the Ming dynasty the narrow focus on coming up with a single unusual character, referred to as "the eye of the lines," was the object of ridicule.[85] Needless to say, the original Buddhist implications of the eye were also forgotten, superseded by considerations of craft.[86]

The narrow focus on crafting a single word doesn't have anything to do with Huang's eye as represented by Huihong and is far removed from Huihong's poetic eye. Huihong's presentation of the poetic eye in the poetry taboo entry and the eye within the line as independent concepts helps to unravel how they were first used in poetry criticism during the Northern Song, before they were conflated and coopted by the Jiangxi school.[87]

Today, both Huang Tingjian's original concept of "eye within the lines" and the later idea of a single key character in a line are referred to as the "poetic eye" (*shiyan*). But the poetic eye as used by Su Shi and Huihong, and possibly even Fan Wen, was a different concept than Huang Tingjian's "eye within the lines" and it had different Buddhist implications. Both the eye of the lines and the poetic eye have been linked to the "dharma eye," but the Buddhist concepts associated with each term are different. The eye within the line is associated with the dharma eye of Chan, emphasizing the use of words to express something that is beyond words. In contrast, we have seen how Buddhist ideas associated

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[85] For example, Ming writer Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 criticized poets after Du Fu for their focus on the single character. He said, "The unusual character in a line was taken as the eye" 句中有奇字為眼 and because of this, "the art of crafting lines became superficial"句法便不混涵. Qtd. in Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 204. Original quote from the middle section of Hu's *Shisou* 詩藪, *juan* 5.

[86] Zhou Yukai, *Fayan yu shixin*, p. 204.

[87] More research needs to be done on the development of these concepts in the late Song and beyond. Here we are focused on how *shiyan* and eye within the lines were originally conceived.

with the poetic eye are linked to the non-discriminatory view of reality rooted in Huayan principles such as the interpenetration of principle and phenomena.

As we have seen, available records indicate that Huang Tingjian's eye related to the composition of poetry or execution of calligraphy. There is no record that Huang ever used the eye of the line to refer to the ability to observe and select from external scenes, like Su Shi's *shiyan*, nor as the critic or reader's transcendent appreciation of artistic works, as Huihong used *shiyan* in *Night Chats* (and possibly Fan Wen as well). Huang's eye was an approach used by the poet that manifested within the lines of a poem, or, in the case of a calligrapher, in his brushwork.

3.3.2 "Swapping Bones" and "Snatching the Embryo"

Besides the "eye of the lines," the poetic techniques in *Night Chats* rooted in Buddhist ideas, which became important in the development of Song poetic discourse, are the two complementary methods of "swapping the bones" (*huangu* 換骨) and "appropriating the embryo/womb" (*duotai* 奪胎).[88] Huihong presents them as techniques for creating poems based on ideas from earlier poems by other authors deficient in vitality. He defines "swapping the bones" as the technique of borrowing an idea from an earlier poem and expressing it in new words. "Appropriating the embryo" also begins with an idea from an earlier poem, but there is more manipulation of the idea before it is expressed with a new form and appearance in the new poem.

[88] The word *tai* 胎 can refer to the embryo or the womb, depending on the context.

Presented by Huihong as two separate but related methods, swapping the bones (*huangu)* and appropriating the embryo (*duotai*) were eventually combined to form a single method called *duotai huangu* (appropriating the embryo and swapping the bones). This new phrase, along with Huang Tingjian's analogy of *diantie chengjin* 點鐵成金 (to torch iron and transform it into gold), became core practices of the Jiangxi school of poetry.[89] Conventionally attributed to Huang Tingjina, *duotai huangu* has long been explained as originating in the Daoist practice of *tuotai huangu* 脫胎換骨, "to shed the embryo and exchange the bones [into those of an transcendent]."[90] But looking at Huihong's entry in which the methods first appeared and uncovering the Buddhist origins of the terminology reveals how these methods were originally understood by Huihong, someone who discussed poetry directly with Huang Tingjian. Moreover, while *duotai huangu* is generally considered to be Huang Tingjian's invention, a slight change of the modern punctuation in the *Night Chats* entry suggests the possibility that Huihong may have initiated the original idea.

The *Night Chats* entry discussing these methods consists of a quote from Huang Tingjian about the limits of poetic talent, a pithy explanation of each method, and several poems demonstrating each method. The entry reads,

> Shangu [Huang Tingjian] said: "The meaning of a poem is inexhaustible, but peoples' talents are limited. To pursue inexhaustible meaning with limited talent—even [Tao]Yuanming and Shaoling [Du Fu] didn't have such skill. Nevertheless, to retain [a poem's] meaning while constructing new words, we call 'swapping the bones.' To repurpose the meaning and illustrate it, we call 'appropriating the embryo.'"

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[89] See Yugen Wang, *Ten Thousand Scrolls*, p. 36 and p. 156.

[90] Zhou Yukai, *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue*, p. 117.

山谷云：〔詩意無窮，而人之才有限。以有限之才，追無窮之意，雖淵明、少陵不得工也。然不易其意而造其語，謂之換骨法；規模其意形容之，謂之奪胎法。〕

As an example, take Zheng Gu's "Chrysanthemums on the Tenth": "Just because people today have lost interest, / you need not let your autumn fragrance die out overnight." Here his point (*yi* 意) is good. But the problem is the line is deficient in vitality.

如鄭谷《十日菊》曰：〔自緣今日人心別，未必秋香一夜衰。〕此意甚佳，而病在氣不長。

The reason the writing of the Western Han was robust, profound, elegant, and powerful was because it had ample vitality. Zeng Zigu said: "Poems should cause people at first reading [to feel that] although the words have come to an end, the meaning lingers on. This is the way the ancients applied their minds." 西漢文章雄深雅健者，其氣長故也。曾子固曰：〔詩當使人一覽語盡而意有餘，乃古人用 心處。〕

Thus, Jinggong wrote in his chrysanthemum poem: "After the many flowers and the hundred grasses wither, only then will you see a person at leisure holding a single sprig [of chrysanthemum]."[91] And Dongpo wrote: "When it comes down to it, the ten thousand things are a but a dream; Enough! Enough! Tomorrow [among] the yellow flowers the butterflies will also be anxious."[92]

所以荊公作《菊詩》則曰：〔千花百卉雕零後，始見閒人把一枝。〕東坡則曰：〔萬事到頭終是夢，休，休，休，明日黃花蝶也愁。〕

Another example is Academician Li's [Li Bai] poem, that reads, "The birds have not all flown away, sky at dusk is jade-colored," and also, "At the edge of the clear sky, the last goose disappears." But the flaw is the same as discussed above.

又如李翰林詩曰：〔鳥飛不盡暮天碧。〕又曰：〔青天盡處沒孤鴻。〕然其病如前所論。

Shangu's poem "Climbing Da Guan Tower," reads:

山谷作《登達觀臺》詩曰：

瘦藤拄到風煙上 The flimsy vines lean where the smoke and wind arise,

乞與遊人眼界開 I request that the traveler's vision open up.

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[91] These lines are a slight variation of the final couplet of Wang Anshi's poem, "He wan ju" 和晚菊.

[92] These lines are from Su Shi's song lyric, "Nan xiangzi, chongjiu hanhui lou cheng Xu jun you" 南鄉子重九涵輝樓呈徐君猷, *Dongpo ci* 2.77.

不知眼界闊多少 I don't know how open vision can be,

白鳥去盡青天回 White birds vanish, blue sky returns.

These are all examples of the technique of "exchanging the bones."

凡此之類，皆換骨法也。

Gu Kuang's poem reads: "If one farewell lasts for twenty years / How many partings can a person bear?" His poem is simple and distinctive, and his meaning is refined and clear. In Shu Wang's "Poem Given to an Old Friend" he says:

顧況詩曰：〔一別二十年，人堪幾回別。〕其詩簡緩而立意精確。舒王作《與故人詩》曰：

一日君家把酒杯 Since we took up the wine cups at your home,

六年波浪與塵埃 I've wandered in the dust for six years.

不知烏石江頭路 On the river road to Wushi, who knows—

到老相逢得幾回 How many chances to meet we will have before we're old?

Letian's [Bai Juyi] poem says:

樂天詩曰：

臨風杪秋樹 Facing the wind in the year-end autumn trees,

對酒長年身 My aging body sitting in front of the wine.

醉貌如霜葉 My drunken face looks like frost-touched leaves,

雖紅不是春 Although it is red, it is not because I am young.

Dongpo wrote in his poem "In the South," "The children are mistakenly delighted about the redness on my face/As I laugh, how could they know it was red from drinking?" All such examples are appropriating the embryo. Students [of poetry] can't afford to be ignorant of this."

東坡《南中作》詩曰：〔兒童誤喜朱顏在，一笑那知是醉紅。〕凡此之類，皆奪胎法也。學者不可不知。[93]

Like the poetry taboo entry, Huihong begins the entry by raising a problem, this time a composition issue brought up by Huang Tingjian: how can something that is unlimited be

[93] "Huangu duotai fa" 換骨奪胎法, *Lengzhai yehua* 1.17.

expressed with something that is limited? The methods of swapping the bones and appropriating the embryo are presented as a solution or work-around to this problem. He once again links the source of the problem as related to vitality (*qi*). The idea in Zheng Gu's 鄭谷 (849-911) lines is very fine, but the line lacks vitality 此意甚佳，而病在氣不長. In contrast, the writing of the Western Han was "robust, profound, elegant, and powerful" 雄深雅健者 because it has "ample vitality" 其氣長故也. Zeng Gong 曾鞏 (1019-1083; referred to by his courtesy name Zigu子固) declares that the meaning of poems should continue on even after they have been read just once 一覽語盡而意有餘. The implication is that the methods of swapping the bones and appropriating the embryo can infuse vitality into lackluster lines.

Huihong gives poetic examples of each method. His pattern is to give lines from a Tang poem, sometimes pointing out that it falls short in terms of vitality, followed by one or two examples of superior lines that have "swapped the bones" or "appropriated the embryo" of the earlier Tang poem. In all but one instance, the poems used to illustrate the application of these methods are attributed to Song poets. The implication is that the poems that have swapped the bones or appropriated the embryo of the earlier inferior poems have been infused with ample vitality and a meaning that can be savored.

To illustrate the method of swapping the bones, Huihong first quotes lines from Zheng Gu's 鄭谷 (849-911) poem on chrysanthemums, followed by lines on the same topic by Wang Anshi and Su Shi. Then two lines from different poems with the image of birds flying off in the distance are quoted, followed by Huang Tingjian's poem with the same

idea.[94] Wang Anshi, Su Shi and Huang Tingjian are all supposed to have improved on the original poems by keeping the meaning but changing the words, or "swapping the bones." For the method of "appropriating the embryo," Huihong gives lines by Gu Kuang 顧況 (ca. 725-814) on the theme of parting, followed by Wang Anshi's poem on a similar topic. In another example of appropriating the embryo, lines by Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) describe his ruddy appearance as an old man in his cups and Su Shi plays on a similar idea in his lines. The original theme of parting or jokes about aging seem to be manipulated in creative ways in the later poems identified by Huihong as "appropriating the embryo."

These are methods that Huihong articulates in order to make more concrete and functional the practice of revitalizing common topics with creative new wording and repurposing old ideas. But none of the poets Huihong quotes described what they were doing as swapping bones or appropriating embryos, even if they did play around with main meaning and words of poems from the past.[95] It appears that originally these methods developed out of close analysis of poems already written. Huihong describes the methods rather than prescribes them. Nevertheless, there is a sense that this discussion was also meant

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[94] The line he attributes to Li Bai ("Academician Li") is actually from the Song poet Guo Xiangzheng's 郭祥正 poem "Jinshan xing" 金山行.

[95] In contrast, Huihong describes himself as applying the "swapping the bones method" in at least one instance in his writings, such as in the title of his poem: "The ancient style poem: 'Amidst the white of the reed catkins are the reds of the smartweed, / One day on the autumn river between gloom and peace. / Two egrets stand opposite one another, /and a few people make a water scene screen.' While its principle can be adopted, its wording is shallow and rough. I call my adaption 'swapping the bones'"古詩云蘆花白間蓼花紅一日秋江慘憺中兩箇鷺鷥相對立幾人喚作水屏風然其理可取而其詞鄙野余為改之曰換骨法. (J 23: B135.653a18-20; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 16.1059).

to promote the use of these methods in the creation of new poems, as implied by Huihong's directive to poetry students at the end of the entry.

The method of "swapping the bones" is illustrated in another entry in *Night Chats* featuring Huihong, Huang Tingjian and Huihong's uncle Yuancai. The entry is an account rather than a theoretical discussion. Besides providing a glimpse of how methods were talked about between poets, the account demonstrates that these new poetry methods were applied to poems already in circulation, where the poet himself may not have consciously set out to apply the method in the first place.

The account includes two autobiographical poems by Huihong in which he takes on the persona of a fisherman, a poem attributed to Huang Tingjian written in response, and Yuancai's comment that Huang's poem is an example of "swapping the bones." The full entry reads,

> When I left Bingzhou and went back to my hometown, I stayed over in Yanfu Temple. In front of the temple was a stream. The countryside along the bank was my playground as a child in Xiezhou. Once at the peak of spring, I was walking alone along the creekbank and wrote a short poem:
>
> 予自并州還故里，館延福寺。寺前有小溪，風物類斜川，予兒童時戲劇處也。嘗春深獨行溪上，作小詩曰：
>
> 小溪倚春漲 Little stream rises with the spring [rain],
>
> 攘我釣月灣 Preventing me from fishing for the moon on the bay.[96]
>
> 新晴為不平 The recent clear skies are indignant on my behalf,
>
> 約束晚來還 They keep in check [the rising stream] until evening for my return.

[96] "Fishing for the moon" is a reference to Tang monk Chuanzi Decheng's 船子德誠 fishing poem entitled "Bozhao ge" 撥棹歌 which describes how he returned from fishing without having caught anything but the moonlight filling his boat.

銀梭時撥剌 The silver shuttle fish from time to time splish and splash,

破碎波中山 Breaking apart mountain [reflections] amid the waves.

整釣背落日 I adjust my fishing rod so my back is to the setting sun:

一葉軟紅間 A single leaf amidst the pinkish gloaming.

Also, one cold evening, I turned back to look at a white gull and composed a poem:[97] 又嘗暮寒歸見白鳥，作詩曰：

剩水殘山慘淡間 A manmade pool and artificial mountain in the melancholy atmosphere,

白鷗無事釣舟閑 White gull with nothing to do, sits in leisure on my fishing boat.

箇中著我添圖畫 Right here, place me into this painting,

便似華亭落照灣 Then I'll resemble [monk] Huating in a sunset lit bay.[98]

Luzhi [Huang Tingjian] told me: "I observe that your poem speaking about smoke and waves being dimly discernible is like Lu of Zhongzhou's discussion of government policy: every character is candid and frank.[99] How could it be that in your past life you were not among the boatmen or a river-bank dwellers?

魯直謂予曰：「觀君詩說烟波縹緲處，如陸忠州論國政，字字坦夷。前身非篙師、沙戶種類耶？」

He had a poem that went something like this:

有詩，其略曰：

吾年六十子方半 I am sixty years old, you are just now half my age,
槁項頂螺忘歲年 With withered neck and coiled topknot I've lost track of time.[100]

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[97] This poem is entitled "Zhou xing shu suo jian" 舟行書所見 and can also be found in *Shimen wenzi chan*; J 23: B135.651b23; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 16.1040.

[98] Huating Chuanzi 華亭船子 (Tang dynasty). Huihong may be referring to Huating's *gāthā* about fishing trip that yielded no returns but "the entire boat empty bears the moonlight home" 滿船空載月明歸. Huihong quotes the *gāthā* and Huang Tingjian's later reworking of it into a *shi* poem in "Huating Chuanzi heshang jie" 華亭船子和尚偈, *Lengzhai yehua* 7.63.

[99] Lu of Zhongzhou is likely referring to Tang dynasty Prime Minister 陸贄 (754－805) Lu Zhi 陸贄 who was eventually banished to Zhongzhou. Given that the poems Huihong has just cited have no lines about "smoke and mists," this comment seems to have been made in response to a different fisherman poem by Huihong.

[100] The *Quan Song biji* version has "With withered neck and coiled crown, I pass the years" 槁項螺巔度歲年.

> 脫卻衲衣著簑笠 Throw off your monk's robe; don a fisherman's hat and cloak,
> 來佐涪翁刺釣船 And come help Old Man of Fu pole his fishing boat.[101]
>
> I once recited this to Yuancai. He said: "This is swapping the bones of that line that Tuizhi [Hanyu] addressed to [monk] Dengguan: 'I wish to invite him to add an official kerchief to his cap.'"
>
> 予嘗對淵材誦之，淵材曰：「此退之贈澄觀『我欲收斂加冠巾』換骨句也。」[102]

At the end of the entry, Yuancai applies the new poetic method nomenclature of swapping the bones to Huang Tingjian's poem.[103] He sees Huang as swapping the bones of a line from a poem by Han Yu 韓愈 (788-824). Han Yu admired the governing skills of the monk Dengguan so much that he wrote a poem suggesting he become an official.[104] Similarly, in his poem, Huang jokingly urges Huihong to live like a fisherman since he has demonstrated in his poem his affinity for their way of life. If we use the explanation that swapping the bones means to retain the same meaning while using new words, as described in the previous entry, Huang is retaining Han Yu's idea of an official trying to convince a monk to join a worldly profession for which he has shown unusual aptitude. Huang has taken up this idea and given it new bones, i.e. expressed it in different words as applied to Huihong. But for Huang, the intent of his poem is to praise Huihong's poetic ability rather than to actually

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[101] "Old Man of Fu" 涪翁 is a nickname Huang Tingjian gave himself when he was demoted to take a position in Fuzhou 涪州.

[102] "Shi shuo yanbo piaomiao chu"詩說煙波縹緲處, *Lengzhai yehua* 3.30.

[103] The poem Huihong attributes to Huang Tingjian does not appear in Huang's collected works. Some scholars in the Southern Song speculated that it was written by Huihong and attributed to Huang, a theory that Zhou Yukai discusses and argues against in *Song seng Huihong*, p. 92-93. Many Southern Song writers accused Huihong of forging poems and attributing them to Huang Tingjian. Zhou points out that Huang's own nephew believed these poems to be his uncle's work.

[104] Han Yu, "Song seng Dengguan" 送僧澄觀, *Quan Tang shi* 342.3831.

praising his aptitude for a fisherman's life. It is Huihong's ability to represent in poetry an (idealized) fisherman's outing that prompts Huang to encourage him to "don a fisherman's hat and cloak" and help "pole his fishing boat."

In practice, the distinction between the methods of "swapping the bones" and "appropriating the embryo" is subtle. Each phrase contains a metaphor. "The bones," in "swapping the bones," is a metaphor for the words of a poem. In this method, an idea is borrowed from a poem by a poet of the past, but new words are used to express that idea. "The embryo," in "appropriating the embryo" is a metaphor for the idea from an earlier poem. In this method, rather than attempting to keep the meaning of the original poem, the poet repurposes it and uses his own words to expand and elaborate upon it.[105] In both methods, an idea from an earlier poem is expressed in new words, but in "swapping the bones" the poet tries to retain the same meaning while there is more room for manipulation of the meaning itself in "appropriating the embryo." The distinction between the two methods as they were originally understood by Huihong is further clarified when we look at the Buddhist origins of the terminology.

The concept of swapping the bones (*huangu*) occurs in several Song monastic biographies about the second Chan Patriarch Huike 慧可 (487-593). When Huike was a boy, after seeing a spirit one night, he is said to have come down with a splitting headache, whereupon a voice from empty space tells him he is "swapping the bones." The experience is

[105] This explanation is based on Zhou Yukai's discussion in *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue*, pp. 116-117.

later interpreted to be an auspicious sign since the shape of Huike's head had altered.[106] Although the account does not reveal much about what swapping the bones entailed, it suggests a transformation where the person, in this case Huike, remains the same, but his appearance changes. Likewise, the poetic method of swapping the bones is about changing only words, i.e., the "appearance" of the poem, not repurposing its fundamental meaning.

As for the method of appropriating the embryo, it aligns with a Buddhist practice. The Song work *Wudeng huiyuan* and a 19th century Japanese scholar monk explain the Buddhist concept of appropriating the embryo (*duotai*) as the ability to determine one's own rebirth by "appropriating" (*tuo* 託) an embryo or womb where another being is already taken up residence in preparation for reincarnation.[107] As a practice where one person takes another's place in a womb, this explanation makes sense as the origin of the poetry method as Huihong represents it, in which the poet appropriates the idea of someone's poem and makes it his own.

Although Huihong's explanation of the two methods aligns best with concepts of transformation in Buddhism, *duotai huangu,* the method later associated with the Jiangxi

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[106] Ibid., p. 120. The story occurs in biographies of Huike in *Houshan ji* 後山集, *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄, and *Wudeng huiyuan*.

[107] Zhou, *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue,* p. 117-119. According to the *Lengyan jing,* when a sentient being dies, the eighth consciousness enters a womb after conception, based on karma. Someone who is able to determine his own rebirth will be in control of which womb his consciousness enters, thereby determining the circumstances of his rebirth. See the text and commentary in Sūraṅgama Sūtra Translation Committee, trans., *The Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, pp. 145-146.

school, has long been explained as originating in Daoist ideas.[108] In particular, it is linked to the Daoist practice of ***t****uotai huangu* 脫胎換骨, "to shed the embryo and exchange the bones [into those of a transcendent]." However, this explanation assumes the two methods were linked together as one process, and we know from *Night Chats* that they were originally seen as two distinct methods. Moreover, the Daoist meanings attributed to the terms do not make sense with the way Huihong represents the methods in *Night Chats*. *Duotai* 奪胎 has been explained as referring to the Daoist practice of *tuotai* 脫胎 (to shed the embryo), but it seems unlikely that *duo* 奪, "to snatch" or "to steal," would be mistaken for the word *tuo* 脫 "to shed," or "escape from," especially given that there was already a Buddhist concept of *duotai* 奪胎. As for *huangu*, the Daoist practice of *huangu* was borrowed to represent a legitimate approach to poetry at the time of Huihong. The poet Chen Shidao 陳師道 (1053-1101) wrote, "Studying poetry is like studying to be a transcendent: when the time is ripe, the bones will naturally be transformed (into to those of a transcendent)" 學詩如學仙， 時至骨自換. Chen is referring to the Daoist practice of transforming one's mortal bones into those of a transcendent 換凡骨為仙骨.[109] He used this type of swapping the bones to refer to the way a poet naturally develops his ability over time. But the Daoist metaphor does not fit the pro-active composition method of swapping the bones as described by Huihong.

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[108] Zhou Yukai, *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue*, p. 117, explains the issues with explaining the *duotai huangu* found in *Night Chats* with Daoist ideas. The following discussion is based on Zhou's findings.

[109] See Zhou Yukai, *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue*, p. 119-120. Chen Shidao applies swapping the bones to the process of developing poetic skill in his "Ciyun da tai zhao zhang" 次韻答泰少章 in *juan* 2 of *Houshan ji* 後山集.

Huihong is usually only given credit for the earliest recording of the methods of swapping the bones and appropriating the embryo. The methods have conventionally been attributed to Huang Tingjian. But it is possible that Huihong had more to do with the ideas than originally thought. This is the conclusion that Zhou Yukai has come to over the years.[110] Recently, Zhou published two articles providing textual evidence suggesting that it was Huihong and not Huang Tingjian who first articulated the methods.[111] This controversial theory is not yet accepted by some Huang Tingjian scholars, but the evidence he provides is persuasive. He points out that simple shifts in punctuation can change attributions in *Night Chats*. Huihong often avoids indicating explicitly when a paraphrase or quote ends and his own ideas begin. The ambiguity is particularly evident in this entry on the swapping the bones and appropriating the embryo. Modern editions of the text punctuate the text so that the introduction of the two methods are included in the Huang Tingjian citation, not part of Huihong's commentary. But given that extensive punctuation such as quotation marks were not added to the text until modern times, we only have the editor's word that Huang's quote ends after the introduction of the methods and not before.[112]

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[110] In his explanations of the Buddhist and Daoist roots of *duotai* and *huangu* in *Wenzi chan yu Song dai shixue* pp. 116-122, Zhou followed the convention that attributes these methods to Huang Tingjian, but he has since changed his position.

[111] Zhou Yukai first presented the evidence and argument in his 2003 article, "Huihong yu huangu duotai fa," to which Mo Lifeng responded with "Zai lun 'duotai huangu' shuo de shouchuangzhe." In response to Mo's counterargument, Zhou wrote a second article, "Guanyu 'Huihong yu huangu duotai fa' de buchong shuoming." Both of Zhou's articles can be found as appendixes in *Song seng Huihong xinglü zhushu biannian zongan*, pp. 397-409; 422-429.

[112] In most current editions of the text, Huang's quotation ends after the methods are explained. Refer to the quotation of the full entry above for this punctuation.

According to Zhou, Huang's quotation should end after the first sentence of the passage, leaving the remaining portion of the entry as Huihong's words. A simple change of the location of the second quotation mark changes the explanation of the methods to be included in Huihong's comments:

> Shangu [Huang Tingjian] said: "The meaning of a poem is inexhaustible, but people's talents are limited." To retrieve inexhaustible meanings with limited talent—even [Tao]Yuanming and [Du Fu] Shaoling didn't have such skill." **[End quote]**
>
> Nevertheless, to retain [a poem's] meaning while constructing new words, we call 'swapping the bones.' To repurpose the meaning and illustrate it, we call 'appropriating the embryo.' 山谷云：〔詩意無窮，而人之才有限。以有限之才，追無窮之意，雖淵明、少陵不得工也。〕然不易其意而造其語，謂之換骨法；規模其意形容之，謂之奪胎法。

With the end quotes placed after "skill," instead of after the description of the methods, the methods are no longer attributed to Huang Tingjian. Instead, Huihong is responding to Huang Tingjian's lament about the challenge of poetry composition by providing two concrete methods that can be used to pursue a boundless idea with limited talent. His use of "nevertheless" (ran 然) suggests that he is giving these methods as a remedy to this problem.[113]

Interestingly, more than one Song *shihua* author saw the methods as Huihong's invention.[114] Southern Song author Wu Zeng 吳曾(fl. 1141), for example, saw swapping the bones and appropriating the embryo in a negative light, and attributed the methods to

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[113] Zhou Yukai, "Guanyu 'Huihong yu huanggu duotai fa' de buchong shuoming," p. 423.

[114] Zhou, "Huihong yu huangu duotai fa," pp. 89-90. The methods are explicitly attributed to Huihong in the anonymous work Shi Xian 詩憲 and by Song monk Puwen's *Shi Lun* 詩論.

Huihong because he couldn't believe Huang would promote anything so low as "stealing" other peoples' ideas.[115] In the process of attacking Huihong, he inadvertently credits him with inventing methods that would one day become famous.[116]

Regardless of who first coined the names of the methods and how they are to be understood, their appearance in *Night Chats* reflects Huihong's interest in pinning down and developing current approaches to poetry composition, especially those that lead to expression that goes beyond the mundane or literal.

As a poet monk, Huihong was well-versed in the Buddhist concepts that could help to explain his approach to reading and writing poetry. He gravitated towards poetry methods that were conducive to the expression of implied meanings rather than literal representation. He was responsible for recording and developing ideas he heard from Huang Tingjian that had roots in Chan thought, and Su Shi, Wang Anshi and Huang Tingjian were the poets he returned to for examples of these methods. His role may have been more pro-active than traditionally thought. At the very least, it is evident that one of Huihong's aims with *Night Chats* was to help make methods of composition more concrete and user friendly. By recording methods like the eye within the lines, swapping the bones, and appropriating the embryo, Huihong was instrumental in developing poetic discourse. Although eventually the Buddhist origins were largely forgotten, and the meanings consequently changed, it is thanks

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[115] Zhou, "Huihong yu huangu duotai fa," pp. 83. The critique of *duotai huangu* and Huang Tingjian's *diantie chengxin* as being mere imitation seems to have been a trend that developed in the Southern Song. See Yugen Wang, *Ten Thousand Scrolls*, p. 36.

[116] Zhou Yukai, "Huihong yu huanggu duotai fa," p. 84.

to Huihong's recording of these concepts and references to the famous poets who used them, that they were able to be adapted into Jiangxi poetics.

3.4 Poetry Criticism

The previous sections focused on the aesthetic principles and poetry methods in *Night Chats* that developed out of Buddhist terminology or perspectives. Buddhist ideas can also be found in Huihong's approach to poetry criticism, in his evaluation of poems and poets. The explicit Buddhist approach to poetry critique is sometimes indicated by the use of terminology borrowed from Buddhism. But often there is another level of critique in Huihong's entries, one in which some form of non-discrimination is in play.

An obvious indicator of Buddhist ideas being applied to poetry criticism is Buddhist terminology used in statements made about poetry. Such terminology is often seen in statements praising the talent of certain poets. Below are two examples. After quoting Su Shi's famous poems about Mount Lu, Huihong records what Huang said about them:

> Luzhi [Huang Tingjian] said, "This elder [Su Shi] speaks about *prajñā* from all different angles. He has awakened to the [art of] no extraneous words. If there wasn't a mouth at the tip of his brush, how could he spit forth such inexpressible subtleties?" 魯直曰：此老人於般若橫說豎說，了無剩語。非其筆端有口，安能吐此不傳之妙哉！[117]

[117] "Lushan laoren yu bo re zhong liao wu sheng yu"廬山老人於般若中了無剩語, *Lengzhai yehua* 7.62-63. Both of the quoted poems by Su Shi express Chan perspectives of the world. The first poem is "Zeng Donglin Zong Changlao" 贈東林總長老. The second poem is "Ti Xilin bi" 題西林壁.

In another entry, Huihong records his own response to a song lyric attributed to Huang Tingjian called "Studio of Daoist Happiness" 道士快軒. After quoting the poem, Huihong gushes:

> I imagine I can see the *qi* from his lofty poetic resonance touch the heavens. He stands alone at the edge of the myriad world images, in brush-tip *samādhi*, frolicking in uninhibited self-mastery. 想見其高韻，氣摩雲霄，獨立萬象之表，筆端三昧，游戲自在.[118]

In these examples, Huang Tingjian and Huihong borrow Buddhist terms, *prajñā*, *samādhi,* and "uninhibited self-mastery" (*zizai* 自在), to praise poetic ability. Huang emphasizes that it is due to Su's *prajñā*, his Buddhist wisdom, that he was able to see all angles of Mount Lu and understand the subjective nature of his perspective. (Su's second poem contains the lines, "If I don't know the true face of Mount Lu, / it is only because I, myself, am at its center" 不識廬山真面目，祇緣身在此山中). Huang uses the Buddhist term *prajñā* to refer to Su's mindset in writing his poems. Huihong goes further and uses Buddhist terms to describe Huang's writing abilities. He describes Huang as in "brush-tip in *samādhi*,"("meditative concentration,"*sanmei* 三昧), where he "frolics" (*youxi* 游戲), presumably with his brush, in "uninhibited self-mastery," the Buddhist phrase used to describe the free and unimpeded state of an enlightened person.[119]

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[118] "Shuwang, Shangu fu shi" 舒王山谷賦詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.48.

[119] Su Shi seems to be the first to use the phrase "frolicking in *samādhi*" (*youxi sanmei* 游戲三昧) to talk about poetry. It appears in a letter to the monk Daoqian 道潛, *Su Shi wenji* 61.1865. Huihong is likely elaborating on this earlier phrase.

But such overt usages of Buddhist terminology to critique poets are actually few and far between in *Night Chats*, one reason why some scholars tend to overlook the Buddhist perspective in the work. But it was not so much terminology that Huihong relied on in his approach to poetry criticism, but a certain kind of recognizing or judging (*shi* 識) based in the Buddhist perspective underlying the principles of the poetry eye and *miaoguan yixiang*—that of non-discrimination.

We see Huihong's approach in entries that use forms of evaluating commonly found in *shihua.* Rather than rely too heavily on explicit critical comments, early *shihua* writers used various formats to create implied evaluative meaning. Huihong adopts formats including comparisons of lines of poetry by different poets and poetry debates and conversations. The topics explored are various. They include identifying the poet who demonstrates the most undaunted spirit in exile, promoting the poet with the most novel approach to peonies, arguing for Du Fu's portrayal of Yang Guifei's death, appropriate word choice based on conventions of a genre, exposing "vulgarizers" *(suren* 俗人) in debates on variant characters in the poetry of Du Fu and Tao Qian, the effectiveness of poetry to communicate Buddhist principles, to name a few. In many respects, Huihong discusses these topics just as a literatus would, by relating comments made by others, by recording a conversation or story, or by adding his own opinion. But we can also see a pattern in the selections and perspectives that reflects his predilection for non-discriminatory approach to poetry criticism. This is Huihong's own poetic eye at work.

3.4.1 Poetry Comparisons

Huihong's values are revealed in entries that compare short poems or couplets by different poets. Such juxtaposing of different lines is a common feature of *shihua* works. The quotation of lines by different poets is used to show the relative accomplishments of poets or their different approaches. The poetry lines in a given entry usually share common factors, such as theme, poetic technique, or circumstances in which they were written. All the poetic examples may be considered skillful, but one is usually identified as superior. The purpose of this practice was often to produce what Stephen Owen calls a "hierarchy of value."[120]

The criteria used by the author to determine the hierarchy reveals the different poetic values that were important in evaluating poetry at the time. *Shihua* authors were sometimes explicit about the criteria by which they were judging the different lines. Ouyang Xiu, for example, has an entry recording a conversation he had with Mei Yaochen comparing couplets by different poets for a range of qualities, including "well-crafted" (*gong* 工) and "[meaning] that can be seen beyond the words" (*jian yu yan wai* 見於言外).[121] While Huihong also values poetic craft and meaning that lingers, in his comparative entries, the underlying consideration is often to what degree a poet manages to transcend the mundane or defy restrictive taboos. In prioritizing such lines, Huihong is demonstrating poetry criticism that is not determined by conventional distinctions. We can see this play out in entries

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[120] Owen, "Remarks on Poetry: Shih-hua," in *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought,* p. 378.

[121] Ouyang Xiu, *Liuyi shihua,* p. 1952. I've slightly adjusted Owen's translations of these phrases. See *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p. 375-379, for Owen's translation of the entire entry and lengthy discussion.

highlighting and promoting poets with lines that demonstrate a liberated spirit (*qi*), innovation, or integrity.

As discussed earlier, the spirit or vitality (*qi*) behind lines and the mindset of the poet that is expressed in the lines, is of utmost importance to Huihong. This *qi* is probably the most critical factor in his evaluation of poetry. If the mindset of the poet is not limited by taboos or social expectations, his poetry can transcend petty distinctions.

Huihong's preference for lines that reflect a spirit (*qi*) of detachment and liberation is particularly evident in an entry comparing lines by Qin Guan 秦觀 (1049-1100; style name Shaoyou 少游), Huang Tingjian, and Su Shi. The factors that connect the examples are theme and circumstances—all poems express the hardships of exile and were written when in exile. In terms of craft, all examples are technically good. But Huihong wishes to demonstrate that it is only Su Shi's lines that reflect a truly transcendent spirit. The entry reads,

> When Shaoyou [Qin Guan] was exiled to Leizhou, he was overcome with sorrow. He wrote a poem that reads:
>
> 南土四時都熱 In the southland, all four seasons are hot,
>
> 愁人日夜俱長 For the distraught, both day and night is endless.
>
> 安得此身如石 How can I make myself like rock,
>
> 一時忘了家鄉 So that once and for all I'll forget about home?
>
> When Luzhi [Huang Tingjian] was exiled to Yizhou, where it is extremely open and flat, he wrote these poems:
>
> 老色日上面 The signs of aging day by day reaches my face,
>
> 懽情日去心 The feelings of happiness day by day leave my heart.
>
> 今既不如昔 The present is not as good as the past,
>
> 後當不如今 And the future certainly will be worse than the present!
>
> And,
>
> 輕紗一幅巾 Thin gauze forms my single kerchief,

短簟六尺床 A short reed mat forms my six foot bed.

無客日自靜 With no guests, the day is quiet by myself.

有風終夕涼 With a breeze, it is cool all night.[122]

Shaoyou emphasized sentiment, so his poems are full of distress and grief. Luzhi studied the Taoist practice of restfulness, so his poems are relaxed and free. But when we come to Dongpo's [Su Shi] lines from his poem "In the South,"—

平生萬事足 Of life's numerous experiences, I've had my fill,

所欠惟一死 All that is missing is that one thing, death.[123]

— His extraordinary and unrivaled *qi* is untouched by delusion or adversity. It certainly inspires awe and admiration!

少游謫雷，悽愴，有詩曰：〔南土四時都熱，愁人日夜俱長。安得此身如石，一時忘了家鄉。〕魯直謫宜，殊坦夷，作詩曰：〔老色日上面，懽情日去心。今既不如昔，後當不如今。〕〔輕紗一幅巾，短簟六尺床，無客日自靜，有風終夕涼。〕少游情鍾，故其詩酸楚；魯直學道休歇，故其詩閒暇。至於東坡，《南中》詩曰：〔平生萬事足，所欠惟一死。〕則英特邁往之氣，不受夢幻折困，可畏而仰哉！[124]

The point of comparison in this entry is the mindset expressed by the author. We see Huihong promoting the lines that reflect the most transcendent spirit. He emphasizes how the lines of each poet reflect their personalities or priorities. Qin Guan was sentimental, so when he set out to write about his experience of exile, he focuses on his feelings of sorrow and homesickness. Huang's poems written under the similar circumstances appear more accepting and relaxed, which Huihong chalks up to his study of Daoism. The poems by these

[122] Huang Tingjian seems to have borrowed these two quatrains and others from various Bai Juyi poems and included them in his series of poems entitled "Zheju Qiannan" 謫居黔南 (Exile in Qiannan), *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu* 12.442-46. Hu Zi would later accuse Huihong of mistakenly attributing these lines to Huang Tingjian. *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua* 48.326.

[123] This couplet is from Su's poem entitled "Zeng Zheng Qingsou xiucai" 贈鄭清叟秀才, *Su Shi shiji* 42.2321.

[124] "Shaoyou, Luzhi bei zhe zuo shi" 少游魯直被謫作詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 3.34.

two poets represent two poetic responses to exile, the reactive and the laissez-faire. But Su Shi's lines presents a third option, and one that Huihong clearly deems superior.

Su's lines emphasize that he has experienced hardships of every kind, so numerous and various that the only one left to face is death. This might be seen as an expression of bitterness, but not as Huihong interprets it, (nor as it comes across in the context of the full poem).[125] To Huihong, the lines show an "outstanding and extraordinary *qi*" (*yingte maiwang zhi qi* 英特邁往之氣), not affected by illusions or the adversity (*menghuan zhekun* 夢幻折困) experienced in exile. They reflect a middle way between the extremes of sentiment and serenity represented by the lines of Qin Guan and Huang Tingjian. Su neither deludes himself by avoiding thoughts of suffering and death (as Huang's poems might be interpreted), nor does he let the hardships disturb him (as Qin Guan might be said to do in his poem). Su's couplet presents the persona of someone who has been through just about everything, and is now ready for that last inevitable experience, death.[126]

Su Shi's extraordinary spirit manifests in both the diction and theme of his couplet. In terms of diction, directly referring to your own death in a poem would be considered a blatant disregard of the taboo against poetic prognosis (*shichen*). This, however, was not a negative in Huihong's book. If we remember, he used these same lines by Su as an example of poetry that defied poetry taboos and expressed *miaoguan yixiang*.

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[125] The poem as recorded in Su's poetry collection, has "in recent years" 年來 as opposed to "my entire life" 平生, giving further support to the idea that he is referring to all his recent political hardships.

[126] We know that in this couplet Su means to show contentment, if not amusement.

Su Shi's unflinching spirit is also seen in his approach to the theme of the hardships of exile. From his personal letters written at the time, we know that he was not always as content and free from resentment as he appears in the couplet and other poems written at the time. Huihong himself brought this discrepancy to light elsewhere in *Night Chats*.[127]

Huihong does not offer direct criticism of the approaches by Qin or Huang, nor is there any indication that he thinks their technique or aesthetic is inferior to Su Shi's. But he singles out for praise the lines that disregard taboo and exhibit an undaunted spirit in the face death. The spirit reflected in poetic lines is the criteria by which they should be evaluated and compared with other poems on a similar theme.

Some parallels to a Buddhist perspective can be seen in Huihong's interpretation of the extraordinary spirit expressed by Su Shi. He characterizes his *qi* as impervious to "illusion," i.e. Su is not confused by the illusory nature of things.[128] Seeing death for what it is, without aversion or attachment, is, of course, a well-known Buddhist practice.

Besides vitality, Huihong prized innovation. We can see the value he places on innovation in another entry using comparisons. Huihong presents lines on the same theme, flowers, using the same technique, analogies. His aesthetic of non-discrimination manifests in a disregard for the respective reputations of the poets, preferring to focus on the creativity

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[127] The entry that reflects these different attitudes held by Su Shi is entitled "Dongpo shudui" 東坡屬對, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.51, and is discussed in detail in chapter four, p. 239.

[128] Specifically, Huihong describes Su as being free from "dreams and illusion" *menghuan* 夢幻, an analogy for the emptiness of all phenomena. See the term in *Foguang da cidian*, p. 5776.

put into the crafting of their analogies. In the entry, he records lines by three different poets who use analogies that are progressively more innovative.

> When those of former generations wrote flower poems, they often used beautiful women as analogies for the appearance of flowers. For example, "If you allow them to speak they could bring about another fall of the state, /Although they are without feelings, they still move people." How passé and common! In Shangu's [Huang Tingjian] poem, "Poem on the Roseleaf raspberry," he wrote: "Dew moistens his pale face as he partakes of the soup noodles, / Sun scorches Xun Ling as he lights the incense burner."[129] When handsome men are used as analogies for flowers, it really stands out. Yet my uncle Yuancai's take on crab-apple blossom poems was different still. He wrote: "After the rain [they look like] the hot-springs bathing concubine, / When the dew is dense, the noodle-soup partaking pale youth." The meaning is especially well-crafted.
>
> 前輩作花詩，多用美女比其狀。如曰：〔若教解語應傾國，任是無情也動人。〕陳俗哉！山谷作《酴醾詩》曰：〔露濕何郎試湯餅，日烘荀令炷爐香。〕乃用美丈夫比之，特若出類。而吾叔淵材作海棠詩又不然，曰：〔雨過溫泉浴妃子，露濃湯餅試何郎。〕意尤工也。[130]

Huihong begins by pointing out that using women as analogies for flowers was a common practice of past poets, and as an example, he gives lines by Luo Yin 羅隱 (833-910) that compare peonies with the favored consort of emperor Xuanzong, Yang Guifei. But Huihong criticizes these lines as "passé and common" (*chensu zai* 陳俗哉). He wants to feature poets who think outside the box and break taboo, who use a traditional theme but

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[129] The full title of the poem is "Guan wang zhubu jia tumi" 觀王主簿家酴醾 (Observing the roseleaf raspberry blossoms at the home of the official registrar to the emperor), *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu* 12.1200. According to the commentary, the pale youth refers to He Yan 何宴, a handsome young man of the Three Kingdoms Period who was said to be so pale that the emperor suspected him of using makeup. Xun Ling 荀令 was a Han dynasty official who used so much incense that when he stayed anywhere, the aroma lingered for three days after his departure. Huang uses these men as analogies for the appearance and the fragrance of the "roseleaf raspberry" blossom (*tumi* 酴醾).

[130] "Shi bi meinü mei zhangfu" 詩比美女美丈夫, *Lengzhai yehua* 4.38.

present it in a fresh way. He next records the lines by Huang Tingjian that use young men as metaphors for raspberry blossoms, instead of the conventional women metaphor. But given pride of place is the third poet, Huihong's uncle Yuancai (formal name Peng Ji 彭几), who manages to both refresh the overused Yang Guifei analogy and make use of the youth analogy in a single couplet on crabapple blossoms. Yuancai's lines show the kind of free thinking that Huihong appreciates. Here, it is not the established poets Luo Yin or Huang Tingjian who receive praise for "especially well-crafted meaning" (*yi you gong* 意尤工), but an obscure poet.[131] Huihong was interested in finding talent in lesser known individuals, not just promoting poets who were already highly regarded.

3.4.2 Poetry Debates and Conversations

Another format of criticism that Huihong engages in is debates on issues of poetics. Like many *shihua* writers, Huihong was interested in recording disparate views on a variety of issues, from textual variants and philology to broader concerns about genre and poetic standards. But his Buddhist perspective and background as a monk comes through most distinctly in the personal conversations he had with other poets. This is especially evident in his discussions with Huang Tingjian, who, as a student of Buddhism, particularly liked to discuss poetics using Buddhist terminology and ideas. Huihong got many of his ideas about poetics from Huang Tingjian, but entries in *Night Chats* suggest that he played an important

[131] Other than the accounts about Yuancai in *Night Chats*, a few of which are mentioned in the next chapter, little is known about him and only a few of his poems survive.

role in articulating and expanding on Huang's ideas and he also appears to have used his aesthetic of non-discrimination to challenge Huang on some of his more conservative approaches to poetic criticism.

In one entry, Huihong records an exchange he had with Huang about appropriate word choice in the *shi* poetry by Wang Anshi. At the time, some literati didn't approve of using ornate and overly sensual words such as those found in rhapsodies (*fu* 賦) to describe landscape in poetry (*shi* 詩). They especially took issue with using terms associated with the female form to describe natural scenes.[132] Huihong quotes poems by Wang Anshi that describe the appearance of water and hills using two terms with sexual connotations, to "naturally display" (*zixian* 自獻) and "lying supine" (*hengchen* 橫陳). The image typically invoked by these terms is that of a woman lying in the nude. Huang Tingjian remarks that Wang shouldn't have used the terms, pointing out that they appear in the lavish and erotic rhapsody poetry of Han dynasty poet Sima Xiangru 司馬相如.[133] Huang no doubt expects Huihong to agree with him. But Huihong responds by citing a line of the *Lengyan jing* that contains the terms, "lying supine." With this single reference, Huihong challenges Huang's fixed views about appropriate word choice in terms of genre and sexual innuendo. The entry reads,

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[132] My understanding of the views of literati poets reflected in this entry was informed by a discussion with Zhou Yukai at Sichuan University, May 12, 2015, and from his article "Shilun *Shimen wenzi* chan zhong jing hua shi chan zhi jiaorong."

[133] The great age of the rhapsody was under emperor Wu (157-87 B.C.E), who brought poets to his court, including Sima Xiangru (179-117 B.C.E). See Martin Kern, "Early Chinese Literature, Beginnings through Western Han," pp. 88-91.

Late in life, Shuwang [Wang Anshi] had a poem:

紅梨無葉庇華身 Red pears have no leaves to screen their colorful bodies,

黃菊分香委路塵 Yellow chrysanthemum scent dissipates into the dusty road.

歲晚蒼官才自保 Late in the year, "dark green statesmen" at last protect themselves,[134]

日高青女尚橫陳 Although the sun is high, "blue maidens" are still lying supine.

Also,

木落岡巒因自獻 When the trees lose their leaves, the hillocks are naturally displayed,

水歸洲渚得橫陳 When the waters retreat, the islet sandbanks appear to be lying supine.

Shangu [Huang Tingjian] said to me, "As for the expressions, "naturally displayed" and "lying supine," they can be seen in [Sima] Xiangru's rhapsodies. It is simply that Jinggong shouldn't have used them."

I replied, "The *Lengyan jing* says, 'When lying supine, it tastes just like chewing on wax.'"

舒王晚年詩曰：〔紅梨無葉庇華身，黃菊分香委路塵。歲晚蒼官才自保，日高青女尚橫陳。〕又曰：〔木落岡巒因自獻，水歸洲渚得橫陳。〕山谷謂予曰：〔自獻橫陳事，見相如賦，荊公不應完用耳。〕予曰：〔《首楞嚴經》亦曰：『於橫陳時，味如嚼蠟。』〕[135]

Huang Tingjian and Huihong have different perspectives with regard to the suitability of using controversial terminology in *shi* poems describing nature. Huang assumes Wang Anshi adopted the terms "to naturally display" and "to lie supine" from the rhapsody poetry of Sima Xiangru. He objects to Wang's use of the terms ostensibly because they transgress the conventions of genre. He also may be expressing the view that describing natural scenes

[134] "Dark green statesmen" 蒼官 is a metaphor for evergreen trees. They "protect themselves" by retaining their needles throughout even the height of winter.

[135] "Wang Jinggong shi yong shi"王荊公詩用事, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.48.

with terms that have been used to describe the female nude form showed bad taste. Likely, it is not only the genre transgression that Huang objects to, but the sexual implications of the terminology. Huihong simply points out that one of the terms, "to lie supine," is found in a passage in the *Lengyan jing*, a widely different genre than either *shi* poems or rhapsodies and a work that deals extensively with the issue of sexual desire.

The line Huihong quotes is from a description in the *Lengyan jing* about one of the situations where sexual activity does not result in defilement: "One does not have any mind of desire, but for the other person one engages in the act. When lying supine, it is as flavorless as chewing wax" 我無欲心。應汝行事。於橫陳時味如嚼蠟.[136] "Lying supine," *hengchen*, is a euphemism for going to bed with one's spouse. The experience is said to "taste like chewing wax" because there are no pleasurable or sensual feelings associated with it. Huihong is explicit about the meaning of this line in his commentary on the *Lengyan jing*, where and he traces the term "lying supine" and "to naturally display" back to Sima Xiangru:

> It was asked, "What does the text mean by 'when lying supine'"? The answer: "It means when a woman is naked." Sima Xiangru's erotic rhapsody reads: "Her stunning features are naturally displayed, / her jade body lies supine." The translators simply used beautiful indigenous expressions to embellish the Buddha's meaning. 問曰: '於橫陳時，何義也？'曰： '女子裸形時也。' 司馬相如好色賦曰：'華容自獻，玉體橫陳。'譯者用此土美詞，緣飾吾聖人之意耳。[137]

Given that Huihong believed that Buddhist translators borrowed these terms and de-eroticized them in the new context, it is no wonder he did not object to Wang Anshi using

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[136] *Da Foding Shoulengyan jing, j.* 8 (T 9: 945.145c26).

[137] *Lengyan jing helun* 楞嚴經合論, *j.* 8 (Z 12: 272.77a9-11).

them. His use of the *Lengyan jing* quotation in response to Huang's critical remarks may simply have been his way to show Huang that there was another way to think about the terms. He could be implying that while Huang thinks of the erotic rhapsody as the origin of the terms describing bare hillocks and islets, he himself thinks of the passage in the *Lengyan jing*.[138] His remark in this sense is a little jab at Huang for automatically associating the terms with lewd imagery.

But considering Huihong's *Lengyan jing* commentary, it is more likely that Huihong is making a larger point about avoiding poetry criticism based in restrictive thinking about genre and appropriate word choice. As Huihong does not object to Buddhists using the term taken from a rhapsody in their scriptures, even less would he object to Wang Anshi using it in his *shi* poetry. Invoking the *Lengyan jing* line thus exposes Huang's inflexible, black-and-white approach to poetry evaluation. At the end of the day, words are not intrinsically problematic. Their meaning depends as much on the context and even on the reader's state of mind as on anything else. Huihong uses his familiarity with Buddhist texts to expose the problem with judging a poem using discriminatory ideas about genre or a word's meaning.

3.5 Non-Buddhist Poetics in *Night Chats*

The Buddhist undertones of *Night Chats* are largely overlooked because Huihong avoids explicit parallels between poetry and Buddhism. But as we have seen, much of

[138] This interpretation is suggested by Zhou Yukai in "Shilun *Shimen wenzi chan* zhong jing hua shi chan zhi jiaorong," p. 143.

Huihong's poetics is informed by Buddhist terminology and ideas. However, Huihong was interested in establishing himself as a poetry critic among his literati peers. He gravitated towards certain aestheticized Buddhist concepts in his discussion of poetics because they helped promote his non-discriminatory approach to poetics, not because they had etymological or philosophical ties to Buddhism. He also included numerous entries on poetics and poets that avoid any hint of a distinctly Buddhist perspective or reflect his monastic background. In particular, he joins discussions on issues that, to put it colloquially, would only have been of interest to the poet nerd. But in doing so, he was in good company. Issues of textual variants, contested meanings of words, debates over the best lines on a theme, the circumstances of poetic inspiration—these were topics bandied between eminent poets and recorded in *shihua*. While his personal discussions with his friends reveal more of his Buddhist mindset and background, in these other, more public textual dialogues, Huihong joins the literati in setting himself up as someone with sophisticated understanding by contrasting his ideas with the so-called "vulgarizers" (*suren* 俗人), i.e. those with common, ignorant views.

Discussions of textual variants and philology were perhaps the most technical and specialist elements of *shihua* at the time. There are about a dozen entries on variants and issues of philology in *Night Chats*. The entries on textual variants focus on correcting variants seen as inferior and invariably assumed to be inaccurate or pandering to the ignorant. The philology entries clarify the meaning of obscure words or point out when words have been altered incorrectly. Inferior variants or misguided alterations are usually blamed on "vulgarizers" who have intentionally or accidentally changed the correct version. Huihong, like his literati contemporaries, shows particular concern over contested variants and

interpretations of the poetry of the two idolized pre-Song masters, Tao Yuanming and Du Fu. For many of these intertextual debates, Huihong did not feel compelled to adopt a Buddhist perspective or use Buddhist terminology.

In one long entry, Huihong records variants found in lines by Wei Ye 魏野 and Du Fu as discussed by Sima Guang and Huang Tingjian, then turns to a discussion of a contested word in a Tao Yuanming poem. There were two versions of Tao's line, "I catch sight of the South Mountain in the distance" 悠然見南山. One version uses *jian* 見 ("to see"; translated here as "catch sight of"), and one uses *wang* 望 ("to gaze at").[139] It was Su Shi who first criticized editions of the poem that used *wang*, arguing that *jian* reflected a more spontaneous, natural action, and thus a superior choice.[140] The *jian* reading was also more consistent with the image of Tao Yuanming made famous by Song poets.[141] In the case of idolized poets like Tao, the version deemed superior was usually assumed to be correct.[142] In *Night Chats*, Huihong records the argument in favor of *jian*.[143]

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[139] To complicate things, *jian* is also read *xian* 現, "to appear." With this reading, the line reads "there appears the South Mountain."

[140] Su Shi shihua, no. 166, *Song shihua quanbian*, p. 786.

[141] Tian, Xiaofei, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture*, pp. 31-38. Tian discusses Song views of the controversy over *tian* and *wang* in detail, including Su Shi's thoughts on the subject.

[142] Ibid., 32.

[143] Most editors assume that Huihong misattributes the argument in favor of *jian* to Huang Tingjian because Huihong doesn't name Su Shi in the entry and the discussion of *jian* follows comments made by Huang Tingjian on a different variant. However, Zhou Yukai argues that the comments on Tao Yuanming were not meant to be a continuation of the previous quote from Huang Tingjian, but rather Huihong's own words based on Su Shi's ideas on the subject. See Zhou, "Huihong yu huangu duotai fa," p. 85. Like the swapping the bones and appropriating the embryo entry, a simple change in punctuation resolves the attribution problem. As familiar with Su Shi and Huang Tingjian as Huihong was, it is unlikely he would misattribute the concept in this case. Note that Xiaofei Tian, in *Tao*

> It is like Yuanming's [line]: "Picking chrysanthemums by the eastern fence, / I catch sight of Nanshan in the distance." He has a spontaneous style, and the line is constructed naturally. But vulgar people changed ["catch sight of Nanshan"] into "gaze at Nanshan." By altering a single character, the feel and style of the ancient one [Yuanming] is lost. Scholars must recognize this." 如淵明曰：『採菊東籬下，悠然見南山。』其渾成風味，句法如生成。而俗人易曰『望南山』，一字之差，遂失古人情狀，學者不可不知也。[144]

There is no sign of any Buddhist idea influencing Huihong's preference here, but by recording and adding to the debates that concerned so many eminent writers, (and siding with Su Shi), he was giving his views authority and an audience, demonstrating that monks could be taken seriously as poetry critics.

Besides textual variants and philology, another area where we see Huihong engaging in literati debates is around the question of a poem's representational aptness or historical accuracy. In the Song, poets articulated the idea that a poem's worth could be determined by values beyond these traditional qualities. For Huihong, the poem as a guide to the personality and character of the poet was more important than how true-to-life or biographically accurate the poem appeared to be. This attitude was likely tied to his Buddhist idea of reality as beyond the everyday distinctions made about appearances, but in expressing himself, Huihong did not appeal to Buddhist principles.[145] Instead, he recorded and adapted discussions of poetics that were compatible with this approach to poetic accuracy.

Yuanming and Manuscript Culture, p. 32, states that both Peng Cheng and Huihong attribute the discussion to Huang Tingjian, an assumption based on the modern punctuation of these texts.

[144] "Shihua wang yi jufa zi"詩話妄易句法字, *Lengzhai yehua* 4.36.

[145] Ronald Egan points out that the "impulse to find values elsewhere than in representational aptness" may have had to do with "Buddhism's emphasis on the illusory nature of all appearances." See "The Northern Song," pp. 433-434.

As an example, take an entry comparing three different poetic renditions of the circumstances of Yang Guifei's death. For Huihong, it is the loyalty shown by Du Fu towards his sovereign that trumps other considerations, even questions of historical accuracy. After the An Lushan rebellion broke out, Emperor Xuanzong and his beloved consort Yang Guifei fled the capital. But Consort Yang was put to death at Mawei Station, for she was largely believed to be the cause of the uprising. Huihong compares Du Fu's rendition of the circumstances that of poets Liu Yuxi and Bai Juyi. It is only Du Fu, in his poem "Northern Journey" 北征, who implies that the emperor took it upon himself to voluntarily get rid of Consort Yang for the sake of the country. The lines by Liu Yuxi and Bai Juyi, in contrast, are interpreted to mean that Emperor Xuanzong only had Yang executed when he was forced to do so by his soldiers.

> Elder Du's poem "Northern Journey" reads:
> 唯昔艱難初 It is only that back when the troubles began,[146]
> 事與前世別 The circumstances were different than what happened in the past.[147]
> […]
> 不聞夏商衰 We would never had to hear about the fall of the Xia and Shang,
> 中自誅褒妲 If in the middle they had seen to the executions of [the consorts] Bao and Da.[148]

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[146] The "troubles" refer to the An Lushan rebellion that began in 755.

[147] The precedent referred to here is the Emperor taking it upon himself to order the execution of his consort if she were deemed the cause of a declining dynasty. Huihong quotes the first two lines of the poem, then skips two before continuing.

[148] The suggestion is that both the Xia and Shang dynasties came to an end because their kings were distracted by their consorts and didn't have them killed. Bao and Da refer to Baosi 褒姒 and Daji 妲己, the consorts of the last kings of Western Zhou and Shang dynasties respectively. There is historical discrepancy between these two lines. While Daji was the favorite consort of the last king of Shang, Baosi was the consort associated with the fall of the Western Zhou, not the Xia dynasty as is implied. This lack of consistency between the two lines has been discussed by traditional

This means that the illustrious emperor [Tang Xuanzong] examined the collapse of the Xia and Shang dynasty, and fearing heaven and regretting his mistakes, he decreed that [Consort Yang] be allowed to kill herself.

And yet Liu Yuxi's poem "Mawei" reads:

官軍誅佞幸 The imperial army executed the sycophant,

天子舍夭姬 The Emperor gave up the demonic woman.

群吏伏門屏 All the officials hid at the doorway,

貴人牽帝衣 As his precious tugged at the emperor's clothes.

Bai Letian's [Bai Juyi] song lyric "Everlasting Regret" says,

六軍不發爭奈何 If the six troops hadn't been dispatched, what would come out of the struggle?

宛轉蛾眉馬前死 Quick as can be, she with "moth-like" brows was killed in front of the horses.

This means that the troops intentionally forced the concubine to be killed. It is simply singing the praises of the Lu Shan rebellion.

Who would ever claim that Liu and Bai were any good at poetry? Their departure from Du Fu: is it not like the difference between a single piece of fur and [the fur of] nine oxen? We recognize from his poem "Northern Journey" the importance placed on the relationship between ruler and official. His spirit of loyalty is on par with autumn scenes in its loftiness and is to be cherished.[149]

老杜《北征》詩曰：「唯昔艱難初，事與前世別。不聞夏商衰，中自誅褒妲。」意者明皇覽夏、商之敗，畏天悔過，賜妃子死也。而劉禹錫《馬嵬》詩曰：「官軍誅佞幸，天子舍夭姬。群吏伏門屏，貴人牽 帝衣。」白樂天《長恨》詞曰：「六軍不發爭奈何，宛轉蛾眉馬前死。」乃是官軍迫使殺妃子，歌詠祿山叛逆耳。孰謂劉、白能詩哉！其去老杜何啻九牛毛耶。《北征》詩識君臣之大體，忠義之氣與秋色爭高，可貴也。[150]

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commentators and is seen by some to reflect Du Fu's superior poetic skill. In current editions of Du Fu's poem, these lines are recorded as: 憶昨浪狽初, 事與古先別…不聞夏殷衰，中自誅褒妲; Du Fu, "Bei zheng" 北 征 *Quan Tang shi* 217.2276. For a translation of Du Fu's full poem, see Owen, *The Poetry of Du Fu*, volume 1, 5.27: 343-344.

[149] "On par with autumn scenes in its loftiness" 與秋色爭高 may be an idea lifted from a couplet in Du Mu's 杜牧 (803-852) poem "Autumn Gazing in Chang'an" 長安秋望 that reads, "Southern mountains and autumn scene: the grander of each interacts in loftiness" 南山與秋色，氣勢兩相高. *Quan Tang shi* 521.5960.

[150] "Lao Du Liu Yuxi Bai Juyi shi"老杜劉禹錫白居易詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 2.25.

It is tempting to see Huihong's preference for Du Fu's poem as further evidence of Huihong's emphasis on transcendent ideas, for Du is showing a disregard for certain historical norms in his portrayal of Xuanzong.[151] But Huihong was not alone among Song writers in his preference for Du Fu's rendition. Ji Hao points out that for many Song writers, "Du Fu's poetry went beyond a 'faithful' account of what happened in his time and guided them to look at historical events in a *proper* way."[152] A nearly identical discussion is found in the *shihua* by Northern Song critic Wei Tai 魏泰 (dates unknown).[153] Like Huihong, Wei Tai compares Du Fu's lines with those of Liu Yuxi and Bai Juyi, emphasizing that it was only Du Fu who depicted the Emperor as learning from past precedents and voluntarily having Yang executed.[154] Huihong seems to have taken much of the entry from Wei, but there are some interesting points of difference.[155] Most notably, whereas Wei focuses on criticizing Liu and Bai's poems for being clumsy and failing to show propriety (*li* 禮) in the subject-ruler relationship, Huihong chooses to focus on praising Du Fu's poem for its "spirit of loyalty" 忠義之氣. Again, it is the spirit or vitality that is most important to Huihong.

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[151] Zeng Wenshu argues this very point, observing that Huihong was not interested in poetry that recorded historical fact, but rather demonstrated a "history of the spirit." See "*Lengzhai yehua* wenshu sixiang zhi yanjiu," p. 93.

[152] Ji Hao, *The Reception of Du Fu*, p. 63.

[153] Wei Tai likely lived a generation before Huihong. Hu Zi recorded Wei Tai's version and notes that Huihong must have recorded Wei Tai's words since Huihong was of the later generation. *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua* 12.77-78.

[154] For a detailed discussion of poem and Wei Tai's comments, see Ji Hao's *The Reception of Du Fu*, pp. 61-63.

[155] We know that Huihong was familiar with Wei Tai's *shihua*. He quotes a passage from Wei Tai directly in "Guan zhong yetan Tuizhi zhi shi" 館中夜談韓退之詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 2.25-26.

By including numerous entries on poetry issues and debates familiar to the literati, regardless of whether he was bringing in Buddhist ideas or not, Huihong was collaborating in the development of poetic ideas. The development of poetry criticism in the Song was not an independent activity done in isolation, but very much a process based on conversations and intertextual "dialogues." In discussing *biji*, Daiwie Fu identifies "imagined *biji* communities" that were "formed through the widespread printing and distribution of Song *biji* texts, [in which] authors knew that their own *biji* would be read and commented on by later *biji* authors, while they themselves were also busy commenting on earlier *biji*."[156] Just as they pointed out mistakes in the interpretations of earlier writers, their interpretations were scrutinized by future writers. These same citation networks are also found in *shihua*. Huihong participates by citing and commenting upon the pronouncements of other writers before him, including Sima Guang, Han Ju, Huang Tingjian, and Su Shi. In turn, Southern Song miscellany authors, such as Hu Zi 胡仔(1082-1143) and Wu Zeng, quote and comment on Huihong's entries. By including these types of discussions, Huihong tries to establish his authority as a poetry critic and demonstrate that he and by association, other monks, are not in the class of the vulgarizers.

Huihong may not have found a need to use Buddhist ideas to engage in discussions of well-established poetic ideas and ongoing debates about variants, etc., but the fact that he was participating in these conversations is significant. By treating these topics with so much

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[156] Daiwie Fu, "The Flourishing of *Biji* or Pen-Notes Texts," p. 116. Fu, pp. 114-115, focuses on a single discussion point, the meaning of the word "black ghost" (*wugui* 烏鬼) taken from Shen Kuo's *Mengxi bitan*, to illustrate how these citation networks played out in *biji* works over time. *Night Chats* includes an entry that is one of the texts in this intertextual dialogue about the term "black ghost."

finesse, he carves out a place for himself in the ongoing poetic "dialogues." Furthermore, even in these entries, we can see his personal predilection for poetry that defied taboos or expresses various kinds of transcendent and spontaneous thought. This predilection, we know, grew out of a combination of his Buddhist understanding and his own experience with the power of poetry to overcome challenging circumstances.

3.6 Conclusion

Beginning with Su Shi's generation, around the second half of the 11th century, we see examples of poets looking at the world and the literati arts of poetry, painting, and calligraphy with perspectives borrowed from Chan and Huayan thought.[157] Writers expressed these perspectives within their poems, but with the rise of *shihua* and the interest in articulating issues of poetry craft and criticism, aestheticized Buddhist ideas eventually became an integral part of how poetry was understood, crafted and critiqued. In *Night Chats*, Huihong helped transform Buddhist terminology and ideas found *within* poems into ways of talking *about* poetry. He took vaguely defined poetic ideas with roots in Buddhism that were bandied between poets, such as the poetic eye, eye within the lines, and *duotai huangu,* and presented them as applicable approaches to evaluation or composition. He used common forms of poetic critique—comparison and debate—to promote a transcendent approach to poetry that prized ingenuity and flexibility over convention and rules. In addition, by

[157] According to Zhou Yukai, Song poets were more heavily influenced by Buddhist ways of viewing the world compared with poets from other dynasties. See Zhou, *Fayan yu shixin,* p. 178.

participating in conversations on poetic issues and recording accounts of poets that reflected purely literary concerns of the day, such as textual variants, he showed that monks had a legitimate voice in the development of poetic discourse.

More than a simple record of famous literati poets' ideas, *Night Chats* reflects Huihong's own, distinct approach to poetry and poetry criticism. Examining the Buddhist elements and origins of Huihong's aesthetic principles, poetic methods and approaches to poetry criticism reveals that although he adopted many existing ideas, his Buddhist outlook, specifically the idea of non-discrimination, influenced how he presented and applied these ideas.

There is no evidence that Huihong was aiming at a systematic aesthetic theory, nor are his ideas about poetics comprehensive. But rather than see the lack of thorough analysis and systematic expression as a reflection of an undeveloped form of criticism, I suggest this was a natural manifestation of Huihong's insistence on a flexible, non-discriminatory approach to poetics derived from his Chan outlook. Granted, the fragmented and disparate discussions of poetry was, to a certain extent, the convention in *shihua* writing at the time. But there were also contemporary *shihua*, like Fan Wen's *Qianxi shiyan,* that were already moving towards the more theoretical and methodological presentation of ideas that culminates in Yan Yu's *Canglang shihua*. Huihong's preference to keep his discussions loose, to include a mixture of examples, commentary, anecdote, and principle, and to articulate concepts without letting them become reified reflects his Buddhist aesthetic as much as it does the conventions at the time. Defining concepts or articulating the limits of their application, while necessary for a good theoretical discussion, invariably results in ossification. Stagnation and narrowing of application are exactly the opposite of what

Huihong saw as good poetry criticism. His aesthetics dictated that both the composition and evaluation of poetry should stem from a non-discriminatory outlook that transcended conventions, limitations, even historical fact.

An aesthetics of flexibility and adaptability is not easily transmitted to others. Even as many of the ideas recorded in *Night Chats* were adopted by later critics, the spirit in which these terms were meant to be understood was largely lost. We see this happen with the poetic eye. In *Night Chats*, the poetic eye (*shiyan*), a concept inspired by Su Shi and developed further in Huihong's own poetry, is used as an approach to appreciating and critiquing poetry using a non-discriminatory attitude. But this usage is not adopted long term. Instead, the poetic eye becomes conflated with Huang Tingjian's eye within the lines and narrowed down to a single character in a line. In later *shihua*, the Chan and Huayan associations of poetic concepts, such as the poetic eye and the eye within the lines, also give way to theoretical and formulaic interpretations.

By the time we get to Yan Yu, a completely different approach to using Buddhism to discuss poetry has emerged. It is in Yan Yu's *Canglang shihua* that the Chan-poetry analogy is spelled out. But his notion of the parallel between Chan and poetry is nothing like Huihong's use of Chan in *Night Chats*. Rather than adopt poetics terminology with ties to Buddhist principles, Yan Yu chooses to emphasize the doctrinal and historical distinctions made within the Buddhist tradition and try to find corresponding distinctions within the literary history of poetry. For him, the dharma eye is not used to recognize or judge (*shi*) individual poems, but to categorize superior or inferior poetry by period, just as the Buddhist tradition distinguished between the great and small vehicle and different stages of awakening. A short excerpt from *Canglang shihua* demonstrates this well:

> Discussing poetry is just like discussing Chan. The poetry of the Han, Wei, Jin, and High Tang is the "primary truth." Poetry since the Dali reign [766-779] is the smaller vehicle Chan. And poetry of the late Tang is at the level of the realization of the "hearers" and "solitary ones." 論詩如論禪，漢、魏、晉與盛唐之詩，則第一義也。大歷以還之詩，則小乘禪也，已落第二義矣；晚唐之詩，則聲聞闢支果也。[158]

Such blanket generalizing and explicit parallels made between Buddhism and poetry are completely absent in *Night Chats*. For Yan Yu, the pinnacle of poetic skill is to be found in early poetry. Huihong is interested in displaying examples of lines that exhibit *miaoguan yixiang*, "subliminal observation and transcendent ideas," regardless of when they originated or the reputation of the poet.[159] Yan Yu's use of Chan is more explicit than Huihong's, but the principles of Buddhism (not limited to Chan) are ingrained in Huihong's poetics. Yan Yu likes to spell out the connection between his view of poetry and his understanding of Chan, whereas Huihong's Buddhist viewpoint manifests organically in the process of articulating his ideas about poetry composition and evaluation.

There are many interesting differences in form and content between Huihong's *Night Chats* and *Canglang shihua*, but that is a topic for another study. One thing should be made clear, however. Yan Yu's idea of "using Chan as an analogy for poetry" 以禪喻詩 is nothing like Huihong's approach to evaluation and appreciation as represented by the poetic eye and *miaoguan yixiang*. Although both writers applied aspects of Chan to their poetics, their

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[158] From "Shi bian," *Canglang shihua*, p. 10. For a translation of the full entry, see Stephen Owen, "Ts'ang-lang's Remarks on Poetry," in *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, pp. 402-403, followed by Owen's more detailed discussion of Yan Yu's use of Chan as analogy.

[159] While Huihong is more apt to find examples of superior poetry from his own era, in the poetry of Su Shi or Wang Anshi, the standard for evaluation and appreciation is not the time period but whether the poem expresses ideas that transcend mundane or limited perspectives.

understanding of what this meant was different. The difference is no doubt indicative of their respective eras and the developments in the Chan tradition, but it also may be due to the difference in attitude between lay scholar and Buddhist monk for whom Buddhism was integrated into daily life.

The spirit of non-discrimination that is behind the poetic eye and represented by *miaoguan yixiang* is also at play in Huihong's anecdotes about individuals and their social interactions. In the next chapter, we will discover that Huihong valued *miaoguan yixiang* as a trait applied to social dynamics and personalities as well as to aesthetics. Viewed with the ordinary eye, his accounts of people may seem nothing more than trivial episodes often prizing the ridiculous over the practical. How do they appear when viewed with the poetic eye?

Chapter 4

Character, Competence, and (Un)Conventionality: Individuals and Social Critique in *Night Chats*

4.1 People Viewed with the Poetic Eye

Although *Night Chats* is best known for discussions of poetics, Huihong was also interested in illustrating the colorful and contradictory social world in which he lived. Discussions of poetry in *Night Chats* are few compared to entries depicting people and their interactions. Like other miscellany writers, Huihong gathered informal oral and written accounts about a wide range of people. But if we look for a consistent political, historical, or even moral agenda within these stories, we may be disappointed. Huihong's experience as a contested Buddhist monk with a diverse social circle caused him to gravitate to stories that promoted a non-discriminatory critique of elite society. Human behavior is often parodied or promoted in order to create a sense of freedom from discriminatory judgements. Huihong creates his critique not through didactic statements, but by crafting accounts overheard or passed around about individuals from within and from without his social circle that shake up social perceptions and conventional priorities. Huihong's Buddhist perspective is revealed in his selection of stories that illustrate *miaoguan yixiang* within the social world. Just as he promotes poetry that transcends restrictive taboos and literal meanings, he looks for stories about people that challenge dualistic or stereotypical ideas about social norms and reputation. This is Huihong's poetic eye as applied to the social realm.

Huihong's approach to social critique is revealed by examining how his stories explore questions of character, competence, and conventionality. In this context, character refers to the mental and moral qualities of a person. Huihong praises instances of integrity, resilience, compassion, and humility. He makes fun of arrogance, stupidity, and hypocrisy. But while he admires certain character traits and objects to others, on a deeper level, his accounts are not so much moral lessons as they are disruptions of discriminatory judgements of character based on markers such as assumptions about a person's social position, reputation, or particular circumstances.

Questions of competence have to do with a person's abilities and effectiveness—in action and in speech. Huihong gives the most attention to accounts of literary endeavors, but he also commends instances of wit and instruction, application of worldly and Buddhist knowledge, philanthropic acts, and prognostication. He challenges assumptions about competence based on social position or established reputation. He records accounts of people succeeding and failing in pursuits that contradict expectation. Rather than denigrate the incompetent and praise the competent, the stories tend to make fun of shallow or ignorant judgements of competence. They poke fun at people with unrealistic ideas about their skills or who fail to recognize the abilities of others because they can't see beyond appearances.

At the heart of Huihong's accounts is a deep skepticism towards social conventionality: that is, behavior or ideas that are adopted primarily because they are deemed socially acceptable or appropriate. Through anecdote, Huihong takes issue with social norms and categories that dictate how people are judged. In illustrating interesting accounts of character and competence, he implicitly calls into question conventional assumptions about correlations made between social position and virtue. But by also including a smattering of

accounts of eccentrics, misfits, and anonymous characters who defy conventional virtues and logic, the reader is invited to temporarily put aside all practical and moral considerations and see the social world through the lens of non-discriminatory aesthetic appreciation.

Night Chats features a diverse makeup of individuals from different social spheres—from monk to merchant. Illustrations of positive and negative character traits, competence and incompetence, and conventionality and unconventionality are found in Huihong's accounts of individuals regardless of their social position. In this chapter, we look at his accounts about individuals from four of these groups—monks, officials, laymen, and Daoists—to explore Huihong's social critique.

4.2 Who's Who in *Night Chats*?

Before diving into Huihong's stories of monks, officials, laymen, and Daoists, let us look at the number and variety of individuals portrayed in *Night Chats*. Of the more than two hundred different individuals, the majority are lay literati/officials, followed by Buddhist monks. The literati are usually portrayed in their role as poets or officials. Many of the Buddhist monks are also poets. Of the named individuals, I counted 113 literati and 55 monks. Su Shi is the most frequent character of all, appearing in 51 different entries, followed by Huang Tingjian, with 33 entries. Wang Anshi comes in third with 27 entries. Huihong himself is the fourth most frequent character, with explicit references in no less than 26 entries. Of the other monks, of which there are about 55 named persons, none appear in more than three separate entries. Less pervasive, but equally noteworthy, are depictions of

Daoists, Emperors, women, hermits, and beggars. Merchants and peddlers also appear on occasion.[1]

The people in *Night Chats* are not only diverse in terms of social role, their social status and notoriety vary widely as well. We find diversity of status and fame among officials, poets, and monks. A major appeal of the work for commentators is the attention given to literary and political luminaries. But Huihong's delight in discovering and sharing interesting accounts of marginal folk and juxtaposing them with stories of the famous figures is evident throughout the work.

In addition to officials with prestigious positions at court such as Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052), Sima Guang 司馬光, Wang Anshi, and Cai Bian 蔡卞(1058-1117), there are several low-level prefects, a local school teacher, and unnamed students. Among lay poets, besides literary luminaries such as Su Shi, Huang Tingjian, and Wang Anshi, attention is given to more obscure folk such as Huihong's uncle Peng Ji 彭几 (referred to by his style name, Yuancai 淵才) and the poor poet Pan Dalin 潘大臨.[2] Among monks, this diversity of status and notoriety is present as well. Qisong 契嵩 (1007-1072) and Faxiu 法秀 (1027-

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[1] Most individuals in *Night Chats* are identified by their formal name, style name or a nickname. But there are also over fifty references to individuals for whom no name is given; these persons are referred to with a word or phrase indicate of their social identity such as "an old woman," "a student" "an unusual monk," "a peddler," etc., and they are not included in the totals above. The unnamed characters, of which I counted 47, are predominantly monks, Daoists, women, and men and boys in low status professions such as merchants, herdsmen, and servants. These are obscure individuals whose names were not known or whose identity was not necessary for the story.

[2] Huihong's attention to well-known poets caused the editors of the *Siku quanshu* to speculate that in including them, Huihong was trying to raise his own fame by association, a criticism addressed in chapter one, p. 33, and by Zhou Yukai in *Song seng Huihong*, p. 93.

1090), for example, were widely respected and influential, and Huihong himself was well known as a poet. But Huihong also gives attention to less prominent monks, such as Master Jing 靚, the monk who took him into the monastery as an orphan, Xizu Chaoran 希租超然, his dharma brother, and several obscure monks for whom no names are given. Among the women mentioned, there are those in the elite classes, like Yang Guifei and Wang Anshi's daughter, and those of lower status but well-known through their association with famous literati, such as the concubine of Su Shi, Zhaoyun, and several unnamed females whose existence would probably have gone unrecorded if Huihong had not considered them important.

Sometimes an entire entry focuses on a single individual, but more frequently, two or more people appear together. Accounts might portray the interaction between individuals of the same social identity, such as two monks or two lay poets, but more often, Huihong recorded accounts that depict the interactions between individuals with different identities: a high ranking official and a beggar, a well-established monk and a famous poet, an emperor and a monk. Note that the social status of these individuals is also mixed, with lowly figures interacting with people in lofty positions, etc. Social interactions of various types, including conversations, outings, visits, and chance encounters, were of particular interest to Huihong, especially when one or more of the people involved demonstrated unusual integrity, impressive literary talent, or an unconventional personality.

Huihong was not alone among miscellany writers to give attention to peripheral or figures with social low status. Shen Kuo also included many individuals from the lower classes in his miscellany. He was looking primarily at craftsmen and laborers, interested in

their technical skills and products.[3] Huihong, while certainly interested in the literary skills of socially low individuals, was equally fascinated with their personality, values and character. A major feature of *Night Chats* is the display of little known details about famous figures of the day and the introduction of little known individuals with noteworthy characteristics.

4.3 Monks: Engaging with the World

Monks make appearances in nearly half of the total entries in *Night Chats*. The accounts predominantly consist of anecdotes or recorded conversations. They are not full biographies and they rarely focus on the traditional achievements of monks. Accounts include both prominent and obscure monks, reflect virtuous as well as flawed conduct, and highlight a range of personalities, from the serious to the saucy. Reflected in these entries is Huihong's fascination with challenging ideas about the character and competency of monks as they engage in the world, especially when that engagement involves the timely composition of a poem, a rare example of integrity, the display of wit, or the creative application of skillful means. To begin, let us look at an entry depicting Huihong's first teacher, Master jing.

> Dhyana Master Senfeng Jing initially stayed at Baoyun. In the district, there was a wealthy merchant. He was volatile and refused to accept monks' solicitations for offerings, saying, "Whether I give is up to me. Why should I let others push me around?" Jing announced, "I alone can convert him." When the man heard that Jing had arrived, as expected, he didn't come out [to meet him]. Jing inscribed something on his wall and left. It read:
>
> 去年巢穴畫梁邊　Last year's clay nests defaced the painted beams,

[3] See Ronald Egan, "Shen Kuo Chats with Ink Stone and Writing Brush," pp. 136-139.

春暖雙雙繞檻前　Warmed by spring in pairs they circumambulate before the railing.

莫訝主人簾不捲　Nobody should be surprised that the landlord hasn't opened the blinds,

恐銜泥土污花磚　He's afraid the mud from their beaks will dirty his decorated roof tiles.

The man was delighted and not annoyed, and he made a point of going after [Jing] himself to give a generous donation. Jing laughed and told everyone: "See, I was able to convert him." 三峰靚禪師，初住寶雲. 邑有巨商，尚氣不受僧化，曰：「施由我耳，豈容人勸. 」靚宣言：「唯吾獨能化之. 」其人聞靚至，果不出. 靚題其壁而去，曰：「去年巢穴畫梁邊，春暖雙雙繞檻前. 莫訝主人簾不捲，恐銜泥土污花磚. 」其人喜不怒，特自追還，厚施之. 靚笑謂人曰：「吾果能化之. 」[4]

There is a lot to unpack in this entry, but the plot is simple enough: Master Jing uses a sympathetic and skillful poem to cause a stubborn householder to *shi* 施 (give offerings), when previously he refused to even acknowledge the monks' *hua* 化 (attempts at transforming him by soliciting offerings).[5] Jing's strategy is clever. Instead of demanding anything from the merchant, he leaves a poem that demonstrates his understanding of the merchant's point of view while implicitly acknowledging that past monks were clumsy in their approach to solicitation. He compares monks who come begging to intruding swallows who defile the fine workmanship of the merchant's roof with their mud nests. Last year, he

[4] "Jing Chanshi quanhua ren"靚禪師勸化人, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.56.

[5] In addition to the provisional meaning of "requesting offerings," *hua*化 retains the meanings "to transform," "to change," "to convert," even "to teach." Thus, the implication is that there is a symbiotic relationship between the monk and the lay person in which the monk provides the opportunity for the lay person to transform through the practice of giving. The concept came to be referred to as *huayuan* 化緣, or the "opportunities to convert/teach." See "huayan" in *Foguan da cidian*, p. 1328.

let them nest, and this spring, here they are again, circling around outside, pair after pair, shut out from the merchant's house. The suggestion is that last year the soliciting monks came and begged for donations, but all they contributed in return was foul words (mud from their beaks), so this year the merchant is not playing along. But Jing doesn't scold the merchant for his lack of hospitality or parsimoniousness. It is no wonder he keeps his blinds shut when the monks (the swallows) are so inconsiderate and bothersome. This combination of sympathy and teasing is successful. The insight reflected in Jing's poem proves to the merchant that monks have some worth after all and inspires him to make an offering. Far from leaving mud behind (foul words), this monk has adorned the front of his house with an insightful and witty poem!

This account provides a good overview of some of the most prominent characteristics of Huihong's monks. Most notably, Jing is a monk who is out in the world engaging with others. He is not cloistered in the temple or alone on a mountain top. He is interacting with people. He uses expedient means to teach the laity, and he is successful due to a combination of familiarity with worldly affairs and poetic skill. He puts himself in the shoes of a rich merchant and homeowner and writes a poem that will resonates with the perosn's particular experience. He also acknowledges that monks have their flaws. Finally, the monk is portrayed with a distinct personality—confident, even a bit smug. While not an exhaustive list, social engagement, skillful means, worldly knowledge, poetic skill, imperfection, and strong personality are some of the dominant ways the monks in *Night Chats* challenge expectation about the character, competency and conventional roles of monks.

Like the Master Jing story, there are several accounts in which monks take on the role of teacher or advisor in their interaction with non-monks. In these accounts, we often see

monks integrating their Buddhist perspectives with worldly knowledge to communicate a point. An account describes how Master Fayan wrote a poem for Li Houzhu 李後主 (937-978), the last emperor of the Five Dynasties. Emperor Li refused to yield to Song Taizu, whose victory was inevitable. According to Huihong, Fayan is in the palace garden observing the peonies when he composes a poem for Li Houzhu. In the poem, Fayan uses observations about the very short blossoming period of peonies to emphasize the passing of time. In the final line, he applies the Buddhist concepts of impermanence and emptiness to the blossoms, in hopes that Li Houzhu will apply the lesson to his situation and get out before it is too late: "Why must we wait until they are withered and dropping, and only then begin to recognize their emptiness" 何須待零落，然後始知空? As clever as Fayan's poem is, it does not have the desired effect: "But Houzhu didn't understand, and the imperial guards quickly crossed the river" 後主不省，王師旋渡江. [6]

In the accounts of Jing and Fayan, the monks show a certain amount of tact in their attempts to advise. Although Jing's poem is a bit of a tease, he shows consideration for the merchant's concerns. By never referring explicitly to the emperor or his situation, Fayan is demonstrating his respect for the Emperor's position (and probably protecting himself). In both accounts, poetry helps soften the didactic intent. Many of the monks in *Night Chats* are shown composing poetry as a means to tactfully apply Buddhist principles to worldly situations or pursuits.[7]

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[6] "Li Houzhu wangguo ji" 李後主亡國偈, *Lengzhai yehua* 1.19-20.

[7] The poetry of monks in *Night Chats* is discussed in detail in chapter five.

Entries in which monks are depicted teaching straightforward Buddhist principles, without packaging them in poetry or adapting them to literati values, are rare. Two entries, both featuring Faxiu, stand out as unusual precisely because they portray a strait-laced monk admonishing well known literati using rationale that stems from a strict interpretation of Buddhist morality. Huihong describes Faxiu as "iron-faced, harsh and cold, with the ability to overpower others with his reasoning" 鐵面嚴冷，能以理折人.[8] One account describes Faxiu warning the famous horse painter Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049-1106) to stop painting horses or he will surely end up being reborn a horse. He suggests Li paint Guanyin images instead.[9] Similarly, the other account relates an encounter between Faxiu and Huang Tingjian in which the monk urges Huang to stop composing romantic songs and song lyrics, explaining, "If your defiled words incite lustful thoughts in others and cause them to transgress propriety and go beyond the proscriptions, this would be a transgression, thus, I'm afraid [the result] wouldn't merely be falling into the evil paths." 若以邪言蕩人淫心，使彼逾禮越禁，為罪惡之由，吾恐非止墮惡道而已. [10] In each entry, Huihong concludes with a line about Faxiu's effectiveness. He is supposedly responsible for Li Gonglin painting images of Guanyin that were the most marvelous in the world, all because "a high ranking person of the era [Li] deferred to the master's well placed ingenuity"故一時公卿服師之善

[8] "Luzhi wu Fayun ba zuo xioaci"魯直悟法雲語罷作小詞, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.91.

[9] "Li Boshi hua ma" 李伯時畫馬, *Lengzhai yehua* 8.78.

[10] "Luzhi wu Fayun ba zuo xioaci"魯直悟法雲語罷作小詞, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.91.

巧者也.[11] As for Huang Tingjian, he is said to have no longer composed song lyrics after he heard Faxiu's words.

Amidst the more lighthearted, adaptable monks in *Night Chats,* Faxiu comes across as unusually strict. The entries on Faxiu serve to represent the critical view of literati arts held by some monks, a position that contrasts with the majority of *Night Chats* monks.[12] But Huihong does not portray Faxiu negatively. Instead, he emphasizes how a monk uses reason to influence literati to modify their artistic pursuits so that they accord better with Buddhist morality. Although demonstrating a different style than we saw with Master Jing and Fayan, the accounts of Faxiu continue the theme of monks' direct involvement in the secular world.

Other accounts of monks engaging with non-monks do not contain any allusions to Buddhist principles. They emphasize monks displaying other kinds of knowledge. They are versed in literature, politics, officialdom, and Confucian ideals. Even knowledge of meat and drink could come in handy. These monks wield their knowledge in these areas for a variety of reasons, but several accounts involve putting arrogant officials in their place. Take, for example, a short account involving Huihong, his two literati friends Li Zhuan 李撰 (1071-1147; courtesy name Dexiu 德修) and You Gongyi 游公義, and an official:

> Li Dexiu [Li Zhuan], You Gongyi and I went to visit a recently promoted official. The promoted official asked us to stay for a meal. The three of us all held our

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Even Faxiu is selective in the literati activities that he takes issue with: it is not that he wants Huang and Li to give up poetry and painting all together. He tells Huang that there is no harm in composing shi poems, and when Li asks him what he can do to purge himself of his offenses, Faxiu suggests painting only Guanyin images.

> chopsticks using the left hand. The promoted official said, "You all incline towards the left [i.e. demoted]," to which I rejoined: "My colleagues and I have no choice but to incline towards the left, but how do we know that you, Sir, aren't someone who turns their spoon over [i.e. at odds with the times/unlucky]?" We all laughed out loud, spitting rice all over the table. 予與李德修、游公義過一新貴人，貴人留食. 予三人者皆以左手舉箸，貴人曰：「公等皆左轉也. 」予遂應聲曰：「我輩自應須左轉，知君豈是背匙人. 」一座大笑，噴飯滿案.[13]

The official tries to belittle his guests by alluding to the fact they are eating with their left hands with the phrase "to turn towards the left" (*zuozhuan*左轉), a term that also means to be demoted. He is emphasizing the contrast between their lack of status and the fact that he is now a high official (*guiren* 貴人). But Huihong is having none of it. He comes up with his own pun on eating habits: "someone who turns the spoon upside down" (*beishi ren* 背匙人). This phrase is a homonym for *beishi* 背時, "to be out of sync with the times," or unlucky. Huihong remarks that of course he and his friends use their left hands (are demoted officials) since they are eating with an official who might very well be someone who turns his spoon upside down (is unlucky). In this account, we see Huihong using humor to stand up for himself and challenge the assumption that high status is any reason to think yourself better than others.

Night Chats contains several accounts of monks challenging officials who make assumptions about people below them or whose sense of superiority is solely based on status. Another entry describes how Dhyana Master Chengtian Zhen 承天珍gets the better of a condescending local prefect. Because Zhen was from Shu, "he had a *ba* accent and an *yi*

[13] "Liu shi xiyu daxiao penfan" 留食戲語大笑噴飯, *Lengzhai yehua* 4.22.

appearance” 巴音夷面 (i.e. he sounded and looked foreign/uncivilized). The prefect hadn’t heard that Zhen was in fact quite a learned and virtuous person, so when he went to visit, he ignored Zhen and only spoke to his friend about the most suitable places to raise fish, sheep, rice, and wheat, (topics he must have assumed the uncouth monk knew nothing about). Suddenly, Zhen makes a comment on the flavor and property of mutton: “Of the world’s flavors, nothing compares with the superiority of mutton. Moreover, its property is extremely warm—it is well suited for people to eat.” 世味無如羊之大美，且性極暖，宜人食. Annoyed, the official asks how he, a monk, knows of such things, to which Zhen replies, “I know about it because I often lie on a lamb’s wool mat. The wool stays warm, so it goes without saying that I understand [the property of] the meat. [Likewise,] if the illustrious one administers the prefecture superiorly, then he will be an even better court official.” 常臥氈，知之，其毛尚爾暖， 其肉不言可知矣. 如明公治郡政美，則立朝當更佳也.[14] The monk is saying that just like he can understand mutton, a topic distant to his own experience, by knowing the properties of the lamb’s wool mat that he uses every day, the prefect will know how to be a good court official if he can become deeply familiar with his role as district prefect and the local situation. The net result of Master Chengtian Zhen’s intervention in the monopolized conversation between the official and the official’s friend is a lesson in the benefits of humility or learning to respect and value what’s in front of you, especially if you aspire to rise to a position of real prestige.

[14] “Yangrou da mei xing nuan” 羊肉大美性暖, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.90-91.

In these accounts, monks have the last word, even when the discourse is not obviously related to Buddhism. The accounts challenge stereotypes about what a monk should know, what skills he is likely to have, and how he is expected to behave. They highlight how a monk, someone who is relatively free of family responsibilities and mundane social obligations, can in fact provide insight and benefit to those with worldly responsibilities and pressures.

In addition to demonstrating the competencies of engagement with society, Huihong collects accounts of monks that demonstrate instances where monks demonstrate their exceptional character. He especially gravitates towards accounts of unusual virtue or integrity. Take for example the detailed story of Huihong's teacher Kewen rescuing a blind girl who had been left to starve by her impoverished family. Hearing of her plight, Kewen weeps in sympathy, then turns to his servant and says, "You don't have a wife. You could take care of this girl if you lived together. I will provide for her throughout her lifetime" 汝無婦，可畜以相活，我給與一世. Every year after that, he sent her clothes and food, "just as if she had been his own flesh and blood"如子姪然.[15] This kind of active involvement in the lives of lay people, especially castoff women, can't have been very common for monks. Besides honoring the deeds of his teacher, the account reflects Huihong's interest in the different ways that monks applied their principles in their interactions with others.

Huihong was particularly interested in accounts of Song monks who shunned worldly prestige. There is the account of the strange monk known as "Monk Mao" (Maoseng 毛僧)

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[15] "Yun'an huo mang nü" 雲庵活盲女, *Lengzhai yehua* 8.73.

who was not particular when it came to food and drink and preferred to hang out with men of lowly status, refusing the invitations of people of consequence.[16] By emphasizing the impartiality of Monk Mao, Huihong is implicitly critiquing those people, including monks, who pander to high ranking donors. A lone mountain monk tells Huihong that he gets by just fine without basic belongings typical of a simple monk: he doesn't need an alms bowl because he eats at the monasteries at meal time; he can get by without a bamboo hat by not going out when it rains, and as to his lack of shoes, he has discovered that he is faster in bare feet![17]

There is also the account of the renowned monk, Dhyana Master Dajue Huailian大覺懷璉 (1010-1090), who declined a dragon wood alms bowl presented to him by the emperor. He tells the messenger to burn the bowl, stating, "My dharma is that of wearing plain clothes and eating from a clay bowl; that bowl goes against my dharma" 吾法以壞色衣，以瓦銕食，此鉢非法.[18] In the same entry, an account of another monk, Master Weijing, a famous scholar of Sanskrit, describes how he refused to pretend the worm markings discovered on a piece of firewood were an auspicious prophesy written in Sanskrit, although bending the truth would result in rewards from the palace. Huihong quotes an official's praise of these two monks and his declaration that if they had been officials, "they certainly would have been utterly loyal, exhausting their talents in every circumstance because of their

[16] "Mao Seng zhi hua" 毛僧之化, *Lengzhai yehua* 7.68.

[17] "Daoren shi Ougong bi bu fan" 道人識歐公必不凡, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.89.

[18] "Du wen bu tong bian yi" 蠹文不通辨譯, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.88.

extraordinary personal character”倘使立朝，必能盡忠，以其人品不凡，故隨所遇，輒盡其才. [19]

Huihong clearly appreciated monks who took down self-important officials and resisted the temptation of prestige. He had a problem with the abuse of authority and the practice of pandering to those in high positions. But it is not the case that officials alone are portrayed with these bad habits while the monks appear inculpable. When we discuss the non-monk characters, we will find that officials are also praised for their integrity and disinterestedness.

In all the accounts of monks mentioned thus far, regardless of whether they are depicted applying Buddhist principles or displaying other kinds of knowledge, composing poetry or demonstrating well-timed wit, behaving outrageously or showing impressive integrity, it is their strengths and accomplishments that are emphasized. We might assume from this that Huihong was intentionally portraying monks in a positive light. Indeed, overall, monks are portrayed favorably, but there are accounts that highlight the character flaws, absurd behavior, and mistaken understanding of some monks. Huihong avoids heavy moralistic statements, but he will occasionally point out shortcomings. More commonly, he cites others’ criticism of certain monks or records accounts in which their foibles are only hinted at through mockery or teasing.

Huihong seems to be most critical of the character and skills of scholarly monks and poet monks. A few accounts point out where the monk authors of monastic biographies lack

[19] “Jing, Lian ke wei fo dizi” 淨璉可謂佛弟子, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.89.

critical evaluation or make mistakes. He criticizes Qisong Zhongling 契嵩仲靈 (1007-1072) for failing to point out the inconsistent behavior of the Eastern Jin monk Huiyuan 慧遠. After noting that Qisong admonished previous scholars for undervaluing Huiyuan's virtues, Huihong boldly states,

> Is it really the case that Zhongling [Qisong] himself investigated [Huiyuan's] affairs? When Xie Lingyun wanted to enter the [White Lotus] society, [Hui]yuan didn't allow it, saying, "It is because your thinking is confused and you will come to a bad end." But after Lu Xun rebelled, Yuan clasped his hand, chatting and laughing. If we say that [Hui]yuan was a good judge of people, then how could he have been in the dark with regard to Xun? If we say he wasn't a good judge of people, then why was he clear when it came to Lingyun? 仲靈寧嘗自考其事乎？謝靈運欲入社，遠拒之曰：『是子思亂，將不令終.』盧循反，而遠與之執手言笑. 謂遠知人，則何暗於循；謂不知人，則何獨明於靈運？[20]

Huihong doesn't think Huiyuan should be portrayed as unequivocally virtuous when he is inconsistent in his judgement of people, having enough discernment and integrity to reject Xie Lingyun but willing to stay friends with a rebel like Lu Xun. Qisong was highly respected both at court and in the monastery, but this does not stop Huihong from critiquing his scholarship.

In his assessment of the character of monk poets, Huihong's criticisms are often part of nuanced descriptions that emphasize seemingly contradictory traits. Introducing the poetry of Huiquan 惠詮 (dates unknown; Huihong's contemporary), Huihong writes, "He feigned madness and was filthy, but his poetic lines were the epitome of purity and grace" 佯狂垢

[20] "Huiyuan zi yi zong jiao wei ji ren" 惠遠自以宗教為己任, *Lengzhai yehua* 9.84.

汙，而詩句絕清婉.[21] Huiquan's poetic competence is not what is expected of someone with his outward appearance and manner. Or there is his description of Daoqian as a monk with a distinct style who became well known through his poetry, "but he was narrow minded and temperamental and he despised ordinary people as if they were his enemies" 然性褊尚氣，憎凡子如仇.[22]

We can also find cases where teasing poems or rhetorical questions indicate an underlying critical view of the monk in question. The account of the poet monk Kezun 可遵 includes several of the rhetorical devises used to suggest criticism seen in *Night Chats*.

> Kezun of Fuzhou liked to compose poetry. He would flaunt his talents to overshadow others. The monastic community made a pretense of being polite, but they didn't really feel that way. Once he inscribed a poem on the wall of a hot springs [bath]. When Dongpo [Su Shi] visited Mount Lu, he happened to see it and [wrote a] match.
>
> Kezun's [poem] reads:
> "Who has set up a stone dragon head in the Chan Hall?
> From the dragon's mouth the hot springs gushes forth without cease.
> Waiting until the defilements of all living beings are purged,
> For only then can I, clean and cool, mix with regular streams."
>
> Dongpo's [matching poem] reads:
> "The Stone dragon has a mouth, but his mouth is without a root/stem (tongue?),
> In the dragon's mouth hot springs spews forth and is swallowed on its own.
> If it is true that living beings originally are without defilements,
> Then why would this spring care whether it was hot or cold?"
>
> Following this, Zun became even more arrogant. When he visited Jinling, Foyin Yuangong [Liaoyuan] was coming back from the capital and stopped there. Zun wrote a poem to present to him:
> "Coming back from the capital, the road is several thousand miles,
> It is exactly as if he were bringing the incense smoke from the imperial censor.

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[21] "Dongpo he Seng Huiquan shi"東坡和僧惠詮詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.57.

[22] "Dongpo cheng Daoqian zhi shi" 東坡稱道潛之詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.58.

> At the foot of Phoenix Mountain you knock on the thatched hut,
> Startling awake the old mountain man from his morning slumber."
>
> Yuan responded in jest:
> "Sleeping meditating monks: thousands upon thousands,
> In their dreams pursuing profit they run off like [incense] smoke.
> I urge you Sir, to perk up and cultivate Chan samādhi,
> In your old age, like a silk worm in its cocoon you have already gone back to sleep."
>
> Although Yuan's [Foyin] poem lacks cultured restraint, he did it quickly for the occasion. 福州僧可遵好作詩，暴所長以蓋人，叢林貌禮之而心不然. 嘗題詩湯泉壁間，東坡遊廬山，偶見，為和之. 遵曰：〔禪庭誰立石龍頭？龍口湯泉沸不休. 直待眾生塵垢盡，我方清冷混常流. 〕東坡曰：〔石龍有口口無根，龍口湯泉自吐吞. 若信眾生本無垢，此泉何處覓寒溫？ 〕遵自是愈自矜伐. 客金陵，佛印元公自京師還，過焉. 遵作詩贈之曰：〔上國歸來路幾千，渾然猶帶御爐煙. 鳳凰山下敲蓬咏戶，驚起山翁白晝眠. 〕元戲答曰：〔打睡禪和萬萬千，夢中趨利走如煙. 勸君抖擻修禪定，老境如蠶已再眠. 〕元詩雖少蘊藉，然一時快之. [23]

We have seen that Huihong liked accounts of strong willed, confident monks who stand up for themselves. But he was quick to point out when they became too full of themselves. After mentioning Kezun's tendency to be arrogant, he includes two of his poems and matching poems by Su Shi and Foyin 佛印 (1032-1098).[24] Both matching poems are meant to poke fun at Kezun. Foyin's poem makes a direct mockery of Kezun, painting him as a lazy monk who is sleeping and daydreaming instead of meditating. Su Shi's poem is not a personal attack, but it eclipses Kezun's poem by suggesting the Chan understanding expressed in it does not go deep enough, a point seemingly lost on Kezun who is simply excited that his poem was matched by the great Su Shi.

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[23] "Seng Kezun hao ti shi" 僧可遵好題詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.61.

[24] Foyin was a great friend of Su Shi and the two often exchanged poems. See Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited*, pp. 101-103.

John Kieschnick argues that monastic biographies represent the monk as he was seen in the "monastic imagination," as an ideal, rather than a reflection of factual reality.[25] The depiction of monks in *Night Chats* are undoubtedly shaped to a certain degree by Huihong's imagination, but the result is rarely an idealized monk. The demonstration of distinct, unusual, even controversial monk behaviors seems to have been a primary consideration in Huihong's selections. The monks in *Night Chats* are portrayed with a broad range of knowledge, literary skills, Buddhist understanding, personalities, behaviors and virtues. There are many monks that could be classified as "unusual monks" (*yiseng*異僧 or *yi biqiu* 異比丘), but it wasn't just any type of strange behavior that appealed to Huihong. Monks performing miracles or manifesting supernatural powers are rare. Only a few monks can be found engaged in ascetic practices on mountain tops. Their unusual characteristics are revealed in their engagement with others in everyday encounters. In the rare cases where reputed ascetic or hermetic monks are depicted, they are inevitably captured when they are engaged in some type of social interaction.

Monks' engagement sometimes involves the discussion of Buddhist principles, but these are usually couched in poetry or applied to worldly situations and literati pursuits, not direct teachings. Many exchanges do not refer to Buddhism at all, and monks are portrayed holding their own on other topics, to the surprise of their non-monk acquaintances who seem to habitually underestimate or make assumptions about them. But the monks in *Night Chats*

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[25] Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, pp. 3-4. Kieshnick's study is primarily based on three collections of monastic biographies: the *Gaoseng zhuan* (6th century), the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (7th century) and the *Song gaoseng zhuan* (10th century).

are not deified either. They have personality flaws and preferences, they show emotions, and they make mistakes. Huihong's portrayals demonstrate how monks of various backgrounds deal with living in the social world. The accounts challenge assumptions about the limits and conventions of monastic life.

The inclusion of numerous accounts of Buddhist monks is one of the obvious ways that Huihong's monastic background influenced his depictions of individuals in *Night Chats.* It is not just that monks are better represented in his miscellany than they are in those written by literati, Huihong brings a monastic insider's perspective to his depiction of monks, willing to both promote their contribution to society and point out the issues involved in that engagement and the foibles and shortcomings monks could exhibit. Huihong had already compiled a collection of monk biographies, the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan*, as well as an entire miscellany devoted to accounts of monks, the *Linjian lu* 林間錄. The former includes formal biographies of monks, while the latter gives accounts that would usually be left out of biographies.[26] The accounts of monks in *Night Chats* tend to focus on monks' interactions with literati and their engagement with worldly situations. In his depiction of monks, Huihong's Buddhist perspective doesn't manifest in constructing accounts of the idealized monk, but rather in showing the diverse ways monks engaged with the world.

[26] The *Linjian lu*, completed in 1107, is the first known *biji* in existence devoted to accounts of monks. After Huihong, other such *biji* began to appear including those by Xiaoying. Recent scholarship by Lu Huiqiong distinguishes *biji* by monks, so-called "Chanlin biji" (Biji of the Chan Grove), with "Wenren bij" 文人筆記 (*Biji* of the literati). See Lu Huiqiong's 2015 Ph.D. dissertation, "Song dai Chanlin biji yanjiu."

Having discussed monks, I will now turn to groups of non-monks that are easily identified and that best lend themselves to comparison with the portrayals of monks: officials, laymen, Daoists, and women. Some individuals fall into more than one category—laymen may also be officials, for example. In these cases, I've based the group identification on the dominant role they play in each entry. Many of the people in these groups are also poets, but their role as such and their poetry will be more fully addressed in the next chapter. There are approximately three times as many identified non-monks as there are monks in *Night Chats*. As discussed above, they represent a wide range of backgrounds and social spheres, and their physical and verbal behavior, interests, and interactions are diverse.

4.4 Officials: In Character and Out of Character

In entries featuring officials, we find luminaries such as Sima Guang, Wang Anshi, Fan Zhongyan, Han Qi, Zhang Shangying, and Su Shi. Several obscure and minor officials, including Huihong's uncle Yuancai are also featured.[27] Regardless of their degree of fame, these men are depicted with character strengths and weaknesses, abilities and inadequacies. The focus of accounts of officials in *Night Chats* is not government policy or power play at court. We generally find short personal accounts of actions and comments made in daily life, sometimes taking place in the context of official duties, sometimes in the private sphere.

[27] Yuancai, whose formal name was Peng Ji, was Huihong's paternal uncle. He held an appointment as "Chief Musician" (xiélü lang 協律郎) for a short period, according to one of the entries about him included in *Night Chats*, entitled, "Kai jing fa jin she fang" 開井法禁蛇方, *Lengzhai yehua* 9.85-86.

Character traits are revealed by officials' informal actions or words, and occasionally reflected in their poems.

Huihong's accounts of officials focus on the unconventional in relation to character and competence. He emphasizes the unexpected, contradictory, and inconsistent aspects of officials' characters. Entries consist of surprising accounts that further elucidate the personal characters of well-known officials, contradict conventional images of certain officials, or challenge expectations about how someone in an official position should behave. The representations tend to either enhance or contradict the image of the statesman as virtuous and competent.

We begin with a few accounts that emphasize the virtue and/or competence manifested by officials. These are striking stories in which officials demonstrate qualities such as genuineness, humility, compassion, and ingenuity. Sima Guang, Fan Zhongyan, and Shi Manqing all exhibit admirable character traits such as these, expressed or revealed in unexpected circumstances.

Genuineness (*zhen* 真), as applied to character, comes across as a broad and sometimes ambiguous concept.[28] The entry that comes closest to defining the concept, does so with examples rather than analysis. It consists of a paraphrase of Su Shi's discussion of instances where three ancients, Tao Yuanming, Han Gaodi, and Xiao He, embodied

[28] Genuineness as a quality in poetry is also emphasized by Huihong in *Night Chats.* See, for example "Daoqian zuo shi zhui fa Yuanming, nai shisi zi shihao" 道潛作詩追法淵明乃十四字師號, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.39.

genuineness.[29] From Su's examples, we can extrapolate that genuineness encompasses at least three aspects: the willingness to be open about one's shortcomings, to approach affairs unmediated by deliberation or ulterior motives, and the ability to recognize the talent of others.

Sima Guang is portrayed as someone who is open about his own character, someone with nothing shameful to hide. Specifically, Huihong shares an account of Sima that he sees as demonstrating that he does not "deceive the spirit." The entry begins with Xu Xuan's 徐鉉 citation of the Tang recluse Zhu Zhen's 朱真explanation that "spirit," in the oft heard maxim, "Don't deceive the spirit" 不欺神明refers not to external spirits as it was commonly interpreted, but to one's own heart. To Huihong, Sima embodied this principle when he said, "In general, there's nothing about me that surpasses other people; it is only that there's never been anything that I couldn't tell others" 我平居無大過人，但未嘗有不可對人言者耳.[30] Sima Guang's comment is meant to be humble, emphasizing that his openness is all that he can boast of himself, but to Huihong this quality of openness is exactly what Huihong values in officials.

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[29] "Guren gui shi qi zhen" 古人貴識其真, *Lengzhai yehua*, 1.14. As Su Shi explains it, Tao Yuanming's genuineness manifests in the fact that after giving up a lucrative but demeaning appointment, he admitted that he still felt envy upon seeing fancy chariots. Han Gaodi's genuineness comes across in his approach to great events as if they were child's play: "nevertheless, his authenticity was apparent and has shined on for a very long time, so we can imagine what kind of person he was." Similarly, Xiao He's ability to recognize the value of Han Xin 韓信 (230-196 BCE) baffles scholars, according to Su Shi, but the implication is that the recognition came about because both men were genuine.

[30] "Bu qi shenming" 不欺神明, *Lengzhai yehua* 9.83.

Another entry emphasizes Sima Guang's compassionate ingenuity. It is an account that reflects a combination of personal character, governance, and artistic pursuits. Sima is depicted as a young boy who is the only one among his playfellows with the acuity to figure out how to rescue a boy who accidently falls into a clay vat of water. The young Sima Guang picks up a stone and breaks a hole in the vat, allowing the water to run out, thereby saving the boy. Huihong's conclusion is that Sima's strategies for saving people can already be seen when he was a child. But he also tells us that this account was the inspiration for the famous painting, "Little Boy Strikes the Clay [Water] Vat" 小兒擊甕圖, popular in Luoyang at the time.[31] Besides demonstrating the early signs of Sima Guang's proactive compassion later associated with his approach to politics, the purpose of this entry is to give the actual event that was depicted in a famous painting.

The early Song reformer Fan Zhongyan (courtesy name Wenzheng), is also featured writing a poem in office that, according to Huihong, reflects his character. But the tone and topic are quite different from Wang Anshi's poem. Fan's early political ambitions and expertise are juxtaposed with a petty annoyance, in reaction to which he writes a poem. Huihong sees a connection between the character and personality reflected in this minor poem and that which is found in his important works.

> When Fan Zhongyan was young, he sought to become the salt inspector of West River in Qinzhou. His goal was to swallow up Xixia, and he knew about the pros and cons of military strategy. But there were a lot of mosquitos in his office, so [Fan] Wenzheng wrote in jest upon his wall: "Full, they leave heavy as cherries, / Hungry, they come light as willow catkin. All I know is that when they leave here, there's no point asking where they are going next." Although these words were

[31] "Huoren shouduan" 活人手段, *Lengzhai yehua* 3.35.

> written in jest, their optimistic and honest energy strike people. How much more is the case with his great works. 范仲淹少時，求為秦州西溪監鹽，其志欲吞西夏，知用兵利病耳. 而廨舍多蚊蚋，文正戲題其壁曰：「飽去櫻桃重，饑來柳絮輕. 但知離此去，不要問前程.」 雖戲笑之語，亦愷悌渾厚之氣逼人，況其大者乎. [32]

Huihong sees Fan's amusing poem not only as a reflection of his sense of humor, but an indication of his character. Like the entry about Sima Guang as a young boy, this is a rare glimpse into the character of a great statesmen as reflected in a short anecdote from his daily life. In both accounts, we see Huihong extrapolating larger implications about the character of individuals from their response to specific incidents.

An account about the poet Shi Yannian石延年 (courtesy name: Manqing曼卿) contains no explicit extrapolation and no poem, but it is also an effective character study. Like the account of Fan Zhongyan, Shi Yannian's sense of humor reveals something deeper about his character. Although Shi Yannian didn't amount to much as an official, in the story he demonstrates humility combined with wit in the face of an embarrassing incident that might cause a lesser man to lose his temper. The account describes Shi, (who's surname literally means "stone"), as someone who "enjoyed making jokes" 善戲. Once, when departing from a temple, his driver lost control and the horses were startled, causing Manqing to fall. Instead of yelling at his driver, as his subordinates expect, Manqing makes a joke, a humorous pun on his own surname: "It is a good thing I am Scholar "Stone." If I were Scholar "Pottery," wouldn't I be shattered to bits?" 賴我石學士也，若瓦學士，顧不破碎

[32] "Fan Wenzheng gong wen shi" 范文正公蚊詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.50.

乎.[33] Besides his quick wit, what stands out is Shi's ability to laugh at himself. Unlike some other officials in *Night Chats*, he doesn't let his position go to his head, or use it as an excuse to mistreat those beneath him. In other accounts officials in *Night Chats* don't always respond to awkward situations with such finesse, as we will see below.

As a transition to depictions of officials behaving in ways that contradict or are inconsistent with the image of the virtuous and competent statesman, let us look at anecdotes about Fan Zhongyan and Han Qi 韩琦 (1008-1075) respectively. These accounts demonstrate the generosity and perseverance of these men, but contrary to expectation, each ultimately fails in his endeavors. While enhancing the image of the official as virtuous and pro-active statesmen, the accounts also contradict the assumption that prestige and resources, even combined with good character, are sufficient to change peoples' fates. Fan Zhongyan sets out to make rubbings of a calligraphy stele to raise money for a starving poet, only to have the stele shattered by lightning before he can begin.[34] Han Qi pities his handsome retainer who at fifty was still unmarried. Han "comes up with numerous strategies to help him arrange a marriage, but whenever it was about to be realized [the fiancé] would inevitably die" 百計賙恤，為求婚，將遂，其人必死. As a last resort, Han gives the retainer his own servant girl, but the retainer himself dies before the marriage can take place. The entry concludes with a statement connecting the stories of Han and Fan: "The fame, affluence, and status of Messieurs Han and Fan are like Mount Tai and the Yellow River: although the days and

[33] "Shi xueshi" 石學士, *Lengzhai yehua* 8.76.

[34] "Lei hong Jianfu bei" 雷轟薦福碑, *Lengzhai yehua* 2.23-24.

months pass, they never decline. But aren't their two retainers amusing?" 韓、范功名富貴如太山黃河，日月所不能老，兩客乃爾可笑耶.[35] On the surface, Huihong is emphasizing the enduring fame and affluence of Fan and Han, while expressing his amusement at their two unfortunate retainers. But in light of the stories, it isn't difficult to see an implicit suggestion that all the fame and resources in the world don't guarantee successful outcomes.

The type of contradiction reflected in the accounts of Fan and Han, that show goodhearted gestures coming to nothing, is unusual. More common are accounts that reflect a contradiction between an official's behavior and how someone in his position is expected to behave. This theme is found in accounts of high level and obscure officials alike. In the section on monks, we saw minor officials so wrapped up in their own position that they treat monks with condescension or indifference. There was the prefect who slighted Master Chengtian because he assumed that he was an ignorant nobody, and the newly promoted official who tries to demean his guests with a joke at their expense. Neither of these officials hold very high positions, but they let what little prestige they have go to their heads. How different from luminaries like Fan and Han who, far from belittling those beneath them, go out of their way to assist them, or Sima Guang who, (despite his position and accomplishments) only claims to have the ability of being open about himself.

There is an account of Su Shi as an official in exile that manages to both contradict and enhance the traditional image of Su Shi. When Huihong was tracing Su Shi's route

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[35] "Guo Zhu qi wei ji men er si"郭注妻未及門而死, *Lengzhai yehua* 9.82. In the current edition, this account and the one about Fan Zhongyan are in different *juan*, but the similarity between the entries and Huihong's comment at the end of the Han Qi story, suggest these were once a single entry.

through Hainan after he had been released from exile, he visited the homes of some of the people Su had befriended there.[36] In *Night Chats*, Huihong relates how he visited the home of Jiang Junzhou姜君弼 (courtesy name Tangzuo 唐佐), but Jiang was not home. Jiang's mother (the woman who, when asked if she knew Su Shi, said, "I knew him, but I couldn't stand his fondness for reciting poetry" 識之，然無奈其好吟詩), tells Huihong about a handwritten note that Su had left for Jiang. Huihong continues,

> I asked to read it. In tipsy and tortuous calligraphy, it read: "For as long as he stayed alive, Zhang of Suiyang continued to curse the rebels to the point that he gnashed through his gums. Even in death, Yan of Pingyuan did not forget his sovereign, to the point that 'his fingernails broke through his fists.'"予索讀之，醉墨欹傾，曰：〔張睢陽生猶罵賊，嚼齒空齦；顏平原死不忘君，握拳透爪.〕[37]

By alluding to the two loyal Tang statesmen captured by An Lushan rebels, Zhang Xun 張巡 (708-757) and Yan Gaoqing 顏杲卿(692-756), Su Shi indirectly expressed to his friend his own fury and frustration at his treatment.[38] His note may only consist of a couple of allusions, but under the circumstances, there could not be a more explicit expression of anger and resentment. Yet this private communication contrasts starkly with the image of Su Shi

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[36] See chapter two, p. 112, for a discussion of Huihong's interest in Su Shi's route on his return from exile.

[37] "Dongpo shudui" 東坡屬對, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.51. Note: the *Quan Song biji* edition has *chuan*穿 in place of *kong* 空, in the phrase "bit through his gums" 嚼齒空齦.

[38] Zhang Xun is said to have cursed the An Lushan rebels so vehemently that he gnashed up his gums. (See the biography of Zhang Xun in the *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 187.4901). Similarly, Yan's determination to stay loyal to his emperor appears to be an allusion to the Jin dynasty official Bian Kun 卞壼 (d. 328) who is said to have been found in his coffin with fists clenched so tightly his fingernails had broken the skin, a reflection of his hatred towards his captors when he was executed. See Bian Kun's biography in the *Jinshu* 70.1872.

represented in poems, as the unconcerned and optimistic exile, an example of which Huihong's includes at the beginning of the entry.[39]

The account of Su Shi's note both contradicts and enhances the conventional image of Su Shi. On the one hand, it provides information that suggests he was anything but complacent about the circumstances of his punishment, contrary to the image constructed in his poems of the period. But on the other hand, for someone to consistently overcome such negative feelings enough to write poetry full of optimism, only emphasizes his pertinacious and sanguine spirit. Hence, this little anecdote about Su Shi has big implications. The demonstration of his true feelings becomes a further testament—beyond his poems—to his grit and determination in the face of the humiliation and bitter conditions of exile.

In the account of Su Shi's exile, we saw an example of an unusual type of inconsistent behavior—the persona Su Shi used in his exile poems contrasted with the one he revealed in private communication—but the impression of Su Shi's character is consistent throughout the account and is in fact enhanced by the information Huihong provides. Inconsistencies in character or principles, on the other hand, are usually prime objects of mockery in Huihong's accounts. Even Huihong's beloved Su Shi and good friend Zhang

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[39] The entry begins with Huihong describing that while in Hainan, he a met a Mr. Li 黎氏who had befriended Su Shi while the latter was in exile there. Mr. Li told Huihong how Su had come every day to beg for fresh vegetables from his garden. Having no money, Su wrote a poem in lieu of payment. Despite his desperate circumstances, however, the poem exhibits the unflappable optimism for which he is well-known, pretending that Hainan is his true home and portraying his bitter exile as a pleasure trip. "I'm originally a native of Dan'er, / I just happened to be born in Shuzhou, / All of a sudden, I strode across the sea, / Just as if embarking on a long-distance excursion" 我本儋耳民，寄生西蜀州。忽然跨海去，譬如事遠遊.

For a study of Su Shi's optimistic exile poetry as contrasted with evidence of his struggles, see Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*, pp. 229-260.

Shangying are not exempt. One account consists entirely of the critical remarks that Huihong's contemporary, Xu Fu 徐俯 (1075-1141), made about Su Shi, Huang Tingjian, and Chen Guan.[40] He begins, "Regarding the three gentlemen of Dongpo, Shangu, and Yingzhong, [sobriquets of Su, Huang, and Chen], I just know they are people [deserving] respect and awe. But I do laugh at their imperfections"予於東坡、山谷、瑩中三君子，但知敬畏者也，然其瑕疵，予能笑之. He then shares instances where each of them show inconsistency between their actions and their professed principles. He points out that Su Shi, for example, was willing to lay down his life in defense of his principles in his writings, yet still sought immortality techniques.[41] Huang Tingjian is criticized for blaming his delay in leaving his post to the lack of a nautical official, and Chen Guan is chastised for occasionally telling fortunes (ostensibly about officials' careers), but he supposedly saw rank and salary as dung and dirt. Xu concludes the entry, "All of these are preposterous, so I chuckle over them" 此皆顛倒也，吾故笑之. Huihong doesn't add any commentary to this entry, leaving Xu's words to speak for themselves. By including the entry, he further emphasizes his interest in the contradictions and inconsistencies exhibited by people, even those he esteemed.

Huihong emphasizes the tendency of men of status to overlook or undervalue individuals of low or marginal status. This latter group includes individuals like himself, who

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[40] "Dongpo, Shangu, Yingzhong xiaci kexiao" 東坡山谷瑩中瑕疵可笑, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.92.

[41] Huihong himself often records Su's declarations of detachment towards the passing of time. Su's line: "I've had my fill of everything in this life, the only single thing I'm missing is death" 平生萬事足，所欠惟一死, appears in no less than three entries in *Night Chats*:

were positioned on the periphery of officialdom. Even when officials show an interest, as in the accounts of Fan and Han, they aren't always able to change the fate of marginal folk. From this, we might assume that Huihong had a general lack of confidence in the abilities of people in positions of power. But as we have seen, he includes plenty of positive portrayals of officials as well. If ridiculous and virtuous behavior can be found among high as well as low ranking officials, among the famous as well as the unknown, then what does position or fame really tell us about a person? At the very least, these worldly markers can't be relied on to fully reflect a person's true character.

Besides expecting officials to be consistent in their principles and behavior, they were supposed to be highly competent. As we have seen, when Huihong portrays officials engaged in the literary arts, such as poetry, it is usually to praise their skills and character. It comes as quite a surprise when someone like Zhang Shangying, who had held the position of grand counselor and was a good friend to Huihong, is portrayed as not only incompetent in an artistic endeavor but shamefully trying to cover up the fact. This is what happens in an account of Zhang's attempt at cursive style calligraphy (*caoshu* 草書).

> Grand Counselor Zhang [Shangying] liked cursive style calligraphy, but he had no skill. At the time, his peers would all make fun of him, but the grand counselor would let it pass. One day, some lines came to him, so he found a brush and quickly began to write until the whole page was filled with flying dragons and serpents [wild strokes]. He had his nephew copy it out. When he came to a place where the strokes were especially eccentric, his nephew stopped in confusion. Holding up the calligraphy, he asked "What is this character?" The grand counselor looked at it for a long time, but he couldn't recognize it either, so he scolded his nephew "Why didn't you ask earlier? Now you've made me forget it!" 張丞相好草書而不工，當時流輩皆譏笑之，丞相自若也. 一日得句，索筆疾書，滿紙龍蛇飛動，使姪錄

之. 當波險處，姪罔然而止，執所書問曰：「此何字也？」丞相熟視久之，亦自不識，詬其姪曰：「胡不早問? 致予忘之!」[42]

To be unable to recognize your own writing means you don't even possess the basic skills of a calligrapher. That Grand Counselor Zhang blames his nephew instead of acknowledging his own lack of talent suggests that the characters are not the only thing he doesn't recognize! He may hold the title of the highest official position, but in terms of the artistry of cursive script, he is at the bottom, not even able to decipher his own handwriting. Remembering the value Huihong places on genuineness, being open about who you are and willing to admit your weaknesses, it is easy to see how he would find this account of his friend amusing.

If we want to experience a smorgasbord of Huihong's favorite character flaws, we need look no further than accounts of Yuancai. This man gives expression to the extreme form of many of the character traits we have seen. In terms of "deceiving the spirit," arrogance, hypocrisy, and over-exaggeration of one's abilities, no one holds a candle to him. Huihong described him once as "out of touch with reality and infatuated with oddities" 迂闊好怪.[43] Yet Huihong clearly appreciates him, and Yuancai is depicted as saying things that if they had come from the mouths of high or influential officials, would undoubtedly not go down so well. Because Yuancai was not in a position of authority, his absurdities are relatively harmless, and it is never entirely clear if he himself believes or takes seriously all

[42] "Zhang Chengxiang caoshu yi zi bu shi qizi" 張丞相草書亦自不識其字, *Lengzhai yehua* 9.80.

[43] "He sheng luan" 鶴生卵, *Lengzhai yehua* 9.81.

that he says. Here we see him attempting to display his professed practical talents and losing his temper when Huihong tries to give an impartial assessment of those talents.

> Yuancai was good at discussing military affairs, he advised the Music Bureau, and he was thoroughly versed in the music from everywhere. He once boasted,
> "When troops set up camp, they are always worried that there won't be enough water. Recently, I heard about a method for finding wells that is quite miraculous."
> At the time, he was staying at Daqing Guan [Daoist temple], where every day he would inspect the ground and dig, but there was no water to be found. He then moved several feet away and tried digging again, to the point that all four sides [around the temple] encountered his shovel and were full of holes. One moonlit night, the Daoist ascended the tower, looked around and frowned, saying,
> "Has my temple become a cracked tortuous shell? How come there are so many holes everywhere?"
> Yuancai was not pleased.
>
> Another time, when he accompanied Defender-in-Chief Guo to see his garden, [Yuancai] boasted,
>
> "Recently, a miraculous method for eliminating snakes was passed on to me. I just have to recite a spell. The snake hears it and is trapped as if [I'd] commanded a small child." Suddenly there [appeared] an extremely fierce snake. The Defender-in-Chief shouted:
> "Yuancai, put your skills to use!" The snake reared its head and rushed towards them. Yuancai didn't try any method whatsoever. He just turned around and ran until he was huffing and puffing, and dripping with sweat. Throwing off his official hat, he said,
> "[The snake] is the spirit of the Defender-in-Chief's residence. It can't be stopped!"
> The Defender-in-Chief only grinned.
>
> When he submitted a book on music to the court, he obtained the appointment of "Chief Musician." He had me write a postscript for the book, saying, "When you wield your brush, you should be impartial. Don't exaggerate my strengths just because we are uncle and nephew." I wrote,
> "When Yuancai was among the common populace, he aspired to statecraft. He is good at discussing military affairs, he advises on imperial music, and writing is his [secondary] pastime. But getting rid of snakes and finding places for wells are not his strengths."
> When Yuancai saw this, he said angrily, "When Sima Zichang [Sima Qian] wrote the biography of Mr. Li, he wrote about the exceptional things that he did. [Sima] explained that [Mr. Li's] mistake was to try to persuade [Han] Gaozu to enfeoff six states, but he didn't mention this in the biography, filling it entirely with the man's good qualities. He still recorded [the mistake] in Zifang's (Liu Bang's) biography because he did not want to hide the truth. So why did you record the stuff about [me] stopping snakes and finding wells?" Everyone who heard this laughed until they fell over. 淵材好談兵，曉太樂，通知諸國音語. 嘗咤曰：「行師頓營，每

> 患乏水，近聞開井法甚妙. 」時館大清觀，於是日相其地而掘之，無水. 又遷掘數尺觀之，四旁遭其掘鑿，孔穴棋布. 道士月夜登樓望之，顰頞曰：「吾觀為敗龜殼乎？何四望孔穴之多耶？」淵材不懌. 又嘗從郭太尉游園，咤曰：「吾比傳禁蛇方甚妙，但咒語耳，而蛇聽約束，如使稚子. 」俄有蛇甚猛，太尉呼曰：「淵材可施其術. 」蛇舉首來奔，淵材無所施其術，反走汗喘，脫其冠巾，曰：「此太尉宅，神不可禁也. 」太尉為一笑. 嘗獻樂書，得協律郎，使予跋其書曰：「子落筆當公，不可以叔姪故溢美也. 」予曰：「淵材在布衣，有經綸志. 善談兵，曉太樂，文章蓋其餘事. 獨禁蛇、開井，非其所長. 」淵材視之，怒曰：「司馬子長以酈生所為事事奇，獨說高祖封六國為失，故於本傳不言者，著人之美為完傳也. 又於子房傳載之者，不欲隱實也. 奈何書禁蛇、開井乎？」聞者莫不絕倒. [44]

It is amusing that Yuancai rebukes Huihong for including his inadequacies in the postscript, after expressly asking him to be impartial. It is just this type of inconsistency in behavior that Huihong enjoys highlighting. But also noteworthy is Yuancai's earnest appeal to the Sima Qian precedent in trying to justify his harangue against Huihong. Yuancai seems to have been well-read—this is not the only story in which he appeals to a textual authority to explain his behavior—but having knowledge of books does not automatically make one reasonable. This juxtaposition of a lack of self-knowledge with historical knowledge subtly undermines the priority given to the latter.

Yuancai is also depicted as prioritizing aesthetic pursuits above all else. According to Huihong, officials enjoyed his company, and they often hosted him in the capital during the long periods when he was out of work. His value seems to have been in his ability to wittily undermine the types of things that officials were conventionally supposed to be concerned

[44] "Kai jing fa jin she fang" 開井法禁蛇方, *Lengzhai yehua* 9.85-86.

with, such as career, salary, caring for one's family. There is the story Huihong records about Yuancai's reaction to hearing that a Mr. Li 李 had turned down a post in distant Changzhou in favor of one in E Cui because it was nearer his hometown. When Yuancai heard about this, Huihong writes, he spit out his food and raced over to Li's to confront him:

> "Who came up with this plan? Chang[zhou] is a good prefecture. Why would you let it go?" [Yuancai said].
>
> Surprised, Li answered, "Is the salary good?"
>
> "No."
>
> "Are there few lawsuits among the residents?"
>
> "No."
>
> "Then what is so good about it?"
>
> Yuancai said,
>
> "The blossoms of the flowering crabapple everywhere in the land have no scent. Only those in Changzhou are fragrant. Doesn't that make it a good prefecture?"
>
> Those who heard this passed it on as a joke.
>
> 「今日聞大夫欲受鄂倅，有之乎？」李曰：「然。」淵材悵然曰：「誰為大夫謀？昌，佳郡也，奈何棄之？」李驚曰：「供給豐乎？」曰：「非也。」「民訟簡乎？」曰：「非也。」「然則何以知其佳？」淵材曰：「天下海棠無香，昌州海棠獨香，非佳郡乎？」聞者傳以為笑。[45]

Yuancai's passion for aesthetics went beyond fragrant flowers, however. He valued other types of literary and artistic objects as well. His passion for objects of aesthetic value apparently even blinded him to the practical needs of his own relatives. In one entry, Huihong describes how Yuancai's starving family calls him home from the capital where he'd been the guest of prominent officials for many years. Yuancai brings a cloth bag home

[45] "Changzhou haitang du xiang wei jia jun" 昌州海棠獨香為佳郡, *Lengzhai yehua* 9.80-81.

with him which everyone assumes must contain coins and precious stones to assist his family. Huihong, "fully aware of his impracticality (*yukuo* 迂闊)," entreats Yuancai to end the suspense and reveal the contents of his bag. As it turns out, inside there are only three items: an ink stone made by the famous Five Dynasties artisan Li Tinggui 李廷珪, a bamboo painting by the Northern Song painter Wen Tong Yuke 文同與可, and a manuscript copy of Ouyang Xiu's *History of Five Dynasties* 五代史. [46]

Although Yuancai's unconventional attitudes are clearly over the top, the stories about him allow listeners to entertain for a moment what it would be like to live totally free from societal expectations and priorities. The officials who hung out with Yuancai no doubt enjoyed temporarily seeing the world from Yuancai's eyes, where behavior was not dictated by conventional discriminations.

With his diverse relationships and experiences, along with his identity as a monk, Huihong was in a unique position to gather and record tales of contemporary officials. Most of his non-monk friends served in one position or another at court and some, like Zhang Shangying, even held quite high appointments. He also met a lot of people, such as friends of Su Shi, on his travels, both on the voluntary trips and the involuntary ones. He was thus privy to much insider gossip and lore. At the same time, because he was technically an outsider to the world of politics, with no official appointment to lose, he could get away with recording things that even if talked about by people in office, would hardly have been written down by

[46] "Liu [sic] Yuancai Nangui bu tuo zhong mozhu, shigao"劉淵材南歸布橐中墨竹史稿, *Lengzhai yehua* 8.72-73. ("Liu"劉 is a typo. The last name of Yuancai is Peng 彭).

them. We know that Huihong's close association with officials and habit of speaking his mind were not without negative consequences. But this doesn't seem to have stopped him from taking every opportunity to share accounts that, overall, are critical of officials' characters. Camouflaged with anecdote and humor, his portrayals of officials may challenge the notion that position, prestige, and fame are in any way a guarantee of a person's character and competence. What is said by someone, (and their every-day deeds) may be "indicative of their inner virtue," but it often reveals their absurdities and flaws as well.

4.5 Laymen: Scriptural Affinities, Monkish Tendencies

We saw several examples of monks demonstrating competencies that exceeded the expectations of the people around them. Monks were shown to be well-versed in worldly topics and able to engage with officials on their own terms. In accounts of officials, there is emphasis on undermining the perceived correlation between high status and good character and competence. In his accounts of elite laymen, Huihong emphasizes the deep interest in Buddhist scriptures, inclinations for monastic practices and living arrangements, close ties with monks, and the ability to compose poetry with Buddhist themes of literati. As depictions of laymen, none of this is surprising. But most of the laymen that Huihong depicts were also well-known officials. I use "laymen" to refer to individuals who formally associated themselves with one Buddhist lineage or a Buddhist master, or who spent significant time studying Buddhist texts and interacting with monks. Su Shi, Wang Anshi, Huang Tingjian, Xie Yi, and Chen Guan are well-known examples of individuals in *Night Chats* who considered themselves to be laymen at certain periods in their lives. It is significant that

Huihong wished to highlight the important role that Buddhism played in their lives. By recording accounts of well-known officials who were interested in Buddhism, he indirectly promotes Buddhism as relevant to non-monks. At the same time, Huihong still looks for ways in which even these lay people exceeded expectations or undermined preconceptions. Some accounts describe layman as voluntarily adopting monk-like existences. Besides promoting such behavior, these accounts can also be seen as an indirect jab at monks who don't measure up. Laymen are even seen in some accounts as more influential or astute than monks. They sometimes shown to have a say in the careers of monks and some, like Su Shi, successfully overshadow monks in their poetry couched in Chan principles.

Laymen are depicted as integrating Buddhist scripture into their daily lives and interactions. While such references are not nearly as frequent as references to their poetry, it is interesting to note that laymen refer to scripture much more often than do monks in *Night Chats*. We find these men reading, copying, carrying, or alluding to *sūtra* texts. Chen's devotion to the *Huayan jing*, for example, is expressed in a letter and a poem sent to Huihong while living in exile, begging Huihong to bring him a copy. Likewise, Zhang Fangping 張方平 (1007-1091), Su Shi, Zou Hao 鄒浩 (1060-1112) and especially Wang Anshi are depicted has having close ties with popular scriptures such as the *Lengyan jing* and the *Lengjia jing* 楞伽經 (*Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*). When Wang Anshi receives a poem about homesickness from his married daughter, he replies with his new explanation of the *Lengyan jing* and a poem encouraging her to look to the principles therein to understand the illusory nature of her

circumstances.[47] In another entry, Wang emphasizes the value of studying Buddhist scriptures in general and argues that such a study develops the ability to discern whether words have principle regardless of who spoke them, an example of non-discrimination applied to the study of text. Wang defends his study of Buddhism by saying, "When those who are good at study read the texts [of Buddhism], they only look for principle. If what is said accords with my heart, then even if it were spoken by firewood gatherers, I wouldn't discard it. If the words have principle, then even if [The Duke of] Zhou or Kong[zi] spoke them, I wouldn't dare follow them"善學者讀其書，唯理之求. 有合吾心者，則樵牧之言猶不廢. 言而無理，周、孔所不敢從. [48] Or there is the account of Zhang Fangping finding an incomplete copy of the *Lengjia jing* in the rafters of a monastery. He proceeds to copy it out in calligraphy identical to the incomplete text causing him to realize that he had been a monk in his past life who had never finished making the copy.[49] Huihong avoids such stories of devotion when talking about monks.

In addition to affinities for Buddhist scripture, accounts of laymen are included in *Night Chats* that emphasize an unusual aptitude for a quasi-monastic life style. These men are depicted as willing and capable of an ascetic existence, even as householders. A few accounts, namely those about Zhao Bian 趙抃 (courtesy name: Yuedao 悅道) and Xie Yi,

[47] "Shuwang nü neng shi" 舒王女能詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 4.45.

[48]"Shuwang shi fo Zeng Zigu feng zhi" 舒王嗜佛曾子固諷之, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.54.

[49] "Zhang Wending gong qiansheng wei seng" 張文定公前生為僧, *Lengzhai yehua* 7.66-67. This entry is discussed by Ronald Egan in *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*, p. 140.

emphasize the preference for a simple living situation in which they focus on Buddhist practices, behavior that is explicitly lauded. In the entry about Zhao, Huihong writes,

> Zhao Yuedao went back to Sanqu (in Zhejiang) for his retirement. His Chan practice was strict and his recitation pristine, like a venerable clerk-mendicant monk. Dhyana Master Fohui of Zhongshan became his monk-friend, and their matching of marvelous lines lit up the monasteries. It was in his nature to enjoy vegetarian food and every day he made a point of having a monk join him for the meal. From this, we can imagine what kind of person he was.
> 趙悅道休官歸三衢作高齋而居之，禪誦精嚴，如老爛頭陀. 與鍾山佛慧禪師為方外友，唱酬妙語，照映叢林. 性喜食素，日須延一僧對飯，可以想見其為人矣.[50]

Another entry describes how Xie Yi's avoided taking a prestigious position at court and records two verses lauding Xie Yi's integrity, one by Huihong and the other by Zhu Shiying. Both verses compare Xie Yi to the famous Tang Buddhist, "Layman Pang," who had a daughter, Lingzhao, who supposedly excelled at grasping Buddhist points.

> Zhu Shiying [Zhu Yan] used the eight virtues (baxing) to recommend [Xie Yi] to court. He [Xie Yi] was about to enter the imperial academy, but he didn't want to go. Having no choice but to go, he stayed only two nights and returned. He lived at Xitang and his lifestyle was like that of Pang Yun [Layman Pang]. Once when I went to visit him, his wife was cooking food, his son Zong Ye was drawing water, and Wuyi [Xie Yi's style name] was reciting books while sweeping up. He turned to look at me and put down the broom and laughed, "This is just the way it is for now." I wrote a verse:
>
> 老妻營炊　The old wife is taking care of the cooking,
>
> 稚子汲水　The son draws the water.
>
> 龐公掃除　Mr. Pang sweeps up,
>
> 丹霞適至　When Master Danxia happens to arrive.
>
> 棄帚迎朋　He puts down his broom to welcome his friend,

[50] "Zhao Yuedao ri yan yi seng dui fan" 趙悅道日延一僧對飯, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.91.

一笑相視　laughing as they look at one another.

不必靈照　There is no need for a Lingzhao,

多說道理　For there to be many principles spoken.

After Shiying heard this, he also made a verse:

提籃靈照　Carrying the basket is Lingzhao,

掃地謝公　Sweeping the floor is Mr. Xie.

一般是麵　They both use flour,

做作不同　What they make is different.

不假語默　No difference if there are words or no words,

通透玲瓏　Our understanding of one another is crystal clear.

更若不會　If you still don't understand this,

換手搥胸　Beat your chest back and forth with your hands.

朱世英以八行薦於朝，當入學，意不欲行，不得已詣之，信宿而返。所居溪堂，生涯如龐蘊。予嘗過之，少君方炊，稚子汲水，而無逸誦書掃除。顧見予，放帚大笑曰：「聊復爾耳。」予作偈曰:「老妻營炊，稚子汲水。龐公掃除，丹霞適至。棄帚迎朋，一笑相視。不必靈照，多說道理。」世英聞之，亦作偈曰：「提籃靈照，掃地謝公。一般是麵， 做作不同。不假語默，通透玲瓏。更若不會，換手搥胸。」[51]

The laymen in *Night Chats* are almost always engaged in interactions with monks, often with Huihong himself. These monk-laymen relationships seem to be primarily friendships built on common interests and the enjoyment of each other's company. Most interactions are depicted as positive and mutually beneficial. There is more than one entry in which laymen are explicitly praised for seeking out the companionship of monks. A scholar composes a poem praising Wang Ji 王冀 for his choice of companion after Wang invites the lecturing monk Zunshi 遵式 to visit: "Admired by the Grand Counselor, but your grand

[51] "Hong Juefan, Zhu Shiying er ji" 洪覺範朱世英二偈, *Lengzhai yehua* 7.69.

guests are few / For pure conversation, you look forward to the monk's arrival" 丞相望崇賓謁少，清談應喜道人來.[52]

Huihong records Su Shi, Wang Anshi, Huang Tingjian, and Chen Guan composing or discussing poetry with Chan themes or Buddhist allusions. While each of these individuals display humor and wit in their Buddhist themed poetry, Su Shi is perhaps the boldest in his teases. One entry, for example, describes Su using the bathhouse at a temple where he composes a regulated verse poem full of double entendre—the circumstances of bathing and Buddhist allusions—to tease the local monk, even alluding to nudity. The second and third couplet read: "On the window, I only see flies attempting to 'burrow through the [window] paper', / Outside the door, I occasionally sense 'a Buddha emitting light. / Throughout the realm, you can't find a place to hide: what a fine game! / Without even a stitch on: what a hoot! 窗間但見蠅鑽紙，門外時聞佛放光. 遍界難藏真薄相，一絲不挂且逢場.[53] In his poetic interactions with monks, Su Shi is at times irreverent, at times affectionate, and usually an interesting mixture of the two. There is an entry in which Su Shi receives a request

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[52] "Lin Hejing song Zunshi shi"林和靖送遵式詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.52.

[53] "Dongpo zuo jie xi Ciyun Zhanglao you yu Liu Qizhi tong can yuban chan" 東坡作偈戲慈雲長老又與劉器之同參玉版禪, *Lengzhai yehua* 7.64. "Flies attempting to burrow through the [window] paper" and "a Buddha emitting light" are allusions to two accounts in the biography of Guling Shenzan 古靈神贊禪師 in Wudeng huiyuan. When Guling was giving his teacher a bath, he makes a joke, "It is a fine Buddha Hall, but the Buddha is not sagely" 好所佛堂而佛不聖. His teacher turns around and glares at him, so he responds, "Although the Buddha is not sagely, he's still able to emit light"佛雖不聖. 且能放光. The other account is of Guling's teacher, who, upon noticing the bees throwing themselves against the window paper in an attempt to get out, says, "The world is vast, and they still aren't willing to go out不肯出. Trying to burrow through that old paper [is like] trying to find an exit during the Year of the Donkey" [i.e. it is totally impossible because there is no such year.]. 世界如許廣闊不肯出. 鑽他故紙驢年去. 鑽進那些老的紙像以為驢年那時候可以走開. See *Wudeng huiyuan*, X 80: 1565.90b14-23.

from a monk to be transferred back to his home province. But Su Shi declines this request, using the form of song lyric to illustrate that the principle of non-duality means leaving and staying are the same, and besides, "To stay a little longer for Dongpo, where's the harm?" 為東坡而少留，無不可者.[54]

That Huihong highlighted officials' Buddhist proclivities rather than other aspects of their lives reflects his interest in them as a monk. Accounts of laymen emphasize their poetry exchanges with monks, devotion to the scriptures, preference for simple living and monk companions, and occasionally their influence on the careers of monks. The layman's dedication and sincerity become more pronounced when considered alongside the entries about people wrapped up in possessions and positions. At times, they even seem to overshadow monks. Su Shi stands out as someone who routinely displayed his understanding of Buddhist ideas in poems while exuding affectionate irreverence towards monks.

4.6 Daoists: Literary and Eccentric

In the portrayals of Daoists, of which there are no more than a dozen, we find Huihong's aesthetic of non-discrimination manifesting in his showcasing their weaknesses and strengths, successes and failures, and conventional and unconventional behavior, without giving a clear indication of which side of these oppositions are superior. The familiar theme of literary talents is present, especially in accounts of Daoists trying to teach a lesson or

[54] "Dongpo liu Jiegong Zhanglao zhu shita"東坡留戒公長老住石塔, *Lengzhai yehua* 7.64-65.

correct a fault, but we also see occasional references to prescience and longevity. In identifying Daoists, we are primarily concerned with individuals who have documented reputations as Daoists, or who Huihong identifies to be a Daoist (*daoshi* 道士). If there is any preference for accounts of Buddhists, it is evident only in the greater number of entries devoted to Buddhists. There are considerably more accounts of Buddhist monks and laymen than accounts of Daoists, but it is significant that Huihong included as many detailed accounts of Daoists as he did. In comparison with Daoists, individuals with interest in Buddhism may come across as slightly less ridiculous, more successful, and more serious in their endeavors. Huihong does gravitate towards Daoists who combine some understanding of Buddhism with their other skills and eccentricities. His accounts of Daoists also may be meant to show up Buddhists, to a certain degree. In one entry, an account making fun of a Daoist devotee's obsessive pursuit of longevity, Huihong brings in his own pointed critique of Chan practitioners. But by now it should be obvious that Huihong appreciated the ridiculous as well as the sensible, the amateurish as well as the talented, and he challenged readers' views on what constituted each of these qualities, an approach that reflects both Zhuangzian spontaneity and Buddhist non-duality. Although some accounts make fun of the eccentric behavior of certain Daoists, Huihong's tone is no different from what we have seen in his critique of people with other social roles.

Below are several entries on Daoists that together give a sense of Huihong's appreciation for their unconventional outlook and unusual competencies.

First, there is the long entry on Zhou Guan 周貫 (988-1068). He is depicted as silly and eccentric. But by giving several different accounts of his behavior, Huihong reveals that

he has skills that maybe shouldn't be taken for granted. His poetic talents might be hit or miss, but occasionally he comes up with lines that are clever, and even prescient.

> There was a certain Zhou Guan. I don't know where he was from. He always referred to himself as "Mr. Wood Goose." During the Zhiping or Xining reign periods, he went to Xishan. He'd often come to Gao'an, where he befriended my grandfather. He'd get drunk during the day. All he had was a single ladle, so when he was traveling, he'd use it for a chamber pot at night.
>
> He could compose poems, and poetry became his obsession. Once he stayed overnight at Longquan Daoist Temple in Fengxin. In the middle of the night, he hammered on the door, startling the Daoist. With a bare head and his clothes thrown on, [the Daoist] opened the door and asked for an explanation. Guan chuckled, saying: "I happened to come up with some lines of poetry I must share." The Daoist wasn't very interested, but since he'd already asked, he let him recite them. Using his finger to trace the words, [Zhou] intoned: 'Playing the Qin, I broke my fingernail, / Pulling up the mat, I damaged my beard.' That night [Zhou] Guan had been very cold, so he had used the mat to cover himself.[55]
>
> He also went to Yuanzhou where he saw a Mr Li, an ordinary resident of the city whose demeanor was one of great elegance. [Zhou Guan] wanted to take him back to the forest with him, but Li loved women and wine and had no intention of going. Guan pointed to the stove for heating medicine and composed a *gāthā* for him: "So dumb, it is fitting that heaven designated you to be a stove. /Despite your three legs, how are you going to walk? / Although possessing 'ears,' you don't listen to the dharma. / You just thirst after the fire pit of lust of the human world."
>
> Guan was about to die at Xishan, when he was about to pass on, someone asked him his age, Guan said: "At eighty I am a drunken immortal at Xishan, with broken sandals and clothes full of holes. As for how many of these cycles [years] I've experienced, stop asking about it. 'Heaven's time' is not calculated by years."
>
> Later on, someone saw him at the bridge of the main capital. Zhou Guan gave him a letter to give to scholar Li of Yuanzhou which said: "Next year on the eve before the mid-autumn festival, I will go up to visit you."
>
> When that time came, as predicted he really did show up at Li's place, but the scholar had gone out on an errand. So [Guan] used some chalky soil and wrote this on his door and left: "This year on the eve of the autumn festival, / I came to fulfill last year's appointment. / But I don't see the broken stove, / my drumming fingers

[55] It appears that Zhou's lines of poetry are his way of complaining about the conditions of the temple. He tries to play the Qin, presumably provided by the temple, but ends up breaking his fingernail. He is cold at night and there is nothing to cover himself with but a mat, perhaps a grass or bamboo mat for sleeping on, and the brittle material messes up his beard.

in vain go ‘tap, tap.’” As it turned out, afterwards scholar Li suddenly fell off his horse and broke one of his legs.

周貫者，不知何許人，雅自號木雁子。治平、熙寧間，往來西山，時時至高安。與予大父善， 日酣飲，畜一大瓢，行沽， 夜以為溺器。工作詩，詩成癖。嘗宿奉新龍泉觀，半夜槌門，道士驚，科髮披衣，啟關問其故，貫笑曰：「偶得句當奉告。」道士殊不意，業已問之，因使口誦。貫以手指畫，吟曰：「彈琴傷指甲，蓋席損髭鬢。」是夜貫寒甚，以席自覆故爾。又至袁州，見市井李生者有秀韻，欲携以同歸林下。而李嗜酒色，意欲無行。貫指煮藥鐺作偈示之曰：「頑鈍天教合作鐺，縱生三 腳豈能行。雖然有耳不聽法，只愛人間戀火坑。」尋死於西山，方將化，人問其幾何歲，貫曰：「八十西山作酒仙，麻鞋軋斷布衣穿。相逢甲子君休問，太極光陰不計年。」後有見於京師橋，付書與袁州李生云：「我明年中秋夕時，當上謁也。」至時果造李生。生時以事出，乃用白 土大書其門而去，曰：「今年中秋夕，來赴去年約。不見破鐵鐺，彈指空剝剝。」李生後竟墮馬，折一足。[56]

Zhou Guan’s prescience is revealed in his second poem for Mr. Li when he again compares Li to the stove, but this time describes it as broken, somehow predicting Li’s broken leg. Huihong also seems to appreciate Zhou Guan for his combined Daoist and Buddhist understanding. Although his identification for Zhuangzi is expressed in his nickname “Wood Goose,” his *gāthā* addressing the medicine contains the basic Buddhist teaching on the dangers of emotional desire.[57] Some of the Daoists in *Night Chats* are like Zhou in that they express teachings that are found in both Daoist and Buddhist teachings, although referring to something slightly different in each case.

The story of Zhou Guan contained a pointed teaching about desire for Li, couched in a verse with an amusing pun. Huihong himself rarely addresses the reader directly with

[56] “Zhou Guan yin shi zuo ji”周貫吟詩作偈, *Lengzhai yehua* 8.75-76.

[57] His nickname “Mu yan zi” 木雁子 is a reference to the “Shanmu” 山木 chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, where trees and geese are given as examples of things that avoid exploitation by being something that people find have no use.

opinions or lessons. So it is surprising when he does just this following a paraphrase of an ancient story on the lengths someone goes to study Daoist longevity. Although it is a story mocking a Daoist, Huihong is quick to uses the anecdote to point out a comparable problem among practitioners of Chan meditation.

> The *Kong Cong zi* says:[58] In the past, there was a person who heard about a man in a distant place who was master of immortality. He wrapped up some food and set off to become his disciple. By the time he'd arrived, the man had already died, but he still sighed with regret that he hadn't got to hear about his path of practice.
>
> I'm fond of this story because it hits right on the sickness of Chan practitioners. The *buddha dharma* is profound and abstruse. The true and the false exist in equal proportion. It is only facing death or disaster, that falseness is not tolerated. Now, to recognize a fake and yet still be confused by him, that is truly laughable.
>
> 《孔叢子》有言：昔有人聞遠方能不死之術者，裹糧往從之, 及至而其人已死矣，然猶歎恨不得聞其道。予愛其事有中禪者之病。佛法浸遠，真偽相半，唯死生禍福之際不容偽耳。今自識其偽猶惑之，可笑也！[59]

The "sickness" or "problem" (bing 病) that the story illustrates seems to be the self-delusion that can occur when one gets overly obsessed in pursuit of some goal, even a positive goal, such as longevity. The foolish man in the story (referred to as Daoist 道士 in the original text) has become so obsessed with the idea of studying longevity techniques with this reputed master, he doesn't give up his wish even when there is evidence that the so-called "master" is false or a fake (*wei* 偽). If we are to understand what Huihong means by the "sickness of Chan practitioners" (*Chan zhe zhi bing* 禪者之病) through the story of the Daoist, it would appear to refer to a similar deluded obsession with Chan practice, where the pursuit of the

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[58] This text is attributed to Kong Fu 孔鮒 (3rd century BCE).

[59] "Wen yuan fang bu si zhi shu" 聞遠方不死之術, *Lengzhai yehua* 9.83-84.

goal obfuscates reaching it. In a few didactic pronouncements, very uncharacteristic of Huihong in *Night Chats* as a whole, Huihong reminds the reader how difficult it is to give up false ideas.

An overview of Huihong's accounts of individuals would not be complete without mentioning the eccentric lame aesthete known as "Cripple Liu" 劉跛子, also referred to by his style name "Yefu" 野夫.[60] This colorful figure is featured in several accounts and Huihong records that he met him once or twice. Although he has definite Daoist tendencies, he stands out as a figure that transcends conventional social categories. He is homeless and handicapped, but also astute and witty, always ready with a pun or a joke in exchange for something to eat. He makes a trip on foot every year to Luoyang for the famous peony session and he likes his wine. Huihong includes a poem he wrote about meeting him,

相逢一枴大梁間　Encountering a single walking staff among the majestic beams,
妙語時時見一班　With subtle words, he frequently reveals snatches [of wit].
我欲從公蓬島去　I'd like to follow him to Penglai Island,
爛銀堆裏見青山　Where amidst the heaps of silvery clouds, appears blue-green peaks.[61]

Huihong uses the word for walking staff (*guai* 枴) to represent Cripple Liu. He meets this "walking staff" among the "great beams," *daliang* 大梁, another name for the city of

[60] He is also known as Liu Shanlao 劉山老. Although not much is known about this figure other than what Huihong records, the *Quan Song ci* includes one of his song lyrics entitled "Man Ting Fang" 滿庭芳 , which is also recorded by Huihong in *Night Chats*. He was from Qingzhou 青州 and reportedly skilled in Daoist magic. See Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 156-157.

[61] "Liu Bazi shuo Er Fan shi" 劉跛子說二范詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 8.71.

Kaifeng. The image of a simple wooden cane amid ostentatious roof beans is used to represent lame Mr. Liu in the city of Kaifeng. Despite his appearance, however, Huihong considers him a special find, due to his witty talk and prospects of immortality.

In another entry, Liu describes himself in a *ci* poem:

跛子年來形容何似	Mr. Cripple: What does he look like in recent years?
儼然一部髭鬚	Stern and dignified, with a thick beard,
世上許大	In the whole wide world,
拐上有工夫	He alone shows skill with the crutch.
達南州北縣	Whether he goes to the southern prefectures or northern provinces,
逢著處酒滿葫蘆	Wherever you run into him, his gourd is filled with wine.
醺醺醉	Merrily in his cups,
不知來日、何處度朝晡	Not concerned where he'll spend the next day.
洛陽花看了	Having viewed the flowers at Luoyang,
歸來帝里	He returns to the capital,
一事全無	Without a single responsibility.
又還與瓠羹不託	Once again he receives a stew of gourd leaves & dumplings:
依舊再作門徒	A "disciple" just as before.
驀地思量	He suddenly has an inspiration,
下水輕船上	To go down river on a small boat,
蘆席橫鋪呵呵笑	A reed mat spread out, laughing: ha! ha!
睢陽門外有箇好西湖	Beyond the gate of Suiyang, there will be beloved West Lake.[62]

While Liu depicts himself in poetry as spontaneous, sanguine, and unconcerned with getting his fill, we find that the challenges of a beggar's life are portrayed more starkly in a strange

[62] "Liu Yefu changduan ju" 劉野夫長短句, *Lengzhai yehua* 8.72.

letter he wrote to Yuancai. With a clownish character like Cripple Liu, it is difficult to know how serious he is, even in a letter, but he appears to admit to the struggles of a life like his and includes what appears to be a veiled suggestion that he was at the mercy of both Daoists and Buddhist monks. Liu's letter to Yuancai reads,

> All his life, Cripple has no other choice but to open his palms and beg for alms. For every two meals that I get my fill, I starve for three. I look back up into the sky and fool myself for a while. Recently, my inner essence (*shen* 神) has become unrecognizable by the impression left by the form (*xing* 形) of [the Daoists] Liu Fashi and Xu Shenweng. I'd really like to go the capital to see you, but at the same time I'm afraid I'll have a run-in with Venerable Clay Buddhas, and suddenly be at the mercy of their dry punches and wet kicks. What's the point?" 跛子一生別無路，展手教化，三饑兩飽，回視雲漢，聊以自誑。元神新來，被劉法師、徐神翁形迹得不成模樣。深欲上京相覷，又恐撞著丈人泥陀佛，驀地被乾拳濕踢，著甚來由。[63]

This cryptic message seems to be implying that Cripple Liu felt threatened by legitimate mendicants who begged for alms. He claims to have no choice but to beg, but the word he uses for "beg," *jiaohua* 教化 is also the term Buddhist monks use to emphasize that in requesting alms, they are giving teachings and the opportunity to transform in exchange. So Liu is competing for offerings. He explains that he doesn't dare go visit Yuancai because a recent run-in with the Daoists Liu Fashi and Xu Shenweng had changed him beyond recognition that he is likely to be beat up by the Buddhists in the capital. Somehow, the Daoists' "form" (*xing* 形) has left its mark on Liu, causing his "inner essence" (*yuanshen* 元神) to be unrecognizable. Perhaps the Daoists have tried to change his appearance to look like them, to the point that he can't recognize who he is any more. He jokes that if the

[63] Ibid.

Buddhists at the capital, where Yuancai is staying, were to see him, they would probably beat him up. ("Dry punched and wet kicked" is a humorous play on "Clay Buddha"). It is not clear if the Buddhists' reaction is related to his makeover from the Daoists, or if he is just expressing that he is tired of being picked on, ostensibly by religious followers who see his begging as illegitimate.

In the accounts of Cripple Liu, we have someone who lived completely outside the norms of society. But such a life doesn't come without a price. For Liu, he is in competition with other more conventional mendicants. Regardless of how much Liu's letter is a reflection of a specific experience, it reflects his anxiety and inability to fit in. It doesn't portray either Daoists or Buddhists very sympathetically. But Huihong is not about to leave it out because of that.

4.7 *Night Chats* and Politics?

Although the main thrust of *Night Chats* appears to be about poetry and the private lives of individuals rather than politics, the impact of factional politics on Huihong's life and the volatile political climate during which he wrote *Night Chats* (approximately 1089-1121) may make us wonder if there was any possible hidden political significance or critique in the work. It is significant that over half of the two hundred plus individuals included in *Night Chats* held positions at court and were partially responsible for and/or personally affected by factional politics of the day. Individuals associated with the Yuanyou faction appear frequently in *Night Chats* and are often depicted in a positive light. The *Siku quanshu* abstract

claims that eighty percent of the poets in *Night Chats* are Yuanyou figures.[64] We also know that Huihong deeply admired the writings and the personal characters of Yuanyou literati like Su Shi and Huang Tingjian and they are featured in many entries in *Night Chats*.

The positive portrayal of prominent Yuanyou figures and the fact that Yuanyou officials were banished from court and their works proscribed during the compilation of *Night Chats* have spurred some to speculate that Huihong had a pro-Yuanyou literati agenda in his selections. It has been pointed out that the very first entry in *Night Chats*—an account of a river god pacified by an offering of Huang Tingjian's calligraphy—can be read as a promotion of the overlooked talents of the Yuanyou period literati.[65] But if we are to accept the argument that the first entry sets the tone for the entire work, we should also give equal attention to the final entry, which gives a positive account of an official on the other side of political spectrum. The last entry consists of an account about Cai Bian. the younger brother to the powerful reformist Cai Jing, grand counselor to Huizong.[66] The account tells of a

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[64] SKZM 120.1039a.

[65] In his M.A. thesis, Zeng Wenshu argues that one of Huihong's motivations for writing *Night Chats* was to preserve and promote the works of Yuanyou period writers, which were proscribed at the time *Night Chats* was published (1121). Zeng Wenshu points to the first entry in *Night Chats* as evidence for this argument, and compares *Night Chats* with Yuan Ge's 阮閣 collection of *shihua*, *Shihua zongge* 詩話總龜 (1123), which intentionally left out Yuanyou period shihua, according to Wu Zeng. See Zeng, "*Lengzhai yehua* wenyi sixiang zhi yanjiu," p. 16.

In the first *Night Chats* entry Huihong lightheartedly conjectures that the river god must have been the ghost of a banished Yuanyou official, given his infatuation with the artistic relic of former Yuanyou official Huang Tingjian. In fact, the works of Huang Tingjian would have been proscribed at the time and his calligraphy not yet valued very highly. Thus, Huihong may be suggesting that the talents of the Yuanyou literati were underappreciated because of their politics. "Jiangshen shi Huang Luzhi shu Wei shi"江神嗜黃魯直書韋詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 1.9.

[66] "Cai Yuandu sheng mo Gaoyou"蔡元度生沒高郵, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.97. Although not always in agreement with his brother, Cai Bian was also a reformer, and served on the Council of State during

sighting of an auspicious sign produced from a Buddhist pagoda that appeared at Cai Bian's death, an unquestionably positive portrayal. Looking at the entirety of *Night Chats*, Huihong praises in equal force individuals from a range of political backgrounds, including Fan Zhongyan, Sima Guang, Zhang Shangying, Wang Anshi, Huang Tingjian, and Su Shi.[67] In short, I have not found any consistent underlying political agenda in *Night Chats*. While Huihong certainly had friends among the Yuanyou literati and admired their work, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that his preference for their poetry was influenced by their political affiliation.

4.8 Conclusion

Huihong uses anecdote to exemplify, critique, poke fun at, question, and highlight the behaviors and personalities of Song and pre-Song individuals. He emphasizes little known details about well-known individuals and introduces notable accounts of marginal or unknown folk. The most common characteristic found in these accounts is that they focus on the uncommon: the unusual and unexpected behaviors and personalities of people.

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the latter part of Zhezong's reign and the beginning of Huizong's reign. See Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*, p. xxiii and p. 54.

[67] Sima Guang and Wang Anshi, for example, represent two contrasting approaches to politics and consequently were often on opposite sides. While Wang Anshi was the father of the New Policies, Sima was probably the most "visible and audible opponent of the New Policies," according to Levine, "Che-Tsung's Reign," p. 487. The diverse makeup of the individuals represented in Night Chats has led Chen Xin to suggest that the Yuanyou proscription was a mere formality within the court and didn't reflect factional literary views among the average literati. See Chen Xin "Dianxiao shuoming," *Lengzhai yehua*, p. 1. No doubt the situation was a little more complicated than this, but it does seem that political affiliations were not a factor in Huihong's preference for one poet over another.

When recording accounts of monks, Huihong emphasizes the unconventional styles and approaches that they exhibit while engaging with the world. The accounts rarely depict monks engaging in traditional Buddhist practices or carrying out monastic duties. Instead, they are shown applying creative skillful means in their exchanges with non-monks, using poetry, jokes, or well-timed comments and repartee to get their points across. Or they are shown displaying knowledge and skills not normally associated with monks, chatting about everything from peonies to pork, in an attempt to impart a lesson or make an impression. Sometimes their engagement is simply an opportunity to discuss or exchange poetry with lay poets. The picture of monks that Huihong leaves with his readers is that of the versatile, fully engaged monk, often with an unusual personality and unexpected proclivities.

If the accounts of monks emphasize their engagement with the world outside the monastery and serve to transcend limited views of monasticism, the accounts of laymen emphasize and praise the monkish tendencies of laymen, their devotion to scriptures and their friendships with monks. These lay people can sometimes upstage monks in their Buddhist-inspired poetry, as we see with Su Shi. Or, they choose to live in conditions of monastic-like simplicity, as we see in the case of Xie Yi.

Contradiction and inconsistency are especially prevalent in depictions of officials. The assumed correlation between high social position and virtue is called into question when Huihong presents high-ranking individuals demonstrating hypocrisy, selfishness, or idiotic behavior. Even in entries about well-respected officials that enhance the conventional image as men of good character, Huihong goes out of his way to record episodes about them that are little-known or unexpected. As someone who saw many of his friends demoted for their

political ties, he is interested in using different criteria to judge officials than their political affiliations or prestige at court.

That Huihong included monks, lay people, and officials in his miscellany might not be too surprising, especially when we consider to what extent these people interacted with each another on a daily basis. But he also recorded many accounts of Daoists and people with Daoist tendencies. While the conventional image of the Daoist might be as a mountain-top recluse practicing immortality techniques, most of the Daoists in *Night Chats* are depicted as very much part of the social milieu, interested in literary pursuits and holding their own when talking with Buddhists. Some are eccentric, others are downright ridiculous, but their sporadic demonstrations of insight and prescience are consistent with Huihong's reoccurring emphasis in entries on people: revealing the value of the overlooked, the marginal, and the trivial.

In short, we find many individuals transcending the stereotypes and conventional behavior of their social group: monks exhibiting worldly knowledge; officials acting in ways that exceed or fall short of expectations; laymen living more ascetically than many monks; Daoists making as many Buddhist as Daoist allusions. The anecdotes push the constraints brought about by fixed ideas about what constituted appropriate behavior for different groups.

Su Shi appears much more frequently than any other person, and he can be found in accounts of individuals from every one of the social groups discussed above. His pervasive presence in *Night Chats* stems from several factors. There is the fact that Su Shi adopted many roles throughout his life. Like many literati, he was both a poet and an official, but he

also identified as a Buddhist disciple and studied Daoism. In addition, the interactions with his diverse range of acquaintances, including monks, were often recorded, by him or by his contemporaries, providing a rich array of sources for Huihong to choose from. Perhaps most importantly, Su Shi and Su Shi's poetry embodied some of the very qualities that Huihong most valued: unconventionality, spontaneity, and creativity. Su was the person Huihong directly characterized as having *miaoguan yixiang*.

Aside from his frequent praise of Su Shi, Huihong as judge of character plays only a small part in these accounts. Explicit praise or criticism about the words and deeds of individuals is not common. Nevertheless, by means of mockery, rhetorical questions, and well-timed jokes, Huihong hints at his own response, whether admiration, scorn, or bemusement.

The accounts of people demonstrate how a single comment or a small action can in fact expose a great deal about a person's character. Thus, the trivial and frivolous in fact are shown by Huihong to have great import. Through storytelling and humor, Huihong demonstrates that the virtuous as well as the corrupt, the wise as well as the foolish, and the talented as well as the inept can be found in all occupations and social levels. He demonstrates an interest in discovering the personality quirks and interesting behavior exhibited by all individuals, regardless of the social identity, status or repute.

Chapter 5

"Leaving All Boundaries Behind": Promoting the Poet-Monk through Anecdote in *Night Chats*

5.1 Huihong's Poet-Monks

In chapter three, we explored how Huihong made himself an active participant in literati discussions of poetic craft. We saw his Buddhist perspective manifest in poetry discussions condemning restrictive and mundane approaches to poetics in favor of poetic ideals and methods developed from aestheticized Chan and Huayan concepts. Huihong's interest in challenging restrictive and mundane thinking also manifests in his anecdotes about the poetic practices of individual poets. This chapter explores Huihong's use of anecdote to challenge preconceptions about the abilities and poetic range of poet-monks.

Writing poetry was often considered a controversial activity for Song period monks.[1] It was frequently viewed with anxiety by the monks themselves as well as by their literati friends. But while reservations about the compatibility of poetic creation with monastic life didn't prevent numerous monks from producing large quantities of poems, it did influence

[1] Jason Protass, in his dissertation, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poems," traces the tension between monasticism and poetry by looking at issues and anxieties about poetry reflected in Buddhist materials, discussions of poet monks included in *shihua* and in colophons by Song literati critics, and in monks' poems themselves. As his abstract states, he shows that "religious poetry as it was actually written was a vibrant site for lived religion that was simultaneously informed by, and at odds with, the norms expressed in prescriptive texts," p. iv.

the themes and language considered acceptable for monastic poets. As a result, Song poet-monks often found themselves in an untenable position. On the one hand, their devotion to monasticism would rarely be questioned if they followed the Tang tradition of *kuyin* 苦吟 "bitter intoning," which saw composition as a painstaking process, and centered on themes of hardship, asceticism and poverty. On the other hand, Song monks who limited their output to such poetry could be viewed as mediocre poets, unwilling and in some cases incapable of producing poetry with the aesthetic qualities admired by literati poets. In these cases, their monastic identity was considered a handicap, not an asset, to the production of superior poetry.

However, Huihong's presentation of diverse monk poets in *Night Chats* contest the view that monastic identity should restrict poetic output. While Huihong does not avoid examples of poetic expressions of Buddhist principles or monastic solitude, his stories highlight monks who exhibit versatile, savvy, and social poetic output.[2] They write on a broad range of themes, from peonies to pork, they express themselves in warm and colorful

[2] Most of the poems by monks in *Night Chats* can be classified as occasional poetry, poems reflecting social or personal experiences created on a particular occasion or addressed to someone specific. Common themes of occasional poems include welcoming a guest, parting, outings and travels. These poems are usually created as a result of social interactions or for the purpose of communicating something to a specific person. It was not uncommon for monks in the Song to write occasional poems. Like the literati, Huihong's monks create occasional poems in order to commemorate interesting social or personal experiences, maintain long-distant relationships, communicate constructive criticism, or express strong feelings about an experience. Chris Byrne has examined how Song Buddhist monks brought conventions of occasional poems into Buddhist verse (*jisong* 偈頌) to represent particularly Buddhist occasions such as going begging, cooking, and other monastic work." See Byrne, "Poetics of Silence," pp. 147-149. Huihong includes some Buddhist verses by monks in *Night Chats* (along with the more prevalent *shi* poems), but while they do express Buddhist views, the occasions they arise from tend not to be particular to monastic life.

language, and their poems don't always align with expectations about monasticism. Huihong uses *biji* style anecdotes to enter conversations on poets that engaged literati at the time, but as a monk, he gives greater freedom and legitimacy to the voice of monks as poets within his community.

To show how Huihong promotes the poet-monk in *Night Chats*, this chapter begins with an overview of prevailing critical views of poet-monks circulated by Northern Song literati. This provides a picture of trends in literary criticism as applied to poet-monks at the time Huihong was writing. We then turn to an in-depth discussion of Huihong's representation of poet-monks, looking at how he uses anecdote to emphasize the broad range of themes and poetic language found in their poetry. Huihong does not directly argue against negative views or representations of poet-monks. He uses the more subversive and entertaining approach of the poetry anecdote and problematizes the trend to critique the poetry of monks using narrow ideas about monasticism.

5.2 Critical Views of Poet-Monks: An Overview

Although engaging in poetry could still be considered controversial, by Huihong's time, there were many monks with well-established reputations as poets, admired by both literati and their monastic brothers. Since the emergence of the designation "poet-monk" (*shiseng* 詩僧) in the 8th century, the number of monks known for their poetry increased and

the range of their poetic output expanded.[3] Nevertheless, when Northern Song literati wrote about the poetry of monks, two issues persisted: concern over the compatibility of monasticism and poetry and the resulting assumptions about the aesthetic limitations of poet-monks. The compatibility issue has its roots in the ideals of monastic practice and the rise of Chan.[4] The aesthetic issue can be traced back to trends in monk poetry from the Tang, in particular the association between monk poets and the *kuyin* (bitter intoning) aesthetic. But it wasn't until the Northern Song, with the development of literati poetry criticism, that assumptions about the limitations of monks' poetic abilities are widely discussed, resulting in the use of culinary metaphors like "the stench/whiff of vegetables" *caiqi* 菜氣 to characterize monks' poetry.

5.2.1 "Bitter Intoning:" Song Dynasty Impressions of Tang Poet-monks

In the Song, assumptions about the poetic abilities of monks developed out of literati impressions of Tang dynasty and early Song poet-monks. The poetry of Wuben 無本 (779-

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[3] In his 2017 dissertation, "The Invention of Chinese Buddhist Poetry," Thomas Mazanec devotes two chapters to tracing the rise and development of the designation "poet-monk" throughout the Tang dynasty. According to Mazanec, "poet-monk" was initially a derogatory term used mainly by the literati in the 8th and early 9th century to refer to a group of monks from Jiangnan who attempted poetry. In the second half of the 9th century, when the poetry of monks like Jiaoran began to reach the capital, and more monks who wrote poetry were situated in the capital, a shift occurs, and the term poet-monk starts to take on a more general designation and loses some of its negatively. Eventually, as parallels were developed between Buddhist practice and poetry writing, as seen in the poems of Guanxiu and Qiji, the double identity of poet and monk would become more acceptable and even considered advantageous. By the end of the Tang and during the Five Dynasties, Mazanec finds that monk poets gained more acceptance among the literati as poets, and they became more proactive in creating their own tradition (p. 109).

[4] See Protass's chapter two, "Monastic Anxiety," in "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," pp. 62-103. Mazanec, "The Invention of Chinese Buddhist Poetry," p. 9, suggests that the shift towards tension noticed by Protass in the Song may have been brought on by the institutionalization of Chan Buddhism.

843), better known by his secular name Jia Dao 賈島, is often included in Song *shihua* works.[5] Although Jia Dao spent much of his life as a layman, his poetry had a far-reaching influence on the expectations for monk poetry.[6] Following in Jia Dao's footsteps were Guanxiu 貫休(838-913) and Qiji 齊己 (863-937?), two late Tang poet-monks whose popularity among the literati waned in the Song.[7] A group of poets from the early Song, known as the Nine Monks 九僧, and their representation in writings of Song literati, helped to color the discourse on poet-monks. Entrenched negative assumptions about the poetic capabilities of monks and the relationship between their poetry and monasticism persisted and were exacerbated throughout the Northern Song.

The aesthetic most closely associated with these early poet-monks is *kuyin* 苦吟 "bitter intoning" or "painstaking chanting."[8] *Kuyin* was originally associated with the poetry

[5] For example, several of his couplets are quoted in Ouyang Xiu's *Liuyi shihua*.

[6] Jia Dao started out as a monk, but at some point, he laicized and pursued an official career. He never gained much success in political life (he failed the exams), but his reputation as a poet, in which his monastic identity was sometimes considered an asset, sometimes a handicap, carried on long after his death. See Li Jiayan, *Jia Dao nianpu*, and Mazanec, "The Invention of Chinese Buddhist Poetry," pp. 57-58.

[7] Mazanec, "The Invention of Chinese Buddhist Poetry," p. 360 discusses the negative views of Guanxiu and Qiji recorded in the monastic rulebook, *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規. Further evidence of Guanxiu and Qiji's declining reputation can be found in comments of Chen Shidao 陳師道 (1053-1102), who, while arguing for Guanxiu and Qiji to be evaluated on their will and spirit, rather than their use of language, mentions that his generation "has little regard for their lines of poetry." See Protass, Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," p. 43, note 93. Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077–1148), in his criticism of Tang poet-monks, is downright scathing when it comes to Guanxiu and Qiji. See his comments discussed by Protass, pp. 136-137.

[8] Mazanec "The Invention of Chinese Buddhist Poetry," pp. 274-311, thoroughly traces the development and application of the *kuyin* aesthetic from Meng Jiao to Jia Dao and monks of the later Tang.

of Meng Jiao 孟皎 and the experiences of the examination system.[9] Once adopted by Jia Dao, *kuyin* began to refer to the pursuit of poetry itself rather than anything to do with the exams. Jia Dao's approach to *kuyin* emphasized the painstaking, sometimes obsessive, pursuit of finely crafted lines, and often manifested in the image of the poet experiencing poverty, hardship, and obscurity. Poet-monks after Jia Dao, including Guangxiu, Qiji, and the Nine Monks, for the most part, adopted Jia Dao's approach to *kuyin*. The qualities that became associated with Jia Dao's *kuyin* were to some extent compatible with the poverty and asceticism of Buddhist monasticism.[10] But while the *kuyin* of Tang monks was not generally seen as a negative attribute of monastic poetry in the eyes of literati, qualities that became associated with it—depictions of poverty and cold weather, rural asceticism, solitude, and a composition process that was belabored and deliberate—contributed to the narrow image of the poet-monk that developed among Song literati.

The narrow views of the poet-monks held by literati are often indirectly expressed in implications, jokes, and even hidden in praise. The portrayals of poet-monks in Ouyang Xiu's *Liuyi shihua* and in remarks made by Su Shi reflect general trends in the views of monk poets that continued to be expressed by literati through Huihong's time. Jason Protass

[9] According to Mazanec, "The Invention of Chinese Buddhist Poetry," p. 274-275, *kuyin* for Meng Jiao was "the vocal recitation of one's own verses during the process of composition and revision," related to preparation for the examinations.

[10] Mazanec makes this point and discusses it in detail in Ibid., pp. 292-293.

has demonstrated how Ouyang helped to identify "poet-monk" as a category and build the impression that their poetic themes were limited.[11]

In Ouyang's *Liuyi shihua*, literati poets contemporary with Ouyang are the central focus. Poet-monks do not have a prominent or topical presence, indicating that they were still considered marginal in the mid Northern Song, or at least in Ouyang's eyes. With the exception of entries that include couplets by Jia Dao, only one entry deals directly with poet-monks, and it depicts monks from earlier in the dynasty, not those contemporary with Ouyang. The entry includes a hidden implication and a humorous story that reflects ideas about the limited availability and scope of monk poetry.

> Buddhist monks at the beginning of this dynasty who became famous for their poetry were nine, consequently their collection was called "The Poems of the Nine Monks." It is no longer in circulation. When I was young, I often heard people praise them. One was called Huizong. I've forgotten the names of the other eight. I do have a vague recollection of their poetry. There was [the couplet]: "Horses are set free on the ground of the surrender, / Eagles circle in the clouds after the battle." Also, "Spring comes forth beyond the cassia cliffs, / People live to the west of the gates to the ocean." Their fine lines were mostly of this type. Their collection has already been forgotten, and nowadays people don't even know of the existence of the "Nine Monks." It is lamentable!
>
> In the current age, there was a presented scholar Xu Dong. He excelled at literary arts and was an outstanding official. When he joined several poet-monks for a poetry gathering, they drew lots that read: "You are not allowed to use this word." The [forbidden] words were all of a kind: mountain, water, breeze, cloud, bamboo, rock, flower, grass, snow, frost, star, moon, animal, bird. At this, every single monk had to put aside his brush.
>
> 國初浮圖以詩名於世者九人，故時有集號《九僧詩》，今不復傳矣。余少時聞人多稱。其一曰惠崇，餘八人者忘其名字也。余亦略記其詩，有云：「馬

[11] For a detailed discussion of Song literati critical views of poet-monks, see Protass's chapter "Literary Critics," in his dissertation, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," pp. 116-158. Protass reveals the literati assumptions about the limited poetic capabilities of monks by tracing their use of vegetable/vegetarian metaphors for their poetry. He discusses Ouyang Xiu's role in the circulation of views of poet monks on pp. 123-126.

> 放降來地，雕盤戰後雲。」又云：「春生桂嶺外，人在海門西。」其佳句多類此。其集已亡，今人多不知有所謂九僧者矣，是可嘆也！當時有進士許洞者，善為辭章，俊逸之士也。 因會諸詩僧分題，出一紙約曰：「不得犯此一字。」其字乃山、水、風、雲、竹、石、花、草、雪、霜、星、月、禽、鳥之類，於是諸僧皆閣筆。[12]

The first half of the entry emphasizes the lamentable loss of the Nine Monks' poetry collection.[13] The theme of preservation and loss is reflected in several entries in *Liuyi shihua*, and certainly not a problem with poet-monks alone.[14] But this entry suggests that beyond these Nine Monks, there aren't many outstanding monk poets, and their poetry is all but lost anyway. Ouyang begins, "Of the Buddha's followers, most famous in our dynasty for their poetry were the Nine Monks" 浮圖以詩名於世. Despite their fame, their collection has been lost. Ouyang can only recall the name of one monk of the nine and has only a "vague recollection"/ "general gist" (*lüeji* 略記) of few couplets from their poems. The loss of their poetry might be a pity, it may not have been valued as it should have been, but nevertheless, Ouyang's representation leaves an image of the poet-monk as obscure and almost beyond recall.

Furthermore, the implication of the entry is that monks had a limited poetic repertoire. Commenting on the couplets, he says, "Their fine lines were mostly of this type" 其佳句多類此. Behind this acknowledgement of "fine lines" is the suggestion that it was only in this type of line that they excelled. The limited scope of their poetry is further

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[12] Ouyang Xiu, *Liuyi shihua* in *Ouyang Xiu Quanji* 128.1951-52.

[13] The precariousness of preservation is a theme that surfaces throughout *Liuyi shihua* and is not specific to monk poets.

[14] The theme of preservation and loss is one of the predominant themes of *Liuyi shihua* according to Owen, "Remarks on Poetry: Shih-hua," pp. 363, 369-388.

illustrated by the story of Xu Dong 許洞(976-1015) and poet-monks at a poetry gathering. At such gatherings, called *fenti* 分題, which literally means "distributing topics," poem topics are randomly selected. In this case, a game is played where participants are asked to create poems without using certain words.[15] In Ouyang's story, the monks had to admit defeat when they drew words associated with monks' poetry--mountain, water, breeze, cloud, bamboo, rock, flower, etc. They couldn't write a word of poetry when such words were off limits. Although there is no direct criticism of the monks, the story is clearly mocking them for their limited poetic abilities, suggesting that monks were incapable of spontaneity and innovation when it came to topics that were outside their comfort zone.

As monks befriended literati poets, built reputations as poets themselves, and received more attention from literati in works of literary criticism, the poet-monk would appear less remote than depicted by Ouyang. But the implication that a monk's poetic abilities were severely limited, implied by Ouyang's comment on the quoted couplets and illustrated in the anecdote, would only become entrenched and take on new guises after Ouyang.

As an indication of views of monk poetry, Jia Dao is a complicated case due to his dual identity as monk and non-monk. He was not seen as your typical poet-monk, but he did

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[15] These types of poetry challenges became popular in the Song. The restriction seen in this game is similar to what is found in the so called "Restricted Style" *jinti* 禁體 developed by Ouyang Xiu (and later referred to as the "Bare-fisted style" *baizhan ti* 白戰體 in a poetry line by Su Shi). This was a method of poetry composition in which a poem was written about snow without using certain common characters typically used in poems on snow, including the word "snow" and "white." For the development of this style, see Zhou, "Baizhan ti yu jinti wuyu" 白戰體與禁體物語 (Bare-fisted style and Restricted Words for Things Style).

influence the reputation of monks' poetry and the development of criticism of poet-monks. In the extant versions of *Liuyi shihua*, Jia Dao's poetry is at times presented in a positive light, at times subtly mocked for imperfections, but his monastic identity is not emphasized.[16] His couplets are presented alongside the poetry of well-respected literati poets. One entry discusses lines on dire poverty and strife from the poetry of Jia Dao and Meng Jiao, emphasizing how both poets were "impoverished by poetry until their deaths" 以詩窮至死.[17] Although there may be a hint of mockery in this entry, Jia Dao's monastic background does not come into the picture. Another entry records Ouyang and Mei Yaochen discussing examples of poetry that "contain inexhaustible meaning that appears beyond the words"含不盡之意見於言外 in which several couplets by Jia Dao are included among those written by literati poets.[18] While later critics emphasized the negative effect that Jia Dao's monastic identity had on his poetry, Ouyang does not bring monasticism into his assessment of Jia

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[16] Mazanec has a different take on Ouyang's opinion of Jia Dao. He finds evidence that Ouyang was critical of Jia Dao's poetry, in part due to Ouyang's ambivalence towards Buddhism. But Mazanec's impression of Ouyang is largely based on a statement attributed to Ouyang by the Southern Song writer Wei Qingzhi 魏慶之 that is not included in the extant *Liuyi shihua*. In his *Shiren yuxie* 詩人玉屑 15.332, Wei claims that Ouyang said, "[Jia] Dao was a monk and that is why he had this flavor of austerity and stillness, which also manifested in his poetry in this way"島嘗為衲子，故有此枯寂氣味，形之於詩句也如此. Ouyang's views of Jia Dao's poetry and Southern Song interpretations (and possible manipulations) of his views needs further study.

[17] *Liuyi shihua* in *Ouyang Xiu Quanji* 128.1952. There is a sense that Ouyang thinks that the suffering and poverty expressed in Jia Dao's lines are a bit over the top, as reflected in his comment on Jia Dao's lines lamenting that he can't weave his greying hair into clothes. Ouyang teases, "Even if he had tried that sort of weaving, he wouldn't have gotten much cloth" 就令織得能得幾何. (The translation of this line is borrowed from Stephen Owen in "Remarks on Poetry: Shih-hua," p. 373.)

[18] *Liuyi shihua* in *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 128.1952. The full entry is translated by Owen in *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, pp. 375-576.

Dao's poetry in the extant *Liuyi shihua*.[19] But the aesthetic Jia Dao was known for, *kuyin*, become a popular mode for poet-monks, and this narrowed the scope of what was deemed poetically acceptable, and possible, for them. And the view about the limited poetic output of monks reflected in Ouyang's entry on the Nine Monks was adopted and amplified by later literati.

5.2.2 "The *qi* of vegetables": Culinary Metaphors as Monks' Poetry Criticism

Throughout the Northern Song, the impression that monks were handicapped when it came to poems on anything outside of asceticism and scenes of nature closely associated with monastic life continued to color the criticism of poet-monks. A new discourse developed to represent the perceived weaknesses of monastic poetry coalescing around culinary metaphors for the vegetarian diet of monks. "The *qi* of vegetables" *caiqi* 菜氣, "the *qi* of vegetables and bamboo shoots" *shusunqi* 蔬筍氣, and "the *qi* of sour vegetable bun stuffing" *suanxianqi* 酸餡氣, were phrases used by Song literati to mock monks' poetry for having qualities they associated with the *qi* 氣 (smell, taste, or stink) of vegetables cooked in the monastery kitchen (as opposed to the flavors of meat). Poetry that had "the stink of vegetables" was seen as restricted, bland, plain, overly pure, or astringent. Although there are a few cases where the metaphors were used to promote these qualities as ideals for monk poetry, at

[19] Criticizing Jia Dao's poetry based on his monastic identity seems to have increased over time. Mazanec discusses how the statement attributed to Ouyang about Jia Dao's monasticism negatively influencing his poetry was mirrored in criticism in the late imperial period, especially in the words of Wen Yiduo. Mazanec, "The Invention of Chinese Buddhist Poetry," pp. 59-61; Cf. p. 277 above.

Huihong's time, they were mostly used as derogatory terms, influenced by lay perspectives on the requirements and restrictions of the monastic diet and way of life.[20]

We can see some overlap between the qualities associated with *kuyin* poetry and the vegetarian metaphors. Besides vegetarianism, the monastic life was associated with living in the mountains, poverty, solitude, restraint, and austerity, qualities often associated with the *kuyin* aesthetic. Part of the criticism conveyed by the vegetarian metaphors was the view that monks' poetic themes and language was limited to these qualities of the *kuyin* aesthetic.[21]

The earliest datable usage of vegetarian metaphors referring to monks' poetry is found in a poem and comment made by Su Shi. In 1101, Su Shi wrote the poem *Zeng shiseng Daotong* 贈詩僧道通 (Sent to the Poet-Monk Daotong), which is full of praise for Daotong's skill as poet. It contains the line "As for the whiff of vegetables and bamboo shoots, when it comes to you, there is none"氣含蔬筍到公無. Su explained in a note that he meant that Daotong's poetry "had no whiff of sour vegetable bun stuffing"無為酸餡氣也.[22] The line in

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[20] Zhou Yukai and Jason Protass have studied the usage of the metaphors extensively. In *Zhongguo Chanzong yu shige*, pp. 45-53, Zhou identifies the shortcomings that were implied when Song literati used "*qi* of vegetables and bamboo" and similar phrases to critique the poetry of monks. These shortcomings include: the tendency towards coldness in tone and scene, lacking the warmth of worldly passions; unvaried and reserved in language; a poetic process that is forced and unnatural such as was championed by *kuyin*. Jason Protass takes a more historical approach to the development of the metaphor in chapter two of his dissertation, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," pp. 62-158. He traces the development and nuances of the metaphor as it was used by literati to critique monk poetry throughout the Song dynasty and later periods.

[21] Zhou Yukai, Zhongguo Chanzong yu shige, p. 47.

[22] The poem and the note are recorded in *Su Shi shiji* 7.2451-2452. *Suanxian* 酸餡 "sour stuffing" refers to the vegetable filling used in vegetarian steamed buns. For the dating of the poem, see *Su Shi nianpu*, pp. 1392-1393. See Protass, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," pp. 127-130 for a

his poem implies that whereas most monks' poetry is known for having the flavor of "vegetables and bamboo shoots," that is not the case with Daotong. Su generally argued for the poetic skill of monks, singling them out as having unique potential for superior poetry.[23] But once he used these catchy vegetarian metaphors, "with a stroke of the brush, Su Shi painted the borders of critical discourse surrounding poet-monks."[24]

While Su Shi's poems are the earliest datable record of the use of vegetable metaphors, he may have picked up the idea from Ouyang Xiu, if we can believe an account in *Night Chats*. Huihong records a few humorous comments supposedly made by Ouyang when he was shown the poetry of Dajue Huailian.[25] The story goes that Wang Anshi, a friend of Huailian, once showed Ouyang some of Huailian's poems, to which Ouyang exclaimed, "This monk has made buns with liver stuffing" 此道人作肝臟饅頭也. When pressed for an explanation, he replied, "There isn't the least whiff of vegetables in them!" 是中無一點菜氣. Huihong goes on to cite a couplet and a verse by Huailian.

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translation and discussion of the full poem. I have borrowed Protass's translation for the pertinent line of the poem.

[23] See, for example, his poem to his lifelong friend Daoqian (style name Canliao 參寥), "Seeing off Master Canliao," in which he argues that a monk's practice of emptiness and quietude is conducive to a particularly insightful poetic representation of the world, contesting the view expressed earlier by Han Yu that monks were incapable of great calligraphy because they lacked emotional sensitivity. ("Song Canliao shi," *Su Shi shiji* 17.905-907). This poem has been discussed by Egan in *Word, Image, and Deed*, pp. 198-99 and by Protass, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry, pp. 22-25. Whereas Egan discusses how this poem reflects Su Shi's attitudes about the potential of poet monks, Protass focuses on what the poem suggests about the monk it is addressed to, Daoqian, and his views of poetry.

[24] Protass, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," p. 130. Protass traces the variations and usages of the phrases used by Su Shi as recorded in later *shihua*.

[25] "Dajue Chanshi qi huan shan" 大覺禪師乞還山, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.55.

This entry will be discussed in detail below. Here, the point is to show that Ouyang's play on culinary metaphors emphasizes the expectations about monk poetry at the time. He is clearly surprised by Hualian's poetry. Not only do his poems have no "whiff of vegetables," they actually seem "meaty" to Ouyang, implying that they have the worldly, rich, flavorful qualities associated with liver filled buns.

While Ouyang's words are not recorded in any work earlier than *Night Chats*, written half a century after Ouyang died, the story is recorded in the early Southern Song collection of miscellanies *Leishuo* 類說. The wide circulation of the account suggests that it was considered probable, or at least appealing to readers.[26]

Criticism of poet-monks culminated in the views of Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077-1148), a contemporary of Huihong. Ye wrote many critical remarks about monks' poetry.[27] His comments reflect how the critical discourse had developed since Ouyang. In an entry in his *shihua* work, like Ouyang, he emphasizes the poor preservation of the poems of Tang monks, he is dismissive of the poetry of Guanxiu, Qiji and Jiaoran, and he is outright scathing when it comes to the poetry of monks of his own generation.[28] By this time, "qi of sour vegetable bun stuffing" was a common way to refer to uninspired and mundane monks' poetry. Although Su Shi originally negated the vegetarian qi metaphors to praise Daotong's poetry (his poetry had **no** *qi* of vegetables and bamboo, **no** *qi* of sour vegetable bun stuffing), Ye

[26] Protass, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," p. 127.

[27] Ibid., p. 136.

[28] Ye Mengde, *Shilin shihua* 石林詩話 (1123), *j.* 2 in *Lidai shihua* 1.425-426.

doesn't hesitate to appropriate Su's remarks to give support to his argument against monk-poetry:

> In recent times, there have been many monks who study poetry. All of them lack a transcendent, self-assured air. They resort to rummaging through the scraps left over by literati for something to imitate. They've even come up with their own kind of "monk style," a regulated verse that is particularly mundane and vulgar. It is known as "the *qi* of pickled [vegetable] stuffing." Zizhan [Su Shi] had a poem "Sent to Huitong" which reads, "Since ancient times, rare does language bring mists and clouds, /As for the whiff vegetables and bamboo shoots, when it comes to you there's none." He once told someone, "Shall I explain what I mean by the language of 'vegetables and bamboo shoots'? It means to be without any whiff of pickled [vegetable] bun stuffing!" Everyone laughs when they hear this.
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> 近世僧學詩者極多，皆無超然自得之氣，往往反拾掇摹效士大夫所殘棄。又自作一種僧體，格律尤凡俗，世謂之酸餡氣。子瞻有《贈惠通詩》云：「語帶煙霞從古少，氣含蔬筍到公無。」嘗語人曰：「願解蔬筍語否？無為酸餡氣也。」聞者無不皆笑。[29]

Ye Mengde accuses contemporary monks of having a variety of defects as poets. In short, he sees them as lacking any genuine creativity or self-confidence. He says they lack a "transcendent and self-assured air" (*chaoran zide zhi qi* 超然自得之氣; qi is translated as "air" here). They resort to imitating literati poets, even having the gall to coin their "mundane and crude" (*fansu* 凡俗) regulated verse as "monk-style" (*sengti* 僧體). He notes that their poetry was characterized in the world (*shiwei* 世謂) with the phrase "qi of pickled vegetable bun stuffing," suggesting that by this time, the metaphor had become common. He gives the origin of this metaphor, ignoring the fact Su used it in the negative to praise a monk's poetry and mistaking the monk's name as Huitong. He adds that everyone laughs at Su Shi's

[29] Ye Mengde, *Shilin shihua* 石林詩話 (1123), *j.* 2 in *Lidai shihua* 1.426.

comment about the qi of vegetable bun stuffing. By this time, it had apparently become a good joke to characterize monk poetry this way.

Interestingly, with regard to the poetic potential of poet-monks, Huihong quite literally expresses the opposite view to Ye Mengde. It turns out, Huihong used the phrase "an extraordinary self-confident air," without any negation, to characterize lines of poetry by the "immortal" monk Shizong in an entry in *Night Chats*.[30] The entry consists of a miraculous account of Shizong and one of his poems, originally recorded in the *Gaoseng zhuan*. Huihong concludes by commenting, "Whether or not immortals exist, I can't say. But observing how his lines of poetry leave behind all boundaries and have a transcendent, self-assured air, [I know] it can't be an ordinary person who could write this" 神仙之有無，吾不能知，然觀其詩句，脫去畛封，有超然自得之氣，非尋常介夫所能作也.[31] Huihong characterizes Shizong's poetic lines as "leaving all boundaries behind" 脫去畛封 and possessing a "transcendent, self-assured air." As an evaluation of the specific poem quoted in the entry, Huihong seems to be referring to the monk's poetic expression of a liberated, unattached approach to life. In the poem, Shizong acknowledges the relation between letting go of desire and the end of suffering, but he portrays himself as obtaining the even higher

[30] A search of the *SKQS* yields Ye Mengde's *Shilin shihua* and *Night Chats* as the earliest sources for the expression "an extraordinary self-confident air" 超然自得之氣. It is likely that Huihong first used the expression, and later Ye Mengde negated it to criticize poet-monks. According to Cong Ellen Zhang, Ye's collection was completed in 1123, a few years after Huihong's *Night Chats* was in circulation, Zhang, "To Be 'Erudite in Miscellaneous Knowledge,'" p. 49. For a discussion about the dating of *Shilin shihua*, see Guo Shaoyu, *Song shihua kao*, p. 33.

[31] "Bai tu dai" 白土埭, *Lengzhai yehua* 8.77.

state of transcending distinctions between desires and no desires.[32] As we saw in chapter three, it is when poets concern themselves with mundane distinctions, between old and young, between spring and winter etc., that their aesthetic output is depleted of *qi*. To Huihong, putting to rest distinctions, like Shizong was able to do, is precisely what allows one to "leave all boundaries behind," and exhibit a "transcendent, self-assured air" in poetry.

By the end of the Northern Song, the literati discourse on poet-monks was colored by accumulated impressions of Tang dynasty and early Song poet-monks, by monks' poetic expressions of *kuyin*, and by the idea of vegetarian bun poetry. Assumptions about monk poetry gleaned from statements made by the likes of Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi, and Ye Mengde are representative of literati views of monk poets that circulated when Huihong was compiling *Night Chats*. Although there were precedents for monastic poetry, the default standard for shi poetry was still rooted in literati and Confucian ideals. The literati considered themselves as the guardians of poetic standards, and when monks wrote in the shi form, they did so largely on literati turf. When monks' poetry was criticized, it was often done so

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[32] The poem reads,

有欲苦不足 With desires, the suffering never ends,
無欲即無憂 Without desires, there are no worries.
未若清虛者 Still not on par with someone pure and empty,
帶索披麻裘 Who wears a rope belt, dons a hemp coat.
浮游一世間 Wandering around the whole world,
汎若不繫舟 Floating along like an untethered boat.
要當畢塵累 If you want to put an end to accumulated afflictions,
棲息老山丘 Then rest for a spell in an ancient mountain grave.

categorically: weaknesses were traced back to the monastic identity of the poet.[33] The criticisms not only reflected narrow views about the poetic potential of monks, but also narrow views about what constituted a proper monastic life. Even when poet-monks were singled out for praise, such as when Jia Dao is admired for his *kuyin* poetry or when a monk is noticed for writing poems without the smell of cooked vegetables, there was still a prevailing attitude that saw monks as potentially restricted or limited in their poetic endeavors due to their monasticism.

By including numerous accounts of poets in his miscellany, Huihong is joining the ongoing conversations about poetics that were taking place among literati. But his inclusion of many accounts of individual poet-monks provides a rare glimpse into a monk's approach to the criticism of monk poetry. As we will see, it was important to Huihong to show monks as capable of transcending all kinds of barriers, both spiritual and aesthetic. He repeatedly portrays monastic life and monk poetry as more complex and colorful than can be adequately represented by the *kuyin* aesthetic or by stuffed bun metaphors.

5.3 Beyond Vegetable Buns: Poet-Monks in Huihong's *Night Chats*

An entry featuring three poems by the monk Daoqian will serve to introduce Huihong's promotion of versatile poet-monks and his use of anecdote to raise issues of monk poetry criticism. Huihong begins the entry by noting that Daoqian's had "literary flair"

[33] Protass provides examples of this bias in "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," pp. 131-132.

(*biaozhi* 標致).[34] He goes on to record three disparate poems by Daoqian, giving the circumstances of each and making comments along the way.

> Monk Daoqian of East Wu had flair. When he was returning to the lake from Gusu, (in Wu) he passed by Linping and wrote this poem: 東吳僧道潛，有標致。嘗自姑蘇歸湖上，經臨平，作詩云：
>
> 風蒲獵獵弄輕柔,
>
> Pussy willows—swish, swish—play gently and softly,
>
> 欲立蜻蜓不自由。
>
> Dragonflies looking to alight, but don't get a chance.
>
> 五月臨平山下路,
>
> In the fifth month, on the road below the mountains of Linping.
>
> 藕花無數滿汀洲。
>
> Lotus flowers, uncountable, cover the islet.[35]
>
> When Dongpo took up his post at Qiantang, he stopped in to see Daoqian, and sang his praises.[36] Later, they found each other again at West Lake. Upon seeing one another, it was just like old times. 東坡赴官錢塘，過而見之，大稱賞。已而相尋於西湖，一見如舊。
>
> When [Dong]Po went to govern Dongxu, [Dao]qian went to visit him and stayed at the Xiaoyao Hall.[37] All the scholar officials vied to get a meeting with [Daoqian]. After Dongpo had fed his guests, they all gathered together [to meet Daoqian], and some lovely women tagged along too. Dongpo sent one of the singing girls to the front to request a poem from Daoqian. Qian no sooner picked up his brush than he

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[34] I've used "literary flair" to represent the fourth definition of *biaozhi* listed in the *Hanyu da cidian*: "Literary style, talent, and appeal" 風格、文采、韻致. But the phrase also has the meanings "to show off, to flaunt" 炫耀. Given what Huihong says about Daoqian in the entry, it is likely he intentionally chose this phrase rather than simply saying he was good at poetry to emphasize the monk's tendency to display or show off his talents.

[35] This poem is entitled "Linping dao zhong" 臨平道中 (On the road to Linping), Daoqian, *Canliaozi shiji* 10.9a.

[36] Qiantang 錢塘 may be a way to refer to Hangzhou. It is a river that runs through the area. Su Shi was appointed vice prefect of Hangzhou from 1071-1073, and prefect of Hangzhou from 1090-1098. See the chronology in Egan's *Word, Image, and Deed, in the Life of Su Shi*, p. xviii.

[37] Su Shi was prefect of Dongxu 東徐, a.k.a. Xuzhou, from 1077-1079.

had completed [the following poem]: 及坡移守東徐，潛往訪之，館於逍遙堂，士大夫爭欲識面。東坡饌客罷，與俱來，而紅妝擁隨之。東坡遣一妓前乞詩，潛援筆而成曰：

寄語巫山窈窕娘，

I've been told that the alluring maiden from Wushan,

好將魂夢惱襄王。

Loved to use dreams to bother Emperor Xiang[38]

禪心已作沾泥絮，

My Chan-mind is already catkin fluff stuck in mud,

不逐春風上下狂。

And doesn't chase after the spring breezes, rising and falling erratically."[39]

All present were greatly surprised. It was this that caused Daoqian's name to be known throughout the land. But he was narrow minded and temperamental. He despised ordinary people as if they were his enemies. He once made a poem: 一座大驚，自是名聞海內。然性褊尚氣，憎凡子如仇。嘗作詩云：

去歲春風上苑行 Last year, spring breezes rose up and drifted in the royal garden,

爛窺紅紫厭平生 A rash peek at the reds and purples cast a pall over ordinary life.

如今眼底無姚魏 Now before me, if no "Yao" or "Wei" [peonies],[40]

浪蘂浮花懶問名 And as for wanton pistols and drifting petals, I won't even bother to inquire about their names.[41]

Gentlemen thought less of him for this.

士論以此少之。[42]

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[38] This refers to the myth that a fairy girl from Mount Wu seduced Emperor Xiang 襄 of Chu (3rd century) in a dream. "The dream of Xiangwang" 襄王夢 became an allusion used to refer to men and women hooking up. See "Xiangwang meng" 襄王夢 and "Chuwang" 楚王 in *Hanyu da cidian*.

[39] This poem does not appear in Daoqian's poetry collection. Huihong seems to have been the first to record it.

[40] These are famous yellow and purple peony varieties.

[41] This poem can be found in *Canliaozi shiji* 5.5a. In *Night Chats*, Huihong records the beginning of this line as *rujin* 如今, but in *Canliaozi shiji*, the line is recorded as *er jin* 而今.

[42] "Dongpo cheng Daoqian zhi shi" 東坡稱道潛之詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.58.

To demonstrate Daoqian's poetic flair, Huihong records three dissimilar poems by Daoqian: a simple heptasyllabic quatrain, a poem addressed to a singing girl, and a poem on peonies. The first poem, "Linping dao Zhong"臨平道中 (On the Road in Linping), is a series of observations of the surrounding scenery made by the poet as he travels along the road. He describes the natural scenes, using onomatopoeia to represent willows moving in the wind. It is not about personal relationships or emotions. There are no allusions or clever word play. The lotus flower is prevalent Buddhist symbol of transcendence arising from the mundane, but other than this, there are no obvious Buddhist elements to the poem. This poem, in fact, does not seem to say a lot about Daoqian's showy display of talents. It is not typical of the monk poems featured in *Night Chats*, which tend to focus on personal feelings, social dynamics, and use more sophisticated Buddhist allusions. But presented with the other two poems, which do reflect these other traits, the poem serves to emphasize this monk's poetic range.

To flesh out the picture of Daoqian, Huihong goes on to recount his close ties with Su Shi, including an episode displaying Daoqian's ability to spontaneously respond to a challenge meant to test his spiritual level as well as his poetic ability.[43] Huihong sets up the episode by emphasizing Daoqian's popularity among the literati. Su Shi may be the renowned poet-official, but it is Daoqian whom everyone wants to meet. "All the scholar-

[43] The friendship that existed between Su Shi and Daoqian is well represented in the extant poems that they exchanged and letters from Su Shi to the monk. The two often discussed poetry. Egan, in *Word, Image, and Deed,* pp. 198-99, discusses a poem Su wrote to Daoqian encouraging his poetic endeavors. Protass, "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," pp. 224-235, compares the lamentation poems by Daoqian and Su Shi.

officials vied to have a meeting with him”士大夫爭欲識面, and after being hosted by Su Shi, they went to see Daoqian. At the gathering, Su Shi plays a joke on Daoqian, playfully testing both the monk’s moral mettle and his poetic ability by goading him with a singing girl. Su Shi is being a bit of a rascal. (One can’t help but wonder if his action stems from feeling peeved by all the attention Daoqian is receiving from his guests!) He teases Daoqian, a celibate monk, by challenging him to write a poem for a singing girl whose job it is to seduce. But without batting an eye, Daoqian responds with a poem that manages to both compliment the girl and present himself as an accomplished Chan monk unfazed by her charms. He compares her to the alluring immortal maiden Yaoji 瑤妓who seduced King Xiang. But unlike the impressionable Xiang, he claims to have a mind like catkin stuck in mud. His mind will not get caught up chasing after the fluctuations of “spring breezes” (*chunfeng* 春風), an analogy for amorous passions.[44] This is a poetic depiction of a straight-laced unflappable Chan master.

Daoqian’s poem portrays himself as maintaining a steadfast resolve in the face of worldly temptation. The poem was well-received. As Huihong, notes, “All those present were amazed. It was this that caused his name to be known throughout the land”一座大驚，自是名聞海內. People admired Daoqian for being able to come up with this poem in these circumstances. But then Huihong harshly criticizes Daoqian. He is narrow minded (性褊), volatile (尚氣)and he is despises ordinary people (憎凡子如仇). In other words, the image of

[44] “Chunfeng” in *Hanyu da didian*, definition seven.

the unmoving Chan master he created in his poem that everyone admires is not the whole picture. By providing this criticism, Huihong is emphasizing that a monk can create an image of himself in a poem that doesn't tell the whole story about himself. Huihong is promoting Daoqian's skill as a poet while at the same reminding the readers to be cautious when it comes to taking a poem as truth. The same monk may present himself in quite a different light in another poem written at a different time, as demonstrated by the third poem in the passage.

With Daoqian's third poem, Huihong further emphasizes the monk's poetic versatility while also demonstrating the shortcomings he has pointed out about Daoqian. Instead of exhibiting a mind like catkin stuck in mud, as he did in the second poem, the monk here admits that "last year," there were "spring breezes" (amorous feelings) that arose while he was in the royal garden viewing the peonies. A glance at the "reds and purples" caused him to feel he'd had enough (*yan* 厭) of his ordinary, plain existence. The voluptuous blossoms of the peony are associated with romance and indulgence, and here they serve as a metaphor for beautiful palace ladies.[45] Now that he's had a taste for such beauties, if he can't view a Yao or a Wei (two of the most precious varieties of peony), he is certainly not going to bother finding out the names of other, lesser flowers (wanton pistols and drifting petals).[46] If he can't glimpse palace concubines, then what interest does he have in ordinary girls?

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[45] See Egan, "The Peonies Allure," in his *The Problem of Beauty*, pp. 109-161, for an analysis of the symbolism and cultivation of the peony in the Song Dynasty.

[46] "Wanton pistols and drifting petals" refer to ordinary flowers and plants. See "langrui fuhua" 浪蕊浮花 in *Hanyu da cidian*. Su Shi used the phrase in "Ciyun Wang Ting Lao tuiju jianqi" 次韻王廷老退居見寄, no. 1, *Su Shi shiji* 17.890.

The last couplet can also be read as a claim by the monk that he now has overcome the weakness for female beauty. There are no Yao or Wei peonies because he is no longer paying attention to such things, and as for ordinary blooms (*lang rui fuhua* 浪蘂浮花), he cares so little he doesn't even know their names. Nevertheless, for a celibate monk to admit to being bewitched by girls to the point of becoming dissatisfied with his life as a monk, even temporarily, is controversial. The poem didn't fly with his readers. According to Huihong, "gentlemen thought less of him for this"士論以此少之.

Huihong has criticized Daoqian for being volatile and snobby. He exhibits such qualities in this poem. If he were in control of his emotions, he would not have been fazed by the palace ladies. If he didn't have a tendency to "treat ordinary people as if they were his enemies," would he distinguish between the crème de la crème of peonies and ordinary flowers?

Whether it was admission of sexual desire or his arrogance, it is easy to see why such a poem would be problematic for a monk. Monks weren't supposed to pay attention to the opposite sex, much less write about such feelings in their poems. When he portrays himself as a Chan master without flaw, as in the exchange with Su Shi, people applaud, and such poetry makes his reputation. When he writes a poem that includes a picture of himself that departs from that image, they denigrate him. Monks could be denigrated for writing poems lacking rich feelings and colorful images, but Huihong's account of Daoqian suggests that monks didn't necessarily receive praise when they did venture into themes and feelings that departed from idealized versions of Chan monasticism.

In addition to demonstrating the range and versatility of Daoqian's poetic abilities, this entry raises issues related to monks' reputations and critiques of their poetry. By including three poems that give three contrasting images of the monk author—a monk dispassionately observing the scenery on his travels, a monk incorruptible by female beauty, a monk flustered by the allure of peonies—Huihong shows that monks were capable of creating multiple poetic personas. By presenting the poems within anecdotal context and commentary, Huihong highlights the impact a monk's poems could have on his reputation and cautions readers against jumping to conclusions when reading their poetry.

Huihong was aware of the unique challenges that monastic poets faced. He at times questioned the role of poetry in monastic life, but he also went out of his way to justify his poetic pursuits to others.[47] To be successful as poets, monks had to navigate restrictions and expectations stemming both from their monastic community and from lay poets.

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[47] In his study of sources that show an underlying anxiety about monastic poetry in the Song, Jason Portrass discusses Huihong's ambivalent attitude towards the compatibility between monastic goals and poetry. See "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry" pp. 108-109. At the same time, some autobiographical entries in *Night Chats* show Huihong quick to defend himself or deflect criticism when anyone took issue with his poems, showing in the process the power of poetry to bring about insights into non liberating thinking such as getting too caught up in dualistic perspectives. See for example, "Chen Yingzhong ci ji shi zhurou shi yu" 陳瑩中此集食豬肉鰣魚 (*Lengzhai yehua* 10.87-88). Also note his poem comparing West Lake to the warring states beauty Xishi 西施 in response to a Su Shi poem, and the subsequent two poems defending his poetry to his fellow monk Kuoran 廓然; "Du Hejing Xihu xi shu juan wei," 讀和靖西湖詩戲書卷尾 (J 23:B135.652b18; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 16.1051) and "Ou du Hejing ji xi shu xiaoshi juan wei yun 'Ai Dongpo yan bu ku…'" 偶讀和靖集戲書小詩卷尾云長愛東坡眼不枯…(J23: B135.624c19-28; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 11.724)

In *Night Chats,* Huihong promotes the idea that Song monks were capable of producing poems on par with literati, whether they were writing within or outside the monastic context. He challenges limited views of monks' poetry and monastic life not so much by explicit discussions of monks' poetry, but by the selection and crafting of anecdotes about poet-monks, including himself, who collectively write on a wide range of themes, who are adept at using rich and colorful language in their poems, and who produce poetry that challenges the tendency to use narrow ideas about monasticism to critique monk poetry. The overall image of the poet-monk in *Night Chats* is more complex and diverse than is implied by the sparse comments and accounts recorded by literati writers or by the traditional boundaries ascribed to monk poetry found in Buddhist sources.

5.3.1 Poetic Themes

The accounts of monks in *Night Chats* promote an image of the monk as adept at addressing a wide variety of themes in their poetry. Huihong seems particularly interested in giving examples of monks writing on themes outside of narrow views of monasticism. Most of the accounts of poet-monks, including those featuring himself as a poet, are shown creating poems on themes that reflect their active social life, personal feelings, and secular knowledge. When monks are depicted writing on the less controversial, "tame" monastic themes, such as bamboo, impermanence, or mountain dwelling, Huihong chooses examples of monks who approach these topics with unusual nuance or wit, often validating the high quality of their poems by recording positive comments made by respected literati poets. The anecdotes do not deny monks' monastic identity or Buddhist background. They promote a broader vision of the role of poetry within monks' lives.

Huihong's illustration of the scope of poet-monks differs from the impression given by literati critics. As discussed above, impressions of the kuyin aesthetic and the subsequent vegetable metaphors reflect the assumption that monks' poetry tended to be limited in theme. Such limitations were illustrated by the story Ouyang Xiu recorded about the monks who couldn't come up with poems unless they contained common words associated with natural scenes: moon, snow, bamboo, mountain, etc. These words are frequently found in poems on themes associated with *kuyin* poetry: poverty, solitude, ascetic living conditions, mountain reclusion, etc. Given that one of the ideals of monasticism dictated that monks remain detached from the "dust" of the world—remain undefiled by sensory objects—it was easily assumed they would fall short when representing worldly knowledge and experiences. The creation of poetry on social life and secular pursuits, and on the personal feelings associated with these themes, was simply not seen as compatible with the ideals of monastic life. If monks did venture into such areas in their poetry, it was likely they would not be taken seriously as monks.

Personal experiences and feelings

In *Night Chats*, Huihong does not avoid including accounts of monks engaging in poetry expressing strong emotion, even sentiments seen as less-than-ideal for monks. A fundamental function of Chinese poetry, since its beginnings, was the expression of emotion, or feelings (*qing*情).[48] Huihong himself admitted that he would "play around with language

[48] This view of poetry can be traced back to the "Great Preface" of the *Shijing* (Book of Songs/Odes). The explanation of poetry in this work includes the statement, "The affections are stirred within and take on outward form in words" 情動於中而形於言. (Based on Stephen Owen's translation in *Readings in Chinese Literary Though*,' pp. 40-41.)

from time to time" 時時戲為語言 when "he couldn't forget his feelings"未能忘情.[49] But for Chan monks, the emotional aspect of poetry was particularly problematic because they were expected to have a handle on their emotions. Poems on emotional themes, especially if they hinted at sensual feelings or sexual attraction, were taboo for monks. A poem by a monk expressing strong feelings could be construed as evidence that he lacked meditative concentration. In general, evidence of a "conflict between the conventions of aesthetics and ascetic religion" can be found in monastic poetry criticism.[50] But we see in Huihong's anecdotes a willingness to show examples of monks, including himself, who are not afraid to express strong emotions in their poems.

Daoqian's peony poem discussed above was one such example. There is also the poem by Huihong about his personal experience of dwelling alone in the mountains, struggling to embrace asceticism, and finding himself recalling festive times spent in the capital.[51] Particularly interesting is an account featuring a poem by Huihong's first teacher, Master Jing. Here we see Huihong highlighting a monk's ability to spontaneously compose a poem that redirects his negative emotions in response to a frustrating experience.

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[49] J 23: B135.707b5-6; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan*, 2.1520.

[50] Jason Protass uses this turn of phrase to describe "the problem of emotions" as applied to monastic poetry in "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," p. 116. (The phrase was used formerly by Ronald Egan as a section heading in *Word, Image, Deed*, pp. 197-206, in which he discusses a related tension in mainstream Song poetry.) Building on his study of how emotion and the pursuit of poetry was represented in Buddhist texts such as Chan monastic regulations, Protass succinctly outlines the conflicting expectations for poet monks. From the Buddhist side, there is the expectation that monks ought to be calm and detached from passions. But the dominant poetic tradition saw poetry as a way to express passion. See Protass, pp. 120-121.

[51] "Shangyuan shi" 上元詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.52.

> Dhyana Master Jing was an elder virtuous cultivator who possessed the Way. He was in charge of Sanfeng Temple in Yun[zhou]. Once, on his way to visit the home of a patron, he was crossing a stream when the water level rose, and Jing, who was heavyset and sluggish, was pulled under by the current. His [temple] youth pulled him onto the bank, where he sat amidst the sand and stones with a drooping head like a rain-drenched crane. Assuming the Master would surely be angry and expecting to be dismissed with a scolding, the boy didn't dare lift up his head to look. Jing suddenly pointed to the stream and composed a poem:
>
> 春天一夜雨霧沱 In spring an entire night of rain in torrents,
>
> 添得溪流意氣多 Increases the stream's flow, boosting its nerve.
>
> 剛把山僧推倒卻 Just enough to push over this mountain monk,
>
> 不知到海後如何 Who knows what it'll be like after reaching the sea!
>
> Subsequently, Jing stayed at Xiangshan [Temple] in Ruzhou, and passed away without illness.
>
> 靚禪師有道老宿也，初主筠之三峰。嘗赴供民家，渡溪溪漲，靚重遲，為溪流所陷。童子掖之至岸，坐沙石間，垂頭如雨中鶴。童子意必怒，且遭詬逐，不敢仰視。靚忽指溪作詩曰：「春天一夜雨滂沱，添得溪流意氣多。剛把山僧推倒卻，不知到海後如何。」靚後住汝州香山，無疾而化。[52]

This account is not found in any work prior to Huihong's *Night Chats*. The level of detail Huihong includes suggests that he either witnessed the event himself as the "youth" in the story or he took poetic license in the telling.[53] He uses vivid details to create a comical picture of Jing's mishap. The corpulent monk wades across the rising stream but is pushed over by the current. His serving boy pulls him out onto the bank, where the old monk sits "amidst the sand and stones with a drooping head like a rain-drenched crane"坐沙石間，垂頭如雨中鶴. The image of a drenched drooping crane, normally majestic and regal,

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[52] "Jing Chanshi wei liu suo ni shi" 靚禪師為流所溺詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.55-56.

[53] Huihong used the same term, "youth" *tongzi* 童子in "Silent Sound's Own Preface" to indicate his early relationship with Master Jing; J 23: B135.696a27; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1437. But *tongzi* is also a generic term for novices or young boys who served the senior monks at a temple.

emphasizes the monk's forlorn, defeated, possibly embarrassed state. The youth assumes his master is stewing in anger and will certainly lash out at him. Contrary to expectation, Master Jing doesn't lose his temper at the boy, nor is his reaction that of an unperturbed Chan master. His natural feelings of annoyance, even revenge, are directed toward the real culprit, the stream who knocked him over, as is expressed in the form of a poem.

Jing personifies the stream in his poem by ascribing to it human feelings and intention. The heavy rainfall of the night before has caused the water pressure of the stream to increase, "boosting its nerve"意氣多. The term *yiqi* 意氣, translated here as "nerve," literally means "aim/intention and mettle," and is usually applied to people, but Jing imagines that the increase in water pressure caused the stream to get up enough nerve to intentionally push him over. Having made the stream into an advisory, Jing can direct his emotion towards it and put it in its place. His last line suggests that once the stream gets to the ocean, it won't amount to much. He is making an indirect allusion to *Zhuangzi* passage in which the river spirit Hebo 河伯 literally swells with pride as all the streams flow into him, but realizes his perspective is faulty when he empties out into the North Sea.[54]

[54] The "Qiushui" 秋水 chapter of the *Zhuangzi* describes how the river becomes swollen from the floods of autumn and this makes the river spirit quite delighted with himself, feeling that all that is lovely under heaven has been drained into himself 以天下之美為盡在己. But when he comes to the North Sea and sees its expanse is without limit, he realizes his mistake, saying, "Among the rustic sayings there is one that applies to me: 'Hearing of the hundred principles of the Dao, I assume there is no one my equal" 野語有之曰『聞道百，以為莫己若』者，我之謂也. The North Sea spirit then teaches him that knowledge is limited based on one's experience: you can't talk about the sea to a frog in a well; you can't discuss ice with a summer insect, etc. (The "Qiushui" chapter is in the "Outer chapters" of the *Zhuangzi*. This story occurs in the beginning of "Qiushui.")

Huihong challenges expectations about monks' behavior and the role of poetry in their lives by presenting conventionally contradictory images of a monk. He starts the entry with descriptive details that present Jing as a respected Chan master—he is a "man of the Way," an abbot of a temple. But this same monk is fat and clumsy, and he has frustrating mishaps like the rest of us. He finds relief in the spontaneous composition of a poem, but this poem doesn't appear to have any Buddhist undertones. In fact, despite its literary cleverness, the poem is meant to seem ridiculous: personifying a stream so as to get back at it! But Huihong concludes with a final biographical detail that might cause readers to check themselves before dismissing Jing. He "passed away without illness." We can't help wondering if Jing's poem does reflect a deeper insight, perhaps the understanding that his feelings of vindictiveness serve no purpose in the larger picture, just as the stream's audacity is vanquished by the vast sea.

Worldly knowledge and pursuits

In addition to personal emotions and struggles, monks are shown by Huihong to be adept at producing poems on themes demonstrating their worldly knowledge and familiarity with secular pursuits. Occasionally, the goal of the poem is pedagogical, to teach a lay person how to view their worldly situation with a more transcendent perspective. There was the account of Master Jing persuading the merchant to become a donor by means of a poem. But often Huihong promotes the poet-monk by demonstrating his ability to respond to situations creatively and responsively, even when this calls for a poem expressing secular sentiments. The most extreme example of this is found in an entry about an unnamed monk who, upon request, produces a regulated verse poem elaborately describing the delightful flavor and

preparation methods of steamed pork, with nary a discriminatory thought of vegetarian fare or meat eating.

> Having pacified Shu, Wang Zhongling was pursuing the remnant enemy troops.[55] He was far away from his own troops and extremely hungry. He went into a village temple and found the monk in charge sprawled out drunk. Furious, Wang was on the verge of executing him, but the monk didn't even flinch. [Wang] thought this was strange, so he pardoned him. When he asked for some vegetarian food, the monk said, "There's only meat, no vegetables." Wang regarded him as even more extraordinary. [The monk] fed him with steamed pork head. The food was delicious, and Wang was delighted. He asked, "Besides drinking and eating meat, do you have any other skills?" The monk said that he was able to write poetry. Wang ordered him to compose a poem about steamed piglet. [The monk] grasped a brush and finished the poem in no time:
>
> 嘴長毛短淺含膿 Snout is long, hairs are short, its flesh is full of fat,
>
> 久向山中食藥苗 It's spent a long time in mountains feeding on herbs and sprouts.
>
> 蒸處已將蕉葉裹 Now wrapped in banana leaves, ready for steaming,
>
> 熟時兼用杏漿澆 When it's well cooked, douse with apricot liqueur.
>
> 紅鮮雅稱金盤飣 'Pink and fresh', we praise it, piled on a golden platter.
>
> 軟熟真堪玉筯挑 Soft and tenderized, perfectly yielding to plucking jade chopsticks
>
> 若把羶根來比並 If we make a comparison with mutton,
>
> 羶根只合吃藤條 Mutton is just about on par with eating rattan stalks.
>
> Wang was overjoyed. He got him a Purple Robe and an Honorific Name. In the early Yuanyou period Dongpo saw Wang's great-great-grandchild and they chatted about this in the evening (夜話), so he recorded it for him.
>
> 王中令既平蜀，捕逐餘寇，與部隊相遠，饑甚，入一村寺中。主僧醉甚，箕踞。公怒，欲斬之，僧應對不懼，公奇而赦之，問求蔬食。僧曰：〔有肉無蔬。〕公益奇之。餽之以蒸豬頭，食之甚美，公喜，問：〔僧止能飲酒食肉耶，為有他技也？〕僧自言能為詩，公令賦食蒸豚，操筆立成，曰：〔嘴長毛短淺含膿，久向山中食藥苗。蒸處已將蕉葉裹，熟時兼用杏漿澆。紅鮮雅稱金盤飣，軟熟真堪玉箸挑。若把羶根來比並，羶根只合吃藤條。〕公大喜，與紫衣師號。東坡元祐初見公之玄孫訥，夜話及此，為記之。[56]

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[55] This may be referring to Wang Jinbin 王金斌 of the early Northern Song.

[56] "Seng fu zheng tun shi" 僧賦蒸豚詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 3.26-27.

Unlike the majority of accounts in *Night Chats*, this story has an extant precedent in the works of Su Shi.[57] That Su Shi took the time to record it gives the account authority, and Huihong is further circulating the story. The monk's behavior may be controversial, but it shows how far Huihong was willing to go to show the diverse talents of poet-monks.

In the story, the monk is full of surprises. Despite the fact that he is drunk, or perhaps because of it, he shows no fear of death, and this piques Wang's interest. Given that he is at a Buddhist temple, Wang expects to be fed vegetarian fare, but the monk claims there is nothing but meat. Wang asks whether he has any other "skills" besides eating meat and drinking wine. There is irony in calling these activities "skills." They are only considered as such because they were prohibited for monks, and yet somehow this monk exhibits a complete lack of inhibition. He has mastered them. In answer to Wang's question, the monk thinks of his ability to compose poetry. That this skill comes to mind suggests that on some level it was seen as in the same category as the taboo behaviors of eating meat and drinking.[58] Wang tests how far the monk's iconoclasm will go by asking the monk to write a poem on a taboo topic for a monk, steamed pork.

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[57] See "Shu shu seng shi" 書蜀僧詩 in *Su Shi wenji* 68.2150. Huihong has made very little alteration to Su's wording, with the exception of the time period he gives for when Su met with Wang's descendent. Where Su records that it occurred in the ninth year of Yuanyou, Huihong records it as occurring "at the beginning of Yuanyou."

[58] This is not the only place that Huihong associates monks' poetry writing with eating meat. In another entry, Huihong tells how Chen Guan exhorted him to stop writing poetry, to which Huihong asked to write a few more poems, justifying it by saying that when his mother tried to get him to stop eating meat, she allowed him to have one last day of eating his fill before quitting. See "Chen Yingzhong ci ji shi zhurou shi yu" 陳瑩中此集食豬肉鱘魚, *Lengzhai yehua* 10.87-88.

Huihong felt the monk's entire poem worth recording in the context of this story. The story showcases a monk's ability to address poetic themes outside of monasticism and write in colorful, worldly language, both areas where they were seen to be at a disadvantage compared to literati. The monk's behavior challenges not only conventions of monasticism but expectations about the poetic jurisdiction of monks. That Huihong's includes this account is another indication that he relished destabilizing narrow views about poet-monks.

Tame topics

Huihong also includes entries that promote the idea that simply because monks might write on certain "tame" themes doesn't mean they will produce dull poems. While he has dozens of accounts featuring monks writing outside of themes associated with a conservative view of monastic life, he also occasionally likes to present monks demonstrating ingenuity in poems on less controversial topics. The anecdotal context Huihong provides in these cases often serves to emphasize the talent of the poet. There is the entry about the Northern Song monk Qingshun Yiran 清順 頤然 who was "pure and ascetic, with many fine lines"清苦，多佳句.[59] Huihong quotes two of his poems, one on bamboo and one on visiting the forest, and promotes him further by mentioning that Wang Anshi praised him and Su Shi exchanged many poems with him. There is Monk Mao's verse on dying, intoned right before passing away, in which he proclaims to have no abilities, yet at the same time demonstrating he's reached the state of no attachment to self or discrimination between birth and death: "Monk Mao! Monk Mao! / Unable to do much of anything. /Once dead and cremated, /It'll be just

[59] "Seng Qingshun fu shi duo jia ju" 僧清順賦詩多佳句, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.58.

like he never was" 毛僧毛僧，事事不能。死了燒了，卻似不曾。[60] Huihong himself has poems on conventional themes including dwelling in isolation in the mountains, climbing to temples, and visiting Buddhist friends. But in each case, his approach reflects something unusual, whether it is the integration of clever literary allusions, the use of humorous Chan analogies, admission of controversial emotions, or the crafting of irreverent jokes. The poems by monks may address themes traditionally associated with expectations about monastic life, but they are often expressed in varying and colorful sentiments and language. We now turn our focus to the poetic language used by monks featured in *Night Chats*.

5.3.2 Poetic Language

Huihong promotes monks who excel at using poetic diction and figurative language that is bold, varied and creative. We find no sign of timidity or limitation in this regard. He features monks expressing themselves in the kind of rich, worldly diction that, according to some, they were incapable of producing. Even when the theme is religious or ascetic, the monks in *Night Chats* tend to use rich diction and creative figurative language. Indeed, Huihong seems particularly interested in showing that monks could produce poems using colorful figurative language to represent Buddhist ideas or aspects of ascetic life.

Huihong was writing against the impression spread by some literati writers, reflected in their discussion of *kuyin* poet-monks and their use of vegetable bun metaphors, that monks' poetic language was invariably restricted and unsophisticated. There was Ouyang's

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[60] "Mao Seng zhi hua" 毛僧之化, *Lengzhai yehua* 7.68. Note that *Quan Song biji* version has "never born" 不生, while the Wushan ban version has "never was" 不曾 in the last line of this poem.

story of the monks who were incapable of writing poems when certain words, commonly found in monks' poetry, were declared off limits. Ouyang's contemporary, Zheng Xie 正獬 (1022-1072), in writing a preface to the monk Wenying's poetry collection, was even more explicit about the limitations of monks' poetic language. He declared that poet-monks since the Tang were "restrained by their rules, incapable of bravado with nuance, and therefore they used a lot of secluded, lonely, feeble, sickly, dry, and withered words" 縛於其法，不能閎肆而演漾，故多幽獨衰病枯槁之辭.[61] Zheng is making a direct correlation between monks' timid poetic diction and what he perceives as their restrictive monastic life. He believes the *fa,* "rules" and "teachings," of their religion prevent them from writing with "bravado" (*hongsi* 閎肆; meaning "expansiveness" and "abandon"). Zheng doesn't see monks' use of words associated with ascetic life as an aesthetic choice, but as evidence that they are incapable of bold and unrestrained expression. Ye Mengde, Huihong's contemporary, made a similar observation, when he accused the poet-monks of his day for "lacking a transcendent, self-assured air."[62]

In *Night Chats*, the most obvious examples demonstrating monks' mastery of poetic language are those found in the accounts where monks are portrayed writing on worldly themes or expressing emotions not indicative of the idealized monk-mind. The drunk monk's pork poem was filled with juicy and colorful phrases such as "Pink and fresh: is how we compliment it, piled on a golden platter, / Soft and tenderized: perfectly suited for the

[61] Zheng Xie, "Wenying shi shiji xu," *Yunxi ji* 鄖溪集 14.13a.

[62] See the earlier discussion of Ye Mengde on p. 282.

plucking of jade chopsticks" 紅鮮雅稱金盤飣，軟熟真堪玉筯挑. In his poem on peonies, Daoqian used two titillating analogies, "spring breezes" and "reds and purples," to express succumbing to sexual desire: "Last year, the spring breezes rose up in the royal garden, /A rash peek at the reds and purples [made me] loathe my life" 去歲春風上苑行 ，爛窺紅紫厭平生. Although produced by monks, the language and the sentiment of these lines is as far away from "vegetable *qi*' as one can imagine.

Figurative Language Employed by Tang Monks

Beyond demonstrating the ability to use colorful diction to express worldly sentiments, Huihong seems particularly interested in promoting the idea that monks were adept at integrating creative figurative language into their poems. That he considered figurative language as an important aspect of poetics is demonstrated in his many discussions delineating poetic techniques such as implication, allusion, and metaphor. These techniques were used to infuse a poem with meaning that transcends the page, meaning that pointed to something beyond a literal interpretation of words. In discussing these techniques, Huihong often uses lines from literati poets as examples. But in the few entries on Tang poet-monks included in *Night Chats*, Huihong explicitly identifies them as good at making lines with implied meanings. There is one entry featuring lines by Jia Dao and one discussing "Tang monks" with the poetry of Jia Dao's cousin Wuke 無可. Both entries are short discussions highlighting sophisticated use of implication and allusion. These are techniques Huihong knows the literati appreciate, and he frequently promotes them in *Night Chats*.

The entry on Jia Dao reads:

> In the poems of Jia Dao, there are 'subtly sketched lines'(*yingyue ju* 影略句). Han Tuizhi [Han Yu] enjoyed them.
>
> There is his poem "Crossing the Sanggan River":
>
> It's been thirty [yearly] frosts since the hostel in Bingzhou,
> My heart intent on returning, day and night, recalls Xianyang.
> I now cross over the Sanggan waters,
> if only to gaze at Bingzhou, my old home.
>
> There is also "On the Road to Changjiang":
>
> With the aid of a staff I hurry to the mountain posting station,
> I run into someone and ask about Zizhou.
> How do I get to Changjiang?
> The traveler gives rise to concern on my behalf.
>
> 賈島詩有影略句，韓退之喜之。其《渡桑乾》詩曰：「客舍並州三十霜， 皈心日夜憶咸陽。 如今更渡桑乾水，卻望並州是故鄉。」又《赴長江道中 》詩曰：「策杖馳山驛，逢人問梓州。長江那可到？行客替生愁。」[63]

To emphasize the skill of Jia Dao's "subtly sketched lines," by which he probably means lines that contain elusive implications, Huihong mentions the rumor that the great prose writer Han Yu liked them.[64]

Excepting their discussions of Jia Dao, when Ouyang Xiu and Ye Mengde mention poet-monks, they often present them as a type, rarely discussing the poetry of named individuals. This was especially true when they were presenting monks' poetry in a critical light. Huihong, on the other hand, almost solely features accounts of individual monks. The one exception is the beginning of an entry praising Tang monks for their skill at using

[63] "Jia Dao shi" 賈島詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 4.43.

[64] Wu Jingyi, *Huihong Wenzichan*, p. 132, explains *yingyue ju* as "lines with unexposed implications."

figurative language, but Huihong supports his general comment about monks by providing specific examples of lines by an individual monk.

> Tang monks have many excellent poetic lines. They are constructed by drawing comparisons with meaning (*yi* 意), and do not directly indicate something. These are called lines that transcend the image (*xiangwai ju* 象外句).
>
> For example, Venerable Wuke's poem says:
>
> 聽雨寒更盡 Listening to the rain while the night drum fades out,
>
> 開門落葉深 Opening the door, it is fallen leaves that have piled high.[65]
>
> This is a case of falling leaves standing in for the sound of rain.
>
> It is also said,
>
> 微陽下喬木 Faint sunlight descends through the towering trees,
>
> 遠燒入秋山 Distant fires entering the autumn mountains.
>
> Here, faint sunlight is used as an analogy for distant fires.
> 唐僧多佳句，其琢句法比物以意，而不指言某物，謂之象外句。如無可上人詩曰：〔聽雨寒更盡，開門落葉深。〕是以落葉比雨聲也。又曰：〔微暘下喬木，遠燒入秋山。〕是以微暘比遠燒也。[66]

In this entry, Huihong identifies the technique of using comparisons to point to something without relying on literal disclosure. Lines created from this technique he calls "lines that transcend the image." He gives an example from Wuke's poetry. He seems to imply that the second couplet is also by Wuke, but the only extant record of lines resembling these are attributed to the (non-monk) Ma Dai 馬戴 (799—869), a contemporary of Wuke's.[67] Both

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[65] These lines are from Wuke's poem sent to Jia Dao, entitled "Qiu ji cong xiong Jia Dao"秋寄從兄贾岛, *Quan Tang shi* 813.9152.

[66] "Bi wu yi yi er bu zhi yan mou wu, wei zhi xiangwai ju" 比物以意而不指言某物謂之象外句, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.58.

[67] Ma Dai has a poem entitled "Luo ri chang wang" 落日悵望. But the second line of the couplet is recorded as "Distant shapes hidden in the autumn mountains" 遠色隱秋山 ; *Quan Tangshi* 555.6428.

couplets contain metaphors that are cleverly revealed to the reader. In the first couplet, the sound of rain at night is revealed in the morning to have been falling leaves. In the second couplet, the poet sees what he thinks is the sun setting on the trees on the mountain, but it turns out to be an agricultural burn. In each case, the poet refrains from explaining the connection between the reality of the situation and the mistaken impression. What is really going on— "the image"—is not spelled out, but only suggested by juxtaposing two images. As literary critic, Huihong provides the explanation only implied by the poem.

Jia Dao and Wuke were both considered *kuyin* poets, but Huihong quotes lines from their work that emphasize qualities that counter the negative impressions of the *kuyin* aesthetic. By focusing on the use of sophisticated and creative language by Tang poet-monks, he creates a more positive picture of their poetic contribution than did writers, like Ye Mengde, who characterized these monks as imitative and coarse.

Figurative Language and Buddhist Meanings

Along with poems by monks with literary allusions and worldly diction, Huihong makes a point of including poems that reflect more traditional Buddhist views and experiences of monastic life. In promoting poet-monks, he neither avoids including poems that contain cliché words listed in Ouyang Xiu's story nor those that exhibit the ascetic milieu condemned by Zheng Xie. However, when monks address themes associated with the limited view of monastic life advanced by the literati—such as poverty, solitude, nature, or

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We don't know if Wuke or Ma Dai was the original author of the couplet, but only in Huihong's version attributed to Wuke does the second line contain a metaphor that "transcends the image."

asceticism—Huihong chooses examples that show monks are capable of weaving together clever literary allusions and creatively aestheticized images of the Chan monk. The impression produced by these poems is of a poet who walks a line between doctrine and aesthetics, between social interaction and solitary contemplation. They reveal a monk who is capable of bringing into the picture the insights gained from his perspective as a monk as well as engaging in poetry on literati terms.

Of monks in *Night Chats* who excel at creating a literary-Buddhist aesthetic in their poems, Huihong himself is the best example. A good illustration is an exchange of poems he had with Chen Guan.[68] Huihong begins the entry by telling how he received a letter from Chen when the latter was in exile. Chen included a verse in the letter expressing his wish for a copy of the *Huayan jing* to be delivered to him in exile. With this verse, Chen initiates a poetic exchange with Huihong ripe with Buddhist and literary allusions, but he also leaves himself open to correction by exposing his non-enlightened thinking. Chen's verse inadvertently makes several distinctions: between Huihong's situation (free to move about as he pleases) and his own (stuck in exile), between Huihong's location (well-connected, at a temple in Huxiang, in Changsha) and his own (isolated, beyond the Ling mountains), and between having access to the sutra and being without a copy.

Responding to Chen with a matching verse, Huihong mirrors Chen's use of Buddhist imagery, but he also points out the principle of non-discrimination: "Huxiang and Lingwai:

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[68] "Fu *Huayan jing* ru Ling daxue er jie"負《華嚴經》入嶺大雪二偈, *Lengzhai yehua* 7.65. Zhou Yukai dates the exchange to the 4th month of 1103, when Huihong was in Changsha and Chen Guan had been banished to the south. Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 82.

Give these distinctions a rest, / In the midst of Perfect Still Light we both may come and go” 湖湘嶺外休分別，圓寂光中共往來.[69] Instead of responding directly to Chen’s request for a copy of the sutra, Huihong’s poem brings Chen the dharma of non-discrimination, a central theme of the sutra that Chen was so eager to obtain.

Including the verse exchange between himself and Chen allows Huihong to illustrate his ability to apply a Buddhist perspective to the situation at hand and share it with Chen in poetic form. But the account does little to advance Huihong’s image as a poet with a broad poetic range. The informality of the miscellany, however, allows him to tack on a few more verses written to Chen at a later date. These verses are related to the first exchange only in that they too were sent to Chen while he was in exile and were also meant to challenge him to see his situation from a *Huayan* perspective, but they emphasize Huihong’s skill at combining Buddhist allusions with elegant literary language. Huihong continues,

> When I heard that Lingwai experienced a great snowfall, I wrote two more verses and sent them to Chen:[70] 又聞嶺外大雪，作二偈寄之曰:

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[69] At the time of writing, Huihong is in Huxiang (a.k.a. Hunan) in Changsha, and Chen is living in exile in Lingwai, “beyond the Ling mountains.” The phrase translated as “Perfect Still Light,” *yuan ji guang* 圓寂光, literally means “the light/brilliance of perfect *nirvāṇa*.” This phrase does not appear in Buddhist dictionaries, but it appears in another poem by Huihong, the last in a series entitled “You ciyun da zhi” 又次韻答之, in the line: “Within Perfect Still Light, one does not tire of roaming” 圓寂光中不厭游. See J 23: B135.643a24; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 15.956. As in his verse to Chen, Huihong’s point is that one’s movements are unobstructed. In some editions of *Night Chats*, *yuan ji guang* is recorded as *chang ji guang* 常寂光, “Permanent Still Light,” a phrase that is found in dictionaries and often appears in texts as *chang ji guang tu* 常寂光土“The World of Permanent and Still Light,” referring to the state of mind where all is in “perpetual peace and glory,” to the state of *Nirvāṇa*, or to various buddha lands. See “chang ji guang tu” 常寂光土in *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* and in *Foguang da cidian*, p. 4528. Huihong’s *yuan ji guang* 圓寂光 is likely an alternate version of this phrase.

[70] Huihong writes here that he sent Chen two verses when he heard of the heavy snowfall in Lingwai, but there is an additional verse recorded in *Shimen wenzi chan* (J 23: B135.658b25; *Zhu Shimen*

傳聞嶺外雪，I heard a rumor of snow south of Ling,
壓倒千年樹。Toppling the old growth trees.
老兒拊手笑，The old folks clap their hands with glee,
有眼未曾睹。Never having beheld such a sight before.[71]
故應潤物材，It was always meant to nourish material things,
一洗瘴江霧。And completely cleanse the pestilent river mists.
寄語牧牛人，When you pass these words on to the ox herder,
莫教頭角露。Don't tell him that the horns are showing.[72]

Also 又曰：

遍界不曾藏，The entire realm, never before concealed,
處處光皎皎。every place (now), glaring bright white.
開眼失卻蹤，Opening your eyes, you lost the tracks [in the glaring snow],
園林忽生春，The orchard trees suddenly burst forth spring,
萬瓦粲一笑。The ten thousand tiles are pearly whites of a smile.
遙知忍凍人，Even from afar, I know the person enduring the freeze,
未悟安心了。Has not yet awakened to a heart fully at peace.

The topic of both verses is an unusually heavy snowfall that has taken place where Chen is living in exile. Huihong uses the bright pervasive snow to make an analogy about the *Huayan*

wenzi chan 17.1117-1118) under the title "Lingwai daxue gu, ren duo zai nanzhong, yuanri zuo san jie, feng ji Chenzhong" 嶺外大雪故人多在南中元日作三偈奉寄瑩中 (In Lingwai, due to a heavy snowfall, large crowds gathered in Nanzhong, and on New Year's Day, I wrote three verses and sent them to Yingzhong). Zhou Yukai dates the year to have been 1104 in *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 88-89.

[71] This line, "never having beheld such a sight before" 有眼未曾睹 is meant to emphasize the experience of a marvel. It may be a play on the phrase "to obtained what they had never had before" 得未曾有that occurs in various sutras to describe the experience of a disciple or disciples who have had a realization from listening to the Buddha speak Dharma.

[72] "Horns"*toujiao* 頭角 are used as an analogy for several different things in the Buddhist canon. They can refer to delusion or false views. (Muller). Here, I suspect that Huihong is making fun of Chen about revealing his lack of understanding as he did in the previous correspondence. But the reference to the ox-herder, also referring to Chen, complicates this interpretation, for it calls to mind the Chan ox-herding pictures and the ox-herder's (the self) pursuit of the elusive ox (buddha nature). Ultimately, the ox-herder finds the ox, i.e. realizes his own mind is not apart from the buddha nature. See Mumon Rôshi, *Lectures on the Ten Oxherding Pictures.* Huihong's precise meaning, like the ox, eludes me, but it does seem that he is trying to tell Chen that the awakening he pursues is, in fact, not apart from himself, a theme that continues in the next verse.

state and includes several Chan allusions to subtly poke Chen about his failure to understand. But amidst the Buddhist meanings, Huihong weaves in elegant literary language that makes these poems something beyond Buddhist verse. Most notably, the third couplet of the second poem consists of a pairing of two well-known poetic analogies, cleverly inverted. There is the line in Wang Anshi's poem on plum blossoms that reads, "From a distance I know they are not snow / [only] because their subtle fragrance comes to me" 遙知不是雪，為有暗香來.[73] Here, snow is used as an analogy for the white blossoms of flowering plum trees. When Huihong writes, "The orchard trees suddenly burst forth spring," he is reversing the analogy, using the image of the white blossomed trees of spring to represent trees covered in snow. Similarly, in the next line, "The ten thousand tiles are pearly whites of a smile," Huihong uses the image of the white pearly smile as an metaphor for snow-capped tiles, reversing a line by Huang Tingjian comparing a girl's beautiful smile to a myriad tiles: "She breaks into a grin of ten thousand tiles"一笑粲萬瓦.[74] For Huihong, clever, colorful language does not impede the communication of deeper Buddhist truths in a poem. The addition of his snow poems to his account of the exchange with Chen Guan helps to demonstrate his poetic range.

In terms of diction and figurative language, Huihong does not exclude monks who use words associated with worldliness, nor does he omit examples of monks using the language of asceticism or solitude. To Huihong, specific words and their literal meanings

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[73] Wang Anshi, "Meihua" 梅花, *Linchuan xiansheng wenji* 26.305. Huihong records this poem in "Jinggong mei shi" 荊公梅詩, *Lengzhai yehua* 5.47.

[74] Huang Tingjian, "Mishu sheng dongye su zhi ji huai Li Desu" 秘書省冬夜宿直寄懷李德素, *Shangu ji* 3.10a.

were not the issue. No words were off limits for monks. The merit and suitability of their poetry should be determined by how they used words and the resulting Buddhist and/or aesthetic implications. In gathering stories about monks adept at using words to various ends, Huihong further promotes the image of the monk as capable of an unlimited poetic range.

5.3.3 Jingchun's "pure and cold" poetry

As explored above, the majority of entries on poet-monks in *Night Chats* portray them producing poems with qualities that differ from those normally associated with the *kuyin* aesthetic. Besides emphasizing that monks' poetic output need not be influenced by narrow views of monasticism, Huihong may have avoided accounts of *kuyin* poems because he himself was underwhelmed by such poetry. The following account suggests this. It is the sole entry in *Night Chats* giving extended attention to the poetry of a monk writing in the "pure and cold style that traces its origin back to Jia Dao and Wuke," 詩規模清寒，其淵源出於島、可. The entry is about the conduct and poems of an early Song monk Jingchun 景淳.[75] But while Huihong relates that other monks admired his poetry and he himself came to appreciate him, Huihong falls short of wholeheartedly endorsing his poems.

> Monk Jingchun of Guilin was skilled at pentasyllabic poems. The scope of his poetry was the "pure and cold" type that originated from Jia Dao and Wuke. Occasionally he had some fine lines. At the beginning of the Yuanfeng period [~1078], his poems were read widely by rural monks of the south. He lived at Yuzhang Ganming Temple and spent his days behind closed doors. His room was entirely bare, and he didn't keep any servants. Hearing the lunch bell of the nearby temple, he'd go there, and sit at the head of the assembly's dining hall. He'd leave immediately after the meal.

[75] No information on this monk has been found, but Huihong notes that his poetry circulated during the first year of the Yuanfeng period (1078).

All the monks liked and respected him. Seeing him arrive, they'd set out a bowl for him. If it was cloudy or rainy, they would have food delivered to him. He lived for twenty years every day just the same. There were four conditions in which he never went out: in times of strong wind, heavy rain, severe cold or extreme heat.

Jingfu Old Shun told me that [Jing]chun's poetic thought was bitter and profound, but the world was unable to understand it right away. For example, these [poems] have profound meaning:

夜色中旬後　A night scene: after mid-month,

虛堂坐幾更　In an empty room: Sitting for how many watches?

隔溪猿不叫　Next to the stream: the apes don't cry out,

當檻月初生　Over the railing: the moon begins to appear.

Also,

後夜客來稀　Late at night, few visitors come,

幽齋獨掩扉　In the secluded hut, alone I close the door flap.

月中無旁立　In the moonlight, there is no one in attendance,

草際一螢飛　At the edge of the grass, a single firefly hovers.

At that time, I was just sixteen or seventeen, and I didn't agree with him. But once I'd learned that practicing purity and cultivating oneself were the life's work of monks, I simply came to appreciate him.

桂林僧景淳，工為五言詩。詩規模清寒，其淵源出於島、可，時有佳句。元豐之初，南國山林人多傳誦。居豫章乾明寺，終日閉門，不置侍者，一室淡然。聞鄰寺齋鐘即造焉，坐海眾食堂前，飯罷徑去。諸剎皆敬愛之，見其至，則為設鉢。 其或陰雨，則諸剎為送食。住二十年如一日。有四時不出，謂大風雨、極寒熱時。景福老順為予言：淳詩意苦而深，世不可遽解。如曰：「夜色中旬後，虛堂坐幾更？ 隔溪猿不叫，當檻月初生。」又曰：「後夜客來稀，幽齋獨掩扉。月中無旁立，草際一螢飛。」有深意。予時方十六七，心不然之，然聞清修自守，是 道人活計，喜之耳。[76]

Unlike most of his entries on poet-monks, Huihong provides detailed biographical information about Jingchun before sharing his poems. He lived simply, solitarily, and safely. His days did not vary. He avoided venturing out in any kind of extreme weather. He was

[76] "Seng Jingchun shi duo shen yi" 僧景淳詩多深意, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.59-60.

well-respected among the monastic community both for the way he lived and for his poetry. His poetry is recommended to Huihong by a senior monk, Jingfu Shun 景福順,[77] who prefaces it by saying the thought is bitter and profound and that it is not easily understood by worldly people.

The poems are quite different than poems by other monks in *Night Chats*. Like the poet's life, the theme and language of the poems are simple and ascetic. The theme is solitude and loneliness. The language is straightforward and stark. There are no surprises, no implications, no clever allusions. Nothing controversial. The poems reflect a narrow, restricted life experience. There is harmony between the way the monk lived his life and the content of his poems.

Huihong admits that at the time of this exchange, he was a teenager (and not yet a monk), and he "didn't agree with him" 心不然之. In other words, he didn't see them as Jingfu saw them, as profound. Huihong's reaction is much like we would expect of a skeptically literati, and perhaps he has intentionally presented it so. But his statement I "didn't agree with him," is followed by the conjunction "however" (*ran* 然), suggesting he had a change of heart. Surely, he has come to realize the profundity that Jingfu spoke of, now that he is a monk. But in the end, Huihong only admits that he learned to like, or appreciate (*xi* 喜) Jingchun, after he had learned that being a monk was about purity and self-

[77] Jingfu Shun, or as Huihong calls him "Jingfu Venerable Shun" 景福老順, passed away between 1094 and 1095, when Huihong was about twenty-five years of age.

cultivation, ideals that Jingchun embodied. He doesn't actually endorse Jingchun's poetry. He leaves his opinion ambiguous.

We realize that Huihong's opening statement regarding the monk's poetry is lukewarm. There is the hint that, even if he had some talent, Jingchun's scope was narrow. Huihong does not say Jingchun was good at poetry in general, but that that he was good at pentatsyllabic verse.[78] The scope (*guimo* 規模) of his poetry was limited to the "pure and cold type." Huihong admits that he had some fine lines, but only "occasionally." Similar to comments about Tang poet-monks made by literati, we see here the suggestion of poetic limitation implied in statements that appear to be positive.

The account of Jingchun stands out as an anomaly in Huihong's entries on poet-monks. It features a monk writing poems in the "bitter intoning" style, both in terms of theme and language use. These might be exactly the kind of poems Song literati would accuse of stinking of vegetables. Huihong's predilection is to focus on accounts about poets who write in a more colorful, rich style, on themes that reflect a broader range of social and personal experiences. Why then would Huihong include poetry that might feed into the negative stereotypes about poet-monks? Included among the other entries, Jinghun's account further emphasizes that monk poetry comes in a broad spectrum of styles and suggests that much of poetry appreciation comes down to the reader's taste and attitude toward asceticism. After all, "rural monks of the south" appreciated Jingchun's poetry, and Jingfu had cautioned that

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[78] Zhou Yukai, *Zhongguo Chanzong yu shige*, p. 47 includes monks' preference for pentasyllabic poems as among the negative views of poet monks associated with vegetable qi. He notes that Tang Buddhist poets and the Nine Monks were mostly known for their pentasyllabic poems, as opposed to the more elaborate seven syllable poems.

"people of the world are unable to understand it right away" 世不可遽解. Huihong leaves his own opinion ambiguous, allowing his readers to ponder the different factors that make a monk's poem worthy of praise or criticism.

5.3.4 Beyond Meaty Buns

In addition to promoting monks as capable poets, Huihong's anecdotes sometimes challenge the way poet-monks and their poetry were evaluated. For Huihong, using a narrow view of monasticism to judge their poetry, for better or for worse, was simply not adequate to capture the diverse poetic practices of monks.

To illustrate Huihong's use of poetry anecdotes to question assumptions about monks and their poetry, let us look at the entry on Huailian's poetry. This is the entry that begins with Ouyang Xiu declaring that Huailian "makes liver-filled buns" with his poetry. Ouyang's comments have been extracted from the entry and used to demonstrate the literati use of culinary metaphors to characterize monks' poetry.[79] But in fact Huihong may have recorded Ouyang's statement in order to subtly challenge his characterization of poet-monks, a perspective that only becomes apparent when the entire entry is considered. In typical Huihong style, the binary thinking (or, in Buddhist terms, discriminatory thinking) that allows monks' poetry to be seen in terms of meaty buns or vegetable qi, as worldly or as

[79] Protass translates and discusses the first part of this entry in "Buddhists Monks and Chinese Poetry," p. 118, but he does not consider the second part, which includes examples of Huailian's poetry.

ascetic, is challenged indirectly, with the use of anecdotal details and poetic examples. The full entry reads,

> Chan Master Dajue Huailian studied externals and was skilled at poetry. When Wang Anshi was young, he used to travel about with him.[80] Once he showed [Hualian's] poems to Ouyang Xiu. Ouyang said: "This monk makes liver-filled buns!" Wang Anshi didn't get the joke, so he asked what Ouyang meant. Ouyang said, "There isn't the least whiff of vegetables in these poems."
>
> Huailian was recognized by Renzong's court; he lived in the eastern capital at Jingyin Chan Temple for a long time. Once he wrote a *gāthā* and presented it [to the emperor], wherein he begged to return to the mountain forests:
>
> 千簇雲山萬壑流 Thousand clusters of clouded mountains, ten-thousand gorges flowing,
>
> 閑身歸老此峰頭 At leisure, I would retire on such a mountain peak.[81]
>
> 慇懃願祝如天壽 Sincerely I vow to pray for a heavenly lifespan for your Majesty,[82]
>
> 一炷清香滿石樓 While a single stick of pure fragrance pervades the stone tower."
>
> He also said:
>
> 堯仁況是如天闊 Yao's benevolence is indeed as expansive as the heavens,
>
> 乞與孤雲自在飛 I beg you give leave to the lone cloud, let him float freely."
>
> 大覺璉禪師，學外工詩，舒王少與游。嘗以其詩示歐公，歐公曰：「此道人作肝臟饅頭也。」王不悟其戲，問其意，歐公曰：「是中無一點菜氣。」璉蒙仁廟賞識，留住東京淨因禪院甚久，嘗作偈進呈，乞還山林，曰：「千簇雲山萬壑流，閑身歸老此峰頭。慇懃願祝如天壽，一炷清香滿石樓。」又曰：「堯仁況是如天闊，乞與孤雲自在飛。」[83]

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[80] Wang Anshi is referred to in this entry by his posthumous title Shu Wang 舒王.

[81] In the biography of Huailian in *juan* 18 of Huihong's *Chanlin sengbao zhuan*, the line reads: "My mind to return will pass out his old age on this mountain peak" 歸心終老此峯頭 (X79n1560:528b22).

[82] Huihong's *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* has this line recorded as: "For my remaining years, I vow to pray for your unlimited life span" 餘生願祝無疆壽; (Z 79: 1560.528b22).

[83] Huihong, "Dajue Chanshi qi huan shan" 大覺禪師乞還山, *Lengzhai yehua* 6.55.

Huailian is presented at the outset as a monk engaged in worldly pursuits. He studies "externals," i.e. non-Buddhist subjects, and is skilled at poetry.[84] He is socially connected, a companion of the eminent statesman Wang Anshi. Moreover, the style of his poetry reflects his worldly tastes, if we are to believe Ouyang's characterization. Coming from a poet like Ouyang, the comparison of a monk's poems to buns stuffed with liver meat (one of the strongest tasting organ meats) as opposed to bland vegetarian fare, was meant to be complimentary. Ouyang is implying that, to his surprise, the poems don't have the shortcomings associated with vegetarian poetry. Perhaps they boast a rich and colorful style or include secular images and pursuits. What the liver-bun characterization suggests about Huailian the monk, however, is more ambiguous. A vegetarian monk who writes poetry that leaves a meaty taste could lead to speculation about his commitment to monastic pure conduct.

We don't have access to the Huailian's poems that were shown to Ouyang. But Huihong gives a sampling of his poetry, after further emphasizing Huailian's worldly ties by noting that Huailian was invited by Emperor Renzong (r. 1022-1063) to take up residence in the capital, where he stayed for a long time.[85] Only after Huihong has built up certain expectations about Huailian and the kind of poetry he might produce, does he actually share some of that poetry.

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[84] "Externals" (*wai* 外) in this case likely refers to the study of anything outside canonical Buddhist doctrine. See Protass's discussion of poetry and other activities considered to be *waixue* 外學 "external learning" in "Buddhist Monks and Chinese Poetry," pp. 63-64.

[85] It may even have been Ouyang Xiu who recommended that Huailian be invited to the capital from Mount Lu. See Protass, p. 127, n. 21.

At first glance, the examples of Huailian's poetry seem nothing like what might be expected of poetry characterized as liver buns. Both *gāthā* verse and the couplet have the same theme: the writer's strong wish to return to the solitude of the mountains. Huailian submitted the verse in order to "beg to return to the mountains and forests" 乞還山林. If the poems are anything to go by, this well-connected and highly esteemed monk who enjoys the patronage of the emperor, appears to want nothing more than to leave his position at court and return to the solitude of the mountains and forests. In theme, at least, the poems appear to express a preference for the life of a rural hermit monk.

The capital is conventionally associated with leisure, social interaction, creature comforts, and, in the case of Huailian, prestige. The mountains, where Huailian wishes to return, are the traditional site of ascetic cultivation, reclusion, abstinence, anonymity. But looking closer, we discover Huailian is not exactly writing poetry that "smells of vegetables" either. He is not expressing cliché anti-worldly sentiments or using particularly mild language. In the verse, Huailian strategically depicts the appeal of the mountain peak to a monk like him, while assuring the emperor of his continued service. "Sincerely I vow to pray for a heavenly lifespan [for Your Majesty], / While a single stick of pure fragrance pervades the stone tower." Praying for the emperor's longevity while meditating on the mountain peak is as effective as anything he could do for the emperor on location.

In the couplet, Huailian turns his praise of the emperor into a strategy to get the emperor to release him. "Yao's benevolence is indeed as expansive as the heavens, / I beg you give leave to the lone cloud, let him float freely." In other words, to deny the request of this lone cloud (me), would contradict your benevolent reputation! In the case of both the

verse and the couplet, Huailian has utilized his worldly erudition and poetry skill to make a case for retreating from the world.

In short, the poems Huihong quotes do not seem to fully personify either a liver bun or vegetable qi characterization. Huihong avoids clarifying any connection between the poems and Ouyang's statement, allowing readers to reflect on the issues surrounding how monk poets are characterized. But the contradictory image of Huailian challenges the assumption that a monk's poetic style—regardless of whether seen as rich like meat, bland like vegetables, or neither—is automatically indicative of his conduct as a monk. Huailian may write "liver stuffed bun" poems that are admired by literati, but he might also use that very skill to express a preference for a way of life that smelled more like vegetarian buns, i.e. mild and simple.

5.4 Conclusion

By the Song, the literati tradition of *shi* poetry, with its occasional poems rooted in the experiences of officialdom and family life, employment of rich figurative language, and precedent of eminent poets, yielded a set of expectations that didn't correspond well to the expectations the literati had for monks. If he hoped to be taken seriously as a poet, a monk had to produce poems that pleased the literati, while at the same time maintain his monastic reputation. This meant that when he set out to write a poem, he had to navigate various, and often contradictory, expectations. The rules and conventions of monastic life dictated that monks refrain from activities that activated emotion and distracted the mind. Although these conventions were primarily intended as monastic training, such ideals often factored into

how monks viewed their own poetic efforts and influenced how their poetry was evaluated by others. Despite active social lives and communal living, many monks viewed the practice of dwelling in solitude in the mountains as beneficial and they knew that the laity expected asceticism to be part of a monk's job description. At the same time, poems dwelling on hardship and renunciation, depicting an ascetic, solitary monastic life, were not always valued by the literati. To be appreciated by the community of literati poets, monk poets had to address themes and use language that resonated with the educated elite, but in doing so, they opened themselves to criticism for straying from their monastic mindset.

We have seen how a strand of poetry criticism in the Song saw monasticism as negatively impacting the scope and quality of monks' poetic output. The qualities associated with the kuyin aesthetic fed this negative impression of monks' poetic potential. In the Song, culinary metaphors built out of impressions of the vegetarian diet of monks became a way for literati to refer to the shortcomings of monks' poetry, shortcomings that were traced back to their monastic identity. Bland, restricted, harsh, and bitter: these were the qualities they associated with monks' poetry in general. Ouyang Xiu, Zhang Ye, and Ye Mengde all played a part in creating a strand of criticism that saw monasticism as negatively restricting the poetic output of monks. Su Shi may have promoted the poetic potential of individual monks, but he also played a role in furthering the negative stereotypes of poet-monks by using catchy metaphors like "qi of sour vegetable bun stuffing" when discussing them.

With *Night Chats*, we have the rare opportunity to see a monk, rather than literati, representing and critiquing the abilities of his fellow poet-monks. Huihong's approach is to focus on accounts that are presented within the literati context—the monks are portrayed interacting and exchanging poems with eminent literati poets, their poems are quoted and

discussed alongside those of literati poets, and it is mostly literati who are quoted when positive statements are made about monk poetry. In so doing, Huihong creates a picture of monks producing poetry that is taken seriously by literati poets.

At the same time, Huihong uses anecdote to challenge the way poet-monks were often evaluated. He does not openly contest the vegetable qi strand of criticism, and he rarely explicitly praises monks' poetry. But when we look at his entries on poet-monks, it is difficult to find a single poem that could be described as smelling of cooked vegetables. Jingchun's poems might be the exception, but Huihong noticeably refrained from endorsing Jing as a skilled poet. Instead, he devotes ample space to those monks who wrote outside the boundary of conservative monk poetry. They are depicted writing on themes and using language that challenge expectations about monks' lives and their poetic output.

This is not to say that these monks were simply writing secular poetry. The majority of the poems they are producing incorporate Buddhist meanings, allusions, or insights. They often reflect the experiences and feelings associated with everyday monastic life which, for Huihong, meant themes, such as personal struggles with desire and social interactions, that ran counter to an idealized vision of monasticism. He also acknowledges in some of his stories that monks who ventured to use such themes, might be misunderstood.

Ultimately, the issue for Huihong isn't whether monks wrote worldly poems or not, but whether or not they could create poetry that transcended boundaries: the boundaries of literal meaning, the boundaries of idealistic monastic life, the boundaries that dictated their reputations. Considering the trend of criticism that saw monks as incapable of transcending their own monasticism, it is not surprising that Huihong wished to show different ways

monks could “leave behind all boundaries.” But just as some people couldn’t get their minds around Wang Wei’s banana tree in snow, not all critics were going to appreciate monks who blurred the lines between aesthetic expression and ascetic practice. Monastic life came with different expectations and priorities than did the life of a literati poet with an official career, so transcending social boundaries in poetry manifested differently for monks. But for Huihong, the standard by which monks’ poetry should be judged was that of “subliminal observation and transcendent ideas,” not narrow views of monasticism rooted in binary thinking.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Overview

Night Chats from Chilly Hut began circulating among literati and monks soon after Huihong completed it in 1122. By the early Southern Song, just a few years after Huihong's death, there were print editions available. Since then, the miscellany has been remarked upon by commentators throughout the generations. Like the author himself, it has instigated a wide range of responses from readers past and present. Some commentators sing its praises; others pick it apart for exaggeration and fabrication. Most have conflicting reactions: they take issue with the veracity of his accounts, question some of his pronouncements on poetry, but nevertheless are compelled to recopy his entries into their own works. I suspect Huihong would have been tickled to see his writings elicit such a variety of reactions.

As one of the few Song literary miscellanies written by a Buddhist monk, *Night Chats* provides a unique view into the mind of its author and sheds light on religious, social, and aesthetic issues of the Northern Song. In this hybrid miscellany-*shihua*, Huihong includes notes, accounts, stories, recorded conversations, and quotations on literary subjects and he depicts the personalities and social interactions of monks and non-monks. He brings his perspective to issues of poetics, eccentricity, asceticism, and personality, providing a slice of life from the Northern Song that captures quotidian interactions and developing aesthetics. By doing this, Huihong suggests that these topics need not be considered as outside the purview of monasticism.

When Huihong composed pieces for what would become his *Night Chats*, he likely had a mixture of motivations. At the time, he was already in the process of completing a *biji* devoted to rare observations and accounts of Chan monks, the *Linjian lu*, and he had finished numerous Buddhist writings and monastic histories. *Night Chats* became the notebook where Huihong could explore his personal interests and observations about topics that were not overtly religious: poetry composition, relationships, notable personalities, etc. At the same time, Huihong's Chan background plays a role in the selection and presentation of material in these entries, and his background as a contested Buddhist poet-monk spurred him to construct entries that challenged or poked fun at unexamined assumptions and restrictive categorizations in artistic pursuits and society. Looking at *Night Chats* holistically, it becomes clear that Huihong was interested in exposing the divisions and limits set up by society and promoting new ways of appreciating people and understanding art.

Despite the insights that *Night Chats'* unusual perspective can provide on Chinese cultural history, modern scholarship has tended to ignore the Buddhist perspective and monastic background of its author, a red thread that runs through all 162 entries. In this dissertation, I have approached Buddhism as a repertoire of resources to show that Huihong's Buddhist ideas and his experience as a controversial monk shaped much of the content of his miscellany and are a necessary basis for understanding the significance of the text and its depiction of poetics, people and poet-monks in 12th century China. I have found that Huihong does not set aside his monastic identity in this work, but rather he shows that monasticism can be viewed dynamically, as in dialogue with other aspects of Song culture and society.

The impact of Huihong's Buddhist ideas and life experiences on *Night Chats* is generally overlooked due to Huihong's complex identity and the understated and highly

integrated presence of the Buddhist ideas in the work. In looking for these elements and perspectives, it helps to approach Buddhism as repertoires of resources aimed towards awakening, adaptable, and layered, rather than as a one-size-fits-all "ism." Buddhist elements and perspectives are evident not only explicitly—in terminology borrowed from Buddhism and used for aesthetic purposes, in overt references to Buddhist principles and texts, and in the depiction of obviously Buddhist individuals—but also implicitly, in how Huihong approaches poetics, individuals, and poet-monks from his understanding of non-discrimination and personal monastic experience. Even in what appear as purely literary or social accounts, Huihong implies that a monk qua Buddhist can have access to and insight into a broad range of issues and information well beyond the ken of traditional monastic life.

6.2 Huihong's Monastic Identity

Huihong's approach comes from his unusual experience of monasticism, which included not only the extensive study and practice of Buddhism, but also repeated challenges to his image as a monk. We have learned that Huihong cared deeply about his monastic identity and strived to present himself as a monk even when stripped of his credentials. But even if we accept his declarations of innocence regarding the legal accusations, Huihong's brazen and outspoken personality and his passion for the literary arts would be enough to bring his monasticism into question, at least in some circles. Huihong was perfectly aware of this and at times tried to curb his behavior, but more often than not he dealt with attacks by turning the table on his attackers and pointing out their inability to put to rest petty discriminatory thinking. As we saw in chapter two, despite attacks, setbacks, and

unconventional situations, Huihong always endeavored to see himself as a monk, especially when that meant overcoming appearances or challenging the perceptions of others. This preservation of self-image is wonderfully expressed in a poem Huihong wrote after his friend Chen Guan supposedly called him "truly a *bhikṣu*" (*zhen shi biqiu* 真是比丘). In his poem, Huihong write, "I am a true *bhikṣu*, / birth and death I view as a bandit's cave. / Just a single meal, I don't want more, / in solitary sitting, I pass the months and years" 吾是真比丘，死生見窟宅。一飯不願餘，孤坐閱歲月。[1] By changing the word order of Chen's comment so that "true" (*zhen* 真) modifies *bhikṣu*, he emphasizes his image as a genuine monk, verified by the fact that he engages in the conventional monk life style: concentrating on seeing through birth and death, eating one meal per day, spending his days in solitary meditation.

We saw a similar image construction in the poem he wrote after Master Ying presented him with a copy of *Night Chats*:

> Not my thing, the Five Cauldrons and Eight Treasures,
> Let others vie after arched eyebrows and a sweet voice.
> The single collection "Chilly Hut,": my late-night chats,
> Face-to-face with the blue-green oil lamp, listening to autumn sounds.[2]

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[1] "Liaoweng you shu yu Xie Wuyi yun: Juafan zhen shi biqiu" 了翁有書與謝無逸云：覺範真是比丘; J 23: B135.613b17-19; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 8.570. Zhou Yukai dates this poem to 1114, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 184.

[2] "Ying Shangren shoulu *Lengzhai* wei shi xishu qi wei" 英上人手錄〈冷齋〉為示戲書其尾; J 23: B135.652b-14; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 16.1050. This poem was discussed at the beginning of chapter one.

Yet we know that throughout his life Huihong found himself in situations and engaged in activities that contradicted this image of the strait-laced ascetic monk. He maintained relations with officials in volatile political positions, spoke his mind and teased others for their faults, and wrote poetry on topics that caused more than a few raised eyebrows. His *Night Chats* is filled with numerous entries depicting non-monks and monks alike engaging in purely aesthetic concerns and worldly activities, and many of these accounts are autobiographical. The focus on poetry alone would be enough to contest his dedication to the simple life of an ascetic. Even though some of these topics overlap with what is found in miscellanies by scholar-officials, Huihong's monastic background changes the meaning and significance of his content because he was coming from a different set of conventions and expectations. For a literatus like Ouyang Xiu to write about monk poets or poems describing concubines means something different than when Huihong writes about these subjects, even if he were to express the same ideas using the same words. Huihong pushed boundaries in his life, and he pushes boundaries in *Night Chats*.

In *Night Chats*, he creates a vision of a broader understanding of what monasticism entailed. He embraces asceticism as an ideal but does not see it as negating worldly pursuits or engagement. In fact, if the accounts of monks outwitting or persuading literati count for anything, he is suggesting that monks can, at times, have more influence in the world even than non-monks. The engagement in worldly matters does not automatically mean one is not a "true bikshu." This conclusion is only revealed when the entire text is taken into consideration along with Huihong's background. Then we see that whether he was talking about poetry or people, recording his own comments or those made by others, Huihong the

monk is always present. He is making a case for a broad-minded understanding of Buddhist monasticism.

Huihong's Buddhist perspective and monastic identity do not manifest as morals or didactic pronouncements in *Night Chats*, nor does he spend a lot of space depicting ascetic monks writing *kuyin* ("bitter-intoned") poetry or telling stories of karmic retribution. Rather, his background as a monk comes to bear on accounts of people, discussions of poetry, and depictions of poet-monks by requiring a non-discriminatory attitude toward fellow human beings and the artistic pursuits they enjoy. Huihong learned first-hand the benefits and delights of bringing a non-discriminatory perspective to his evaluation of situations and people, and he used poetry as a way to make that perspective more immediate and real for himself.

6.3 Huihong's *Night Chats* on Individuals

In his depiction of Song individuals and their interactions, Huihong makes social commentary through anecdotes that play with assumptions about character, competence and conventionality. Given Huihong's history of legal and political entanglements brought on by the accusations of officials, Daoists, and even fellow monks, it is not surprising that he was drawn to accounts that gave attention to the misunderstood, overlooked, or undervalued in society. He juxtaposes these peripheral figures with eminent poets, monks, and officials, often showcasing the talents of the former and undermining the authority of the latter. The eccentric behaviors or unexpected actions of individuals like Yuancai and Cripple Liu challenge the status quo and undermine conventional social values.

Huihong finds examples of the ironic, eccentric, contradictory, and irreverent in all walks of life and classes. He constructs his accounts to show the importance of little details where the smallest action or comment can reveal much about someone's character, even more than great deeds. His Buddhist perspective and experience as a monk come through by inviting his readers to see people as he does, appreciating and evaluating them on the basis of *miaoguan yixiang* ("subliminal observation and transcendent ideas") and warning against the dangers of judgment based on first impressions, external appearances, or limiting ideas about their social roles. His accounts are a kind of Buddhist-aesthetic social commentary. Taken together, they reveal that he was less interested in attacking specific individuals or social groups than he was in exposing a certain mentality, namely the tendency to underestimate and dismiss those, like himself, who were so often judged for failing to fit conventional molds in their behavior and ideas.

6.4 Huihong's *Night Chats* on Poetics

Examining the Buddhist elements of the entries on poetics in *Night Chats* has shown that Buddhism influenced the development of poetic discourse in a variety of ways in the Northern Song. *Night Chats* provides a window into the process by which Buddhist ideas first entered into written poetic criticism. The process can't simply be summed up by the phrase "using Chan as an analogy for poetry" 以禪喻詩. Huihong's use of Buddhism to discuss poetry consisted of elaborating on the Buddhist associations of ideas originally mentioned by Su Shi and Huang Tingjian and is vastly different from the approach put forth by the likes of Yan Yu. He brought Buddhist influenced concepts into poetic discourse by

recording the comments made by his contemporaries and by transforming terms previously found within poems into the terminology of criticism.

Unpacking the Buddhist associations of terms like the poetic eye, the eye within the lines, *miaoguan yixiang*, "swapping the bones," and "appropriating the embryo," we discover that the meanings and usage of poetic terms often changed dramatically over time and tended to lose their original Buddhist referents. For example, *Night Chats* reveals early applications of the poetic eye, a term that would become widely used in premodern Chinese poetry criticism. Huihong alerts us to the fact that there was more than one idea of eye in Northern Song poetics. One poetic eye was based on Su Shi's use of the term, where it referred to the artists' special ability to select poetic content for a poem. Huihong transformed this into a way of evaluating poetry. For Huang Tingjian's an eye was to be included within the lines of a poem, the part of the poem designed to suggest something profound and elusive that can't be literally expressed. Both concepts are related to Buddhist concepts of the dharma eye, though they utilize different meanings of that term as well, and both are used to bridge the underlying spirit of different artistic pursuits. But over time their meanings are conflated and changed, and the original Buddhist associations are lost. As a result, they are often misrepresented in the scholarship. With the help of *Night Chats,* we have begun the interesting task of untangling the early usages of the poetic eye.

Besides bringing terminology with Buddhist associations into poetic discourse, Huihong also applied the principles behind such terminology to issues of poetics. For example, he applied the Buddhist non-discriminatory perspective embedded in the poetic eye and *miaoguan yixiang* to the composition and evaluation of poetry. His aesthetic of non-discrimination is built on Huayan and Chan ideas of reality that sees beyond external/internal

and relative dualities. In terms of composition, this approach manifests in his rejection of taboos and rules that deplete a poem of its *qi* (energy, spirit) and in the idea of lodging in poems ideas that transcend ordinary views of reality and transcend restrictive categories. Poetry techniques like "swapping the bones," "appropriating the embryo," personification, and allusions are useful because they helped the poet think outside the box and express innovative and non-literal ideas. But through his anecdotes, Huihong demonstrates that poetry that lodges *miaoguan yixiang* appears differently depending on the situation and identity of the poet. For an official like Su Shi, a poem of transcendence might express an optimistic and undaunted spirit while the poet faces the possibility of death in malaria-infested Hainan. For a monk, his poem might shatter preconceived categories and expectations by describing pork delicacies or palace ladies. There wasn't a formula or a one-size fits-all approach to creating poems with transcendent *qi*. For Huihong, a poet was to be admired if he was able to transcend his own particular set of circumstances, social expectations, and limited views.

The non-discriminatory mindset is also crucial for Huihong's approach to evaluating poetry. A critic or reader with the non-discriminatory poetic eye is open-minded about possibilities when it comes to the scope and quality of a poem by any given poet. He is not to base his judgment of a poem on narrow views about the poet's social status or identity. Huihong models this approach by giving attention to many obscure poets—Yuancai and Cripple Liu, for example—and by demonstrating the broad scope of poet-monks, placing the compositions of these obscure or unconventional poets alongside prestigious poets to bring home the point that reputation does not have a monopoly on brilliance. Huihong's non-discriminatory aesthetic also prompts him to be wary of criticism based on inflexible ideas

about genre and conventions, as we saw when he suggested to Huang Tingjian that no word should be considered off limits simply because it was conventionally used in a poetic genre with lewd associations.

6.5 Huihong's *Night Chats* on Poet-Monks

Although Huihong collaborated with literati in much of his discussions on poetics—through quotation and paraphrase—his entries are colored by his own perspective, a perspective that was largely informed by his monastic background and Buddhist insights. In addition to poetry criticism, Huihong's distinct perspective is evident in his portrayal of poet-monks. Alongside the numerous accounts of lay poets, Huihong includes dozens of anecdotes about the poetic output of monks. His anecdotes call into question the restrictions and stereotypes seen in Song literati writings on monk poetry. As one of the few poetry critics who was also a monk, Huihong gives greater freedom and legitimacy to the voice of monks from within his community, and in the process, he challenges the view, expressed or hinted at by others, that monasticism should restrict the poetic output of monks.

Regarding the reception of their poetry, Song poet-monks found themselves in an untenable position. On the one hand, if they followed the Tang tradition of *kuyin*, which saw composition as a painstaking process centered on themes of hardship, asceticism, and poverty, monks could avoid jeopardizing their reputation as serious monastics. On the other hand, monks who limited their output to *kuyin* poetry risked being viewed as mediocre poets, unwilling or incapable of producing poetry with widely accepted aesthetic qualities. In these cases, monasticism could be considered a handicap, not an asset, to the creation of superior

poetry. Huihong uses the subversive and entertaining anecdote to problematize the trend of critiquing monks' poetry with narrow ideas of monasticism and challenges the correlation made between monastic legitimacy and restricted poetic expression. We have seen that he includes occasional accounts of monks producing poems overtly preaching Buddhist principles or depicting monastic solitude, but these are eclipsed by stories of monks who used their Buddhist perspective in service to creativity, writing on a broader range of themes, from peonies to pork, expressed in warm and rich language at odds with the ascetic aesthetic.

6.6 Initial Reception of *Night Chats*

Soon after *Night Chats* went into circulation, miscellany and *shihua* writers began citing and commenting on entries from the work. Huihong's contemporary Yuan Yue 阮閱 (*jinshi* 1085) recorded dozens of entries in his *shihua* collection *Shihua zonggui* 詩話總龜, many of which are not included in extant versions of *Night Chats* (suggesting that some of Huihong's entries may have been passed around in manuscript form before they were compiled into a single work). But although the text was popular, it incited mixed reviews from literati writers, especially Huihong's pronouncements and quotations of poetry.[3] These writers acknowledged Huihong's skill as a poet and were happy to record and circulate

[3] Monks' reactions to the work is another question that could use further study, but it is more difficult to explore because of the dearth of *shihua* and miscellanies written by monks. We do know that some monks appreciated *Night Chats*. Why else would the young monk Huiying, Huihong's disciple, take the time to copy it out by hand as part of his project to collect together Huihong's writings? Song monastic writers also recorded some of Huihong's anecdotes in their Buddhist writings, especially his stories dealing with monks and lay disciples.

numerous excerpts from *Night Chats*, but they didn't hold back when it came to pointing out errors or accusing Huihong of fabrication. Writing a few decades after Huihong, Wu Zeng and Hu Zi both cite and critique Huihong in their *shihua.* Wu Zeng's entry in *Neng gai zhai manlu* entitled "Chilly Hut Doesn't Read" 冷齋不讀書 focuses on instances where lines of poetry have been misattributed and accuses Huihong of attributing a poem to Huang Tingjian that Huihong wrote himself.[4] Similarly, in another entry, Wu accuses Huihong of falsely attributing the *duotai huangu* method to Huang Tingjian and states, "I used to avoid studying Juefan's [writings] because he always concocts falsehoods." 予嘗以覺範不學，故每為妄語.[5]

By this time, to point out errors in understanding and interpretation was a conventual component of criticism found in *shihua*. A writer tries to demonstrate his superior knowledge of poetry by exposing the mistakes made by critics in the past. Huihong does this himself in some of his entries on philology and variant characters. But there seems to be level of condemnation and suspicion directed at Huihong that surpasses what is typically seen in intertextual poetry dialogues. It is likely writers were influenced by knowledge of Huihong's unconventional background—his legal controversies and his reputation as a poet. Moreover, his relationship with factual truth had been questioned ever since the controversy over his

[4] Wu Zeng, "Lengzhai bu du shu," *Neng gai zhai manlu*: 3.73-74.

[5] "Shi you duotai huangu shi you san tou" 詩有奪胎換骨詩有三偷, *Neng gai zhai manlu* 10.24.

ordination name came to light. Huihong's shadowy past may have predisposed some writers to distrust his words.[6]

But beyond reiterating that his text was full of mistakes and made-up bits, Huihong is attacked for including poems that were interpreted as passionate or romantic. Wu Zeng records what has become perhaps the most notorious comment made about Huihong the poet: Upon reading Huihong's 1105 Lantern Festival poem, a poem Huihong records in *Night Chats*, Wang Anshi's daughter declared: "Why, he is nothing but a rogue-monk"浪子和尚耳.[7] The poem by Huihong that she was commenting on is entitled "Shangyuan su Baizhang" 上元宿百丈 (Staying the Night in Baizhang during on the Lantern Festival) and it is recorded in *Night Chats*.[8] Wang's daughter is supposed to have made the statement upon reading the lines: "What situation has caused such extreme vernal emaciation? /Two hands

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[6] This is not to say that their accusations are unfounded, but the tone of their criticism is dismissive. There is no room given for the possibility that Huihong was recording accounts and poems as they were presented to him, through gossip or hearsay. The fact that many of the accounts recorded in *Night Chats* have oral origins means that there were likely multiple versions circulating. With his diverse acquaintances and extensive travels, it is not unreasonable to believe that Huihong had access to some unusual, little-known or even fabricated accounts, which he found interesting and worth recording.

[7] Wu Zeng, "Langzi heshang shi" 浪子和尚詩, *Neng gai zhai manlu* 11.45. The term *langzi*, translated here as "rouge," has many layers of meaning. Literally a *langzi* is a wander or drifter. Eventually it was used to refer to people with no occupation. But a Buddhist monk, by definition, doesn't have an occupation in the traditional sense, and Mrs. Wang was clearly reacting to what she saw as erotic undertones in Huihong's poetry. Lin Boqian summarizes the meanings of this term as used by Wang in "Huihong fei 'langzi heshang' bian," arguing that Wang intended to criticize Huihong's integrity as a monk, accusing him of indulging in mundane emotions like romantic sentiments not in keeping with the precepts of a monk (p. 68).

[8] In the *Night Chats* entry Huihong records an autobiographical anecdote with this poem, along with another matching poem written years later; (*Lengzhai yehua* 5.55; WSB, p. 52).

full of a mind bent for home that has not yet returned"一掬鄉心未到家，十分春瘦緣何事. Similarly, Hu Zi chastises Huihong for recording poetry with emotional content:

> To forget about emotion and cut off romantic love, this is the lesson of Gautama Buddha. Huihong is himself a monk, but his poetry includes the phrases "an entire pillow of nostalgic tears" and "extreme vernal emaciation." How can he be like this? Furthermore, he recorded these in his *shihua*, flaunting his own words: what incomprehensible wickedness! 忘情絕愛，此瞿曇氏之所訓，惠洪身為衲子，詞句有‘一枕思歸淚’及‘十分春瘦’之語，豈所當然？又自載之詩話，矜衒其言，何無識之甚邪！[9]

For Hu Zi, a monk writing such poetry was bad enough, but even more objectionable was his inclusion of it in his *shihua*, i.e. *Night Chats*.[10] The point is that Huihong's monastic identity was used against him when it served a critical agenda, but at the same time, the Buddhist understanding or perspective that came with that identity was overlooked when evaluating his poetics.

Despite their objections, writers were intrigued with *Night Chats*. They continued to record Huihong's comments and stories, up until the present day where his accounts are frequently found in the commentaries on literary collections of Song poets. This speaks to the tenaciousness of Huihong's approach to aesthetics and social critique: that something of value lies beyond the dogged pursuit of facts (such as "banana plants don't grow in snow" or

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[9] Hu Zi, *Tiaoxi Yuyin conghua* (*qianji*) 56.385.

[10] If space permitted, we could demonstrate how the offensive lines of poetry when read in context are not so salacious as they might appear. As was typical with Huihong, his meaning was often intentionally equivocal, with one possible reading bordering on the scandalous. He was toying with his readers. When these poems are recorded in the social context in which they were intoned, as so often is the case in *Night Chats*, Huihong invariably reveals another interpretation, suggesting that the scandalous reading is the result of his listener's own lude or discriminatory mindset.

"the author of such-and-such a poem was actually someone else") and beyond adherence to moral convention (such as "good monks don't/shouldn't write emotional poems").

6.7 Implications for Further Research

Deliberate focus on miscellanies and *shihua* enrich our understanding of aspects of Song culture that are inaccessible from other, more mainstream, sources, such as poetry and history. These informal texts give us the personal perspective and interests of their authors, their quotidian observations and random reading notes, accounts they've picked up from gossip, and records of ideas developing and circulating at the time. For a monk like Huihong, where else but a miscellany could he share what he saw, heard, and read gathered over years of living as a social and literary monk in Song China? There were other monks at the time who were social and others who were literary, but they didn't produce miscellanies. So the perspective available to us through *Night Chats* is rare.

Huihong created a miscellany that reveals his eclectic interests and priorities. While individual entries may tease, promote, or denigrate certain individuals or ideas, read in its entirety, it is clear that Huihong was more interested in exposing narrow attitudes and judgements regarding aesthetics, poetry, and human character than he was interested in making pointed attacks on specific individuals, groups, or schools of thought. Because he showed interest in poetics and people that have become central to middle period cultural history as well as included personal ideas and accounts of little known individuals from his social circle, his miscellany enhances our understanding of the intersecting social, literary, and religious worlds of the Northern Song.

Night Chats resists generalization along conventional disciplinary boundaries. The text touches on issues related to the fields of literature, social history and Buddhist studies, but to focus on only one of these areas would inevitably obscure the multidimensional aspects of this text. This study has touched on these different aspects by approaching the text with the identity of the author as a centering point. As we have seen, Huihong was anything but a one-dimensional monk. By keeping front and center an awareness of his monastic experience, something that Huihong himself saw as tremendously important (despite external challenges and his own controversial diversions into literary and aesthetic pursuits), we have discovered different levels where Buddhist ideas and monastic life shape Song culture.

There is still much to be explored about this multifaceted text and its complex author. Huihuong's writings were profuse and this study does not pretend to account for all of them. But by examining Huihong's literary miscellany in the context of the author's monastic background, we have been provided with the overlooked monk's perspective on aspects of literati culture, and more significantly, on monks' contribution and influence in that culture. This study has also clarified the process by which Buddhist terminology and ideas were adopted and anesthetized into key terms of poetry criticism. We have seen how Huihong's attitude of non-discrimination, represented in terms like the poetic eye and *miaoguan yixiang*, became an aesthetic ideal used to promote artistic creativity and critique social intolerance and narrow views of poet-monks.

The case of Huihong and *Night Chats* shows that the use of Buddhism in the discourse of poetry criticism was a variegated and changing process. Various aspects of Buddhist ideas and terminology were used to discuss both the composition and evaluation of poetry throughout the Song. Much of our understanding about the relationship between

poetics and Buddhism is based on later texts when critical terms and analogies between Chan and poetry had become well established. This study has shed light on how Buddhist terminology and ideas were first adopted and transformed into the discourse of criticism by Huihong and his contemporaries. We discover how poetic ideas like the poetic eye, *duotai huangu*, and eye of the lines, were understood before such terms were claimed and articulated by the Jiangxi school. We see how terms like the poetic eye, first used by Su Shi to talk about a poet's subtle ability to select and shape perceptions of the world into poetic content, were transformed into terminology used to talk about poetry itself. We learn what Huang Tingjian may have said about the eye within the lines and discover that the poetic eye and the eye within the lines served different purposes in poetics and were rooted in Huayan and Chan concepts respectively.

There is still much to explore regarding the changes made to these concepts and to others not explored in this study. How did the Buddhist associations of terms wax and wane and what do these changes tell us about developments poetry criticism and understandings of Buddhism? *Shihua* and miscellanies like *Night Chats* are a crucial source for untangling the nuances and influence of poetic ideas.

These are aspects of literary and religious culture that can be further examined in light of this study. Southern Song *Canglang shihua* is often pointed to as the quintessential example of Buddhist-influenced poetry criticism. This is largely because Yan Yu makes explicit analogies between Chan and poetry that are logical and explicit. But his text does not reflect the ideas or the understanding of Buddhism that came into poetic discourse in the Northern Song as recorded by Huihong. Huihong's aesthetic, rooted to a large degree in Buddhist non-discrimination, manifests in his belief that quality poetry is not contingent on

the social status or historical era of the poet. Further study is needed comparing *Night Chats* and *Canglang shihua* (as well as other *shihua* that deal with poetics shaped by Buddhist thought) to understand how the use of Chan to discuss poetry changed over the course of the Song and how those changes reflect different understandings of Chan. But part of the difference between the two texts is likely related to their different formats. Yan Yu focused on making and recording theoretical pronouncements, whereas Huihong primarily expresses his ideas through anecdotes and recorded conversations, often collected from other poets. Studying the implications of formal differences would be needed to fully understand greater shifts in thinking about Buddhism and poetry throughout the Song dynasty.

In addition to revealing Buddhist elements of poetics and social life as represented by Huihong, this study has emphasized the importance of understanding miscellanies holistically. While miscellanies and *shihua* are increasingly incorporated into broad literary and historical studies as well as becoming a key resource in emerging fields like digital humanities, there are still very few studies that give individual miscellanies the attention they deserve. This is especially the case of scholarship in western languages, where translations of Chinese miscellanies are few and far between. Besides translating and analyzing dozens of entries from *Night Chats*, this dissertation has hopefully revealed that the interests and intentions of miscellany authors can easily be overshadowed by disciplinary priorities. In the case of Huihong, although he was interested in historical accounts and specialized questions about poetics, there is this other side to what he was doing in his miscellany—prioritizing stories or observations that invite readers to question assumptions and expose narrowminded judgements, things that, to a Buddhist eye, bind people up, and to an artist's, limit their creativity. This taste of freedom, whether it be artistic or otherwise, is embodied in

Huihong's *mioaguan yixiang*. But Huihong's perspective only becomes evident when the entries on poetics and people are taken together and understood to be from the same brush. We may want to take into consideration Huihong's standard of aesthetic non-discrimination when entries from *Night Chats* are used in future historical or literary studies and as we continue broaden our understanding of middle period Chinese literature by giving more attention to the role that monks played in poetry production and criticism.

Appendix A:

Entry Titles and Page References for *Night Chats*

The following table lists the entry titles in *Lengzhai yehua* 冷齋夜話 (Night chats from Chilly Hut), translations of those titles, and their location by *juan* and page number in the Wushan ban edition of *Lengzhai yehua* included in Zhang Bowei's *Xijian ben song ren shihua si zhong* (column "**a**") and in *Quan Song biji*, 2nd series, vol. 9 (column "**b**"). The Wushan ban edition is used in references throughout this dissertation. Column "**c**" provides the chapter and page number in this dissertation for the entries that I have mentioned or discussed.

For reference, a list is provided of frequently appearing peoples' style names and pseudonyms used in the titles and their corresponding formal name:

Alternative Name	Formal Name (名)
Dongpo	Su Shi
Luzhi	Huang Tingjian
Jinggong	Wang Anshi
Shangu	Huang Tingjian
Shaoyou	Qin Guan
Shuwang	Wang Anshi
Yingzhong	Chen Guan

	Lengzhai yehua entry title	English translation of entry title	a.	b.	c.
Juan 1					
1	江神嗜黃魯直書韋詩 “Jiangshen shi Huang Luzhi shu Wei shi”	The river spirit likes Wei’s poetry written in Huang Luzhi’s hand	1.9	1. 29	4.263 n.
2	秦少游作坡筆語題壁 “Qin Shaoyou zuo Dongpo biyu tibi”	Qin Shaoyou writes an inscription on the wall in Dongpo’s handwriting	1.9-10	1. 29	---
3	羅漢第五尊失隊 “Luohan di wu zun shi dui”	The Fifth Venerable Arhat became separated from his comrades	1.10	1.29	---
4	東坡夢銘紅靴 “Dongpo meng ming hong xue”	Dongpo dreamt that he made an inscription on the red boots	1.10-11	1.30	---
5	詩本出處 “Shi ben chuchu”	Some original sources of poems’ [allusions]	1.11-12	1.30	---
6	宋神宗詔禁中不得牧豭豘因悟太祖遠略 “Song Shenzong zhao jin zhong bu de jia tun yin wu Taizu yuanlüe”	Song [Emperor] Shenzong ordered the raising of swine to be stopped and as a result realizes Taizu’s foresight	1.12	1.31	1.60 n.
7	東坡南遷朝雲隨侍作詩以佳之詩 “Dongpo nan qian Zhaoyun suishi zuo shi yi jia zhi shi”	When Dongpo went south, Zhaoyun accompanied him, and he wrote a poem in praise of her	1.12-13	1.31	---
8	東坡書壁 “Dongpo shu bi”	Dongpo’s inscription on the wall	1.13	1.32	---
9	古人貴識其真 “Guren gui shi qi zhen”	The ancients value the ability to recognize genuineness	1.14	1.32	4.234
10	東坡得陶淵明之遺意 “Dongpo de Tao Yuanming zhi yiyi”	Dongpo captures Tao Yuanming’s [Tao Qian] intention	1.14	1.32	4.125
11	鳳翔壁上詩 “Fengxiang bi shang shi”	Poem on a wall at Fengxiang	1.15	1.32	---
12	盧橘 “Luju”	Luju fruit	1.15-16	1.33	---
13	東坡論文與可詩 “Dongpo lun Wen Yuke shi”	Dongpo discusses Wen Yuke’s [Wen Tong] poetry	1.16	1.33	---
14	的對 “Didui”	Parallel matches	1.16	1.33	---

15	東坡留題姜唐佐扇楊道士息軒姜秀郎几間 “Dongpo liu ti Jiang Tangzuo shan, Yang Daoshi xi xuan, Jiang Xiulang ji jian”	Dongpo left an inscription on Jiang Tangzuo’s fan, on Daoist Master Yang’s Pavilion of Relaxation, and on Young Jiang’s desk	1.17	1.33	1.94
16	換骨奪胎法 “Huangu duotai fa”	Swapping Bones and Snatching the Embryo	1.17	1.34	4.173
17	詩用方言 “Shi yong fangyan”	Regional language in poetry	1. 18	1.34-35	---
18	老嫗解詩 “Laoyu jie shi”	The old lady explains the poem	1.18-19	1.35	---
19	采石渡鬼 “Caishi du gui”	Ferrying ghosts at Caishi	1.19	1.35	---
20	李後主亡國偈 “Li Houzhu wangguo ji”	Verse for the last Emperor Li on the collapse of the nation	1.19-20	1. 35	4.60; 219
Juan 2					
1	韓歐范蘇嗜詩 “Han, Ou, Fan, Su shi shi”	Han, Ouyang, Fan, and Su’s love for poetry	2.21	2.36	---
2	陳無己挽詩 “Chen Wuji wanshi”	The funeral poem of Chen Wuji [Chen Shidao]	2.21-22	2.36	---
3	洪駒父評詩之誤 “Hong Jufu ping shi zhi wu”	The mistakes in Hong Jufu’s poetry comments	2.22	2.36	---
4	留食戲語大笑噴飯 “Liu shi xiyu daxiao penfan”	A joke following the meal that caused everyone to spit their rice out laughing	2.22	2.36	4.222
5	歐陽夷陵黃牛廟東坡錢塘西湖詩 “Ouyang Yiling Huangniu Miao, Dongpo Qiangtang Xihu shi”	Ouyang’s poem on the Yellow Ox temple in Yiling and Dongpo’s poem on the Qiantang river in West Lake	2.22-23	2.37	---
6	古樂府前輩多用其句 “Gu yuefu qianbei duo yong qi ju”	Ancient lyric songs of the previous generation often use these phrases	2.23	2.37	---
7	雷轟薦福碑 “Lei hong Jianfu bei”	Thunder bolt strikes the stele at Jianfu temple	2.23-24	2.37	4.237
8	立春王禹玉口占 “Lichun Wang Yuyu kouzhan”	Wang Yuyu’s improvised poem written on the first day of spring	2.24	2.37-38	---
9	稚子 “Zhizi”	[Bamboo] “child”	2.24	2.38	---
10	老杜劉禹錫白居易詩	Poems by Du Fu, Liu Yuxi, Bai Juyi	2.25	2.38	3.203

	“Lao Du Liu Yuxi Bai Juyi shi”				
11	館中夜談韓退之詩 “Guan zhong yetan Tuizhi zhi shi”	Chatting at night in a hostel about Tuizhi’s poems	2.25-26	2.38-39	3.204 n.
12	昭州崇寧寺觀音竹永州澹山岩馴狐 “Zhaozhou Chongning si Guanyin zhu Yongzhou Danshan yan xun hu”	Guanyin in the bamboo at Chongning Temple in Zhaozhou; On Dan Mountain in Yongzhou there is a tame fox.	2.26	3.39	---
13	僧賦蒸豚詩 “Seng fu zheng tun shi”	A monk composes a poem on steamed pork	2.26-27	3.40	5.299 -299
14	王平父夢至靈芝宮 “Wang Pingfu meng zhi gong”	Wang Pingfu dreams of going to Auspicious Fungi Palace	2.27	3.40	---
15	安世高請福郡亭廟秦少游宿此夢天女求贊 “An Shigao qingfu Han Ting miao; Qin Shaoyou su ci, meng tiannü qiu zan”	An Shigao sought blessings at the temple at the Han pavilion; Qin Shaoyou stayed the night there and dreamt the Heavenly Goddess requested an encomium from him	2.27-28	2.40	---
Juan 3					
1	諸葛亮劉伶陶潛李令伯文如肺腑中流出 “Zhuge Liang, Liu Ling, Tao Qian, and Li Lingbai wen ru feifu zhong liu chu”	The writings of Zhuge Liang, Liu Ling, Tao Qian, and Li Lingbai seem to have flowed forth from the bottom of their hearts	3.29	3.42	---
2	池塘生春草 “Chitang sheng chun cao”	Spring grass grows in the pond	3.29-30	3.42	---
3	詩說煙波縹緲處 “Shi shuo yanbo piaomiao chu”	The place in your poem that speaks of dimly discernable fog and waves	3.30	3.42-43.	3.178
4	山谷集句貴拙速不貴巧遲 “Shangu ji ju gui zhuosu bu gui qiaochi”	The poetry lines in Shangu’s collection prize naturalness and speed, not ingeniousness and deliberation	3.31	3.43	---
5	東坡美謫仙句語作贊 “Dongpo mei zhe xian juyu zuo zan”	Dongpo praises the Exiled Immortal’s lines and writes an encomium	3.31	3.43.	---
6	韋蘇州寄全椒道人詩 “Wei Suzhou ji Quanjiao Daoren shi”	Wei Suzhou [Wei Yingqu] sends a poem to the Daoist of Quanjiao	3.32	3.43-44.	---
7	棋隱語 “Qi yinyu”	Mysterious words of chess	3.32-33	3.44	---

8	李元膺喪妻長短句 “Li Yuanying sang qi changduan ju”	Li Yuanying’s song lyric upon losing his wife	3.33	3.44	---
9	秦國大長公主挽詩 “Qinguo dazhang gongzhu wanshi”	Mourning poems for the princess of Qinguo	3.33-34	3.44	---
10	荊公鍾山東坡餘杭詩 “Jinggong Zhongshan, Dongpo Yuhang shi”	Jinggong’s poem at Zhongshan and Dongpo’s poem at Yuhang	3.34	3.44	---
11	少游魯直被謫作詩 “Shaoyou, Luzhi bei zhe zuo shi”	The poems Shaoyou and Luzhi wrote upon being sent into exile	3.34	3.45	3.190
12	活人手段 “Huoren shouduan”	Strategy for saving lives	3.35	3.45	4.235
13	詩未易識 “Shi wei yi shi”	Poetry is not easy to understand	3.35	3.45	---
14	詩一字未易工 “Shi yizi wei yi gong”	There is not one character in [Du Fu’s] poetry that is without skill	3.35	-- Not included.	---
Juan 4					
1	詩話妄易句法字 “Shihua wang yi jufa zi”	Careless changes to words and phrases in *shihua*	4.36	4.46	3.125 n.; 3.200-201
2	五言四句得於天趣 “Wuyan siju de yu tianchu”	Five-character, four-line [poems] reach the appeal of naturalness	4.36-37	4.46	---
3	夢中作詩 “Meng zhong zuo shi”	The poem I wrote in a dream	4.21	4.46-47.	3.126 n.
4	西崑體 “Xikun ti”	The Xikun style	4.38	4.47	3.166
5	詩比美女美丈夫 “Shi bi meinü mei zhangfu”	Poems with analogies of beautiful women and handsome men	4.38	4.47.	3.193
6	道潛作詩追法淵明乃十四字師號 “Daoqian zuo shi zhui fa Yuanming, nai shisi zi shihao”	In writing poetry, Daoqian strives to model himself on Tao Yuanming, and gets a fourteen character monastic sobriquet	4.39	4.47	4.233 n.
7	米元章瀑布詩 “Mi Yuanzhang pubu shi”	Mi Yuanzhang’s [Mi Fu] waterfall poem	4.39	4.47-48.	---
8	詩句含蓄 “Shiju hanxu”	Implications in Poetry	4.39-40	4.48	---
9	滿城風雨近重陽	Wind and rain cover the entire city wall as I approach Chongyang	4.40	4.48	---

	"Man cheng feng yu jin Chongyang"				
10	天棘夢青絲 "Tianji meng* qingsi" *Meng, "dream," seems to be a typo. Other editions of *Night Chats* and the line in Du Fu's collection has man/wan 蔓.	"Heaven-jujubes" spread green tendrils (I've borrowed Stephen's Owen's translation of this Du Fu line, as found in Owen, *The Poetry of Du Fu*, p. 11.)	4.40	4.48	---
11	琥珀 "Hupo"	Amber	4.41	4.48	---
12	詩誤字 "Shi wu zi"	Mistaken words in poems	4.41	4.49	4.125 n.
13	王荊公東坡詩之妙 "Wang Jinggong, Dongpo shi zhi miao."	What is especially subtle about the poems of Wang Jinggong and Dongpo	4.42	4.49	---
14	詩忌 "Shi ji"	Poetry Taboos	4.42-43	4.49	3.122 -124
15	詩言其用不言其名 "Shi yan qi yong, bu yan qi ming"	Poetry that states the function without giving the name	4.43	4.50	3.164 -166
16	賈島詩 "Jia Dao shi"	The poetry of Jia Dao	4.43	4.50	3.305
17	詩用方言 "Shi yong fangyan"	Regional language used in poetry	4.44	4.50-51	---
18	舒王女能詩 "Shuwang nü neng shi"	Shuwang's daughter can write poetry	4.45	4.51	4.250
Juan 5					
1	賭梅詩輸罰松聲詩 "Du mei shi shu fa song sheng shi"	Wagering plum poems and losing; Fined a poem on the sound of pines	5.46	5.52	1.55
2	東坡藏記點定一兩字 "Dongpo zang ji dianding yi liang zi"	Dongpo only revises one or two words [of a poem] from his memory	5.46-47	5.52	---
3	荊公梅詩 "Jinggong mei shi"	Jinggong's plum blossom poem	5.47	5.52	5.311 n.
4	詩置動靜意 "Shi zhi dong jing yi"	Poetry that uses the idea of motion and stillness	5.47	5.53	---
5	舒王山谷賦詩 "Shuwang, Shangu fu shi"	The poetry composition of Shuwang and Shangu	5.48	5.53	3.186
6	王荊公詩用事 "Wang Jinggong shi yong shi"	Allusions in Wang Jinggong's poems	5.48	5.53	3.196

7	荊公東坡警句 “Jinggong, Dongpo jing ju”	The startling lines of Jinggong and Dongpo	5.49	5.53	---
8	荊公東坡句中眼 “Jinggong, Dongpo ju zhong yan”	The “eye within the lines” of Dongpo and Jinggong	5.49	5.54	3.161-162
9	舒王編四家詩 “Shuwang bian sijia shi”	Shuwang edits the *Poetry of the Four Masters*	5.49-50	5.54	---
10	范文正公蚊詩 “Fan Wenzheng gong wen shi”	Fan Zhongyan’s mosquito poem	5.50	5.54	4.235-236
11	柳詩有奇趣 “Liu shi you qiqu”	The “appeal of marvelous” in Liu’s poems	5.50-51	5.54	---
12	東坡屬對 “Dongpo shudui”	Dongpo’s matching couplets	5.51	5.54	2.94 n. 3.192 4.239
13	林和靖送遵式詩 “Lin Hejing song Zunshi shi”	Lin Hejing [Lin Bu] sends off Zunshi with a poem	5.52	5.55	4.253
14	丁晉和蘇文公詩兩聯 “Ding Jin he Su Wengong shi liang lian”	Couplets by Ding Jin and Su Shi	5.52	5.55	---
15	上元詩 “Shangyuan shi”	Lantern Festival Poems	5.52	5.55	5.295
16	東坡滑稽又言無有無對 “Dongpo huaji you yan wuyou wudui”	Dongpo’s wit and his comments on how nothing is without a match	5.53	5.56	---
Juan 6					
1	舒王嗜佛曾子固諷之 “Shuwang shi fo Zeng Zigu feng zhi”	Shuwang was devoted to Buddha and Zeng Zigu [Zeng Gong] criticizes him for it	6.54	6.57	4.250
2	陳瑩中罪洪不當稱甘露滅 “Chen Yingzhong zui Hong bu dang cheng ganlu mie”	Chen Yingzhong criticizes Huihong, saying he shouldn’t call himself “Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*”	6.54-55	6.57	2.81-82
3	大覺禪師乞還山 “Dajue Chanshi qi huan shan”	Chan Master Dajue begs to return to the mountains	6.55	6.57	5.280 5.317
4	靚禪師為流所溺詩 “Jing Chanshi wei liu suo ni shi”	Chan Master Jing’s poem after being submerged by the current	6.55-56	6.57-58	5.296
5	靚禪師勸化人 “Jing Chanshi quanhua ren”	Chan Master Jing causes someone to transform.	6.56	6.58	4.217

6	誦智覺禪師詩 “Song Zhijue Chanshi shi”	Chanting the poem of Chan Master Zhijue	6.56-57	6.58	3.125 n.
7	永庵嗣法南禪 “Yong an cifa Nanchan”	Hermitage abbot Yong is the dharma heir of Nanchan.	6.57	6.58	---
8	東坡和僧惠詮詩 “Dongpo he Seng Huiquan shi”	Dongpo matched Monk Huiquan’s poem	6.57-58	6.59	4.228
9	比物以意而不指言某物謂之象外句 “Bi wu yi yi er bu zhi yan mou wu, wei zhi xiangwai ju”	Making analogies by using the meaning of something and not directly referring to it is called [writing] “lines that transcend the image”	6.58	6.59	5.306
10	僧清順賦詩多佳句 “Seng Qingshun fu shi duo jia ju”	The poetry of Monk Qingshun has many fine lines	6.58	6.59	5.301
11	東坡稱道潛之詩 “Dongpo cheng Daoqian zhi shi”	Dongpo praised the poetry of Daoqian	6.59	6.59-60	4.228 5.285 -287
12	僧景淳詩多深意 “Seng Jingchun shi duo shen yi”	The poetry of Monk Jingchun has profound meaning.	6.59-60	6.60	1.55 n. 5.312
13	鍾山賦詩 “Zhongshan fu shi”	Composing poetry on Zhongshan.	6.60	6.60	---
14	僧可遵好題詩 “Seng Kezun hao ti shi”	Monk Kezun enjoys inscribing poems.	6.61	6.60-61.	4.229
Juan 7					
1	蘇軾襯朝道衣 “Su Shi chen chao Daoyi”	Su Shi wears religious clothing underneath his court raiment.	7.62	7.62	---
2	東坡廬山偈 “Dongpo Lushan jie”	Dongpo’s Lushan verses.	7.62-63	7.62	
3	廬山老人於般若中了無剩語 “Lushan laoren yu bo re zhong liao wu sheng yu”	“The Elder of Lushan realizes how to be without any extraneous words from within *prajñā*.”	7.63	---- (combined w/ previous)	3.185
4	華亭船子和尚偈 “Huating Chuanzi heshang jie”	Master Huating Chuanzi’s verse.	7.63	7.62	3.177 n.
5	東坡和陶淵明詩 “Dongpo he Tao Yuanming shi”	Dongpo matches Tao Yuanming’s poems	7.63-64	7.62-63	---
6	東坡作偈戲慈雲長老又與劉器之同參玉版禪	Dongpo writes a verse teasing Venerable Ciyun; He investigates “Jade Shoot” Chan with Liu Qizhi	7.64	7.63	4.253

	“Dongpo zuo jie xi Ciyun Zhanglao you yu Liu Qizhi tong can yuban chan”				
7	東坡留戒公長老住石塔 “Dongpo liu Jiegong Zhanglao zhu shita”	Dongpo makes Venerable Jiegong stay at Shita	7.64-65	7.63-64	4.254
8	負《華嚴經》入嶺大雪二偈 “Fu *Huayan jing* ru Ling daxue er jie”	Carry the *Huayan jing* into Ling; two verses on the heavy snowfall	7.65	7.64	5.308
9	夢迎五祖戒禪師 “Meng ying Wuzu Jie Chanshi”	Dreaming of welcoming Chan Master Wuzu Jie	7.66	7.64-65	---
10	張文定公前生為僧 “Zhang Wending gong qiansheng wei seng”	In his previous life, Zhang Wending [Zhang Fangping] was a monk	7.66-67	7.65	4.250
11	詵公送官墮馬損臂雲峰悅師作偈戲之 “Shengong song guan duo ma, sun bi, Yunfeng Yue Shi zuo ji xi zhi”	When [Monk] Shengong saw off an official, he fell off his horse and broke his arm. Chan Master Yunfeng Yue writes a verse to tease him	7.67	7.65	---
12	喚作拳是觸不喚拳是背 “Huan zuo quan shi chu, bu huan quan shi bei”	Calling this a fist is “to connect”; Calling this not a fist is “to turn away”	7.68	7.66	---
13	毛僧之化 “Mao Seng zhi hua”	Monk Mao’s Passing	7.68	7.66	4.225 5.302
14	謝無逸佳句 “Xie Wuyi jia ju”	Xie Wuyi’s [Xie Yi] fine lines	7.69	7.66	---
15	洪覺範朱世英二偈 “Hong Juefan, Zhu Shiying er ji”	Two verses, one by Huihong Juefan and one by Zhu Shiying [Zhu Yan]	7.69	7.66-67	4.251
Juan 8					
1	劉跛子說二范詩 “Liu Bazi shuo Er Fan shi”	Cripple Liu recites a poem about the two Fan brothers	8.71	8.68	4.259
2	陳瑩中贈跛子長短句 “Chen Yingzhong zeng Bazi changduan ju”	Chen Yingzhong presented a song lyric to Cripple Liu	8.71-72	--- (combined with previous)	---
3	劉野夫長短句 “Liu Yefu changduan ju”	Liu Yefu’s song lyric	8.72	8.68-69	4.260
4	劉*淵材南歸布橐中墨竹史稿	The bag that Liu [sic] Yuancai brought when he returned south	8.72-73	8.69	4.247

	“Liu Yuancai Nangui bu tuo zhong mozhu, shigao” *Note: “Liu”劉 is a typo. The last name of Yuancai is Peng 彭; other editions of the text simply don’t provide a last name here.	contains an ink bamboo painting and a historical manuscript			
5	雲庵活盲女 “Yun’an huo mang nü”	Yun’an saves the blind girl	8.73	8.69-70	4.224
6	錢如蜜一滴也甜 “Qian ru mi, yi di ye tian”	Money is like honey: even a single drop is sweet	8.73-74	8.70	---
7	道士畜三物 “Daoshi xu san wu”	A Daoist Master who raises three animals	8.74	8.70	2.94 n.
8	黃魯直夢與道士游蓬萊 Huang Luzhi meng yu daoshi you Penglai”	Huang Luzhi dreamt he traveled to Penglai with a Daoist	8.74-75	8.70	---
9	周貫吟詩作偈 “Zhou Guan yin shi zuo ji”	Zhou Guan intoned a poem and wrote a verse	8.75-76	8.71	4.256
10	石學士 “Shi xueshi”	The Stone Scholar	8.76	8.71	4.236
11	白土埭 “Bai tu dai”	The white earthen dike	8.76-77	8.71-72	5.283
12	范堯夫揖客對臥 “Fan Yaofu yi ke dui wo”	Fan Yaofu [Fan Chunren] invites guests in then goes to sleep in front of them	8.77-78	8.72	---
13	李伯時畫馬 “Li Boshi hua ma”	Li Boshi [Li Gonglin] paints horses	8.78	8.72-73	4.220
14	房琯婁師德永禪師畫圖 “Fang Guan, Lou Shide, Yong Chanshi huatu”	The Painting of Fang Guan, Lou Shide, Chan Master Yong	8.78	8.73	---
15	退*靜兩忘少忘 “Tuijing liangwang shao wang” *Note: In other editions of the text, the monk is recorded as saying, “Promotion and Retirement, could you forget both?” 孰若進退兩忘”	Retiring and quiescence, forget both or almost forget both	8.78-79	8.73	---
Juan 9					
1	張丞相草書亦自不識其字	Grand Counselor Zhang [Shangying] can’t even recognized	9.80	9.74	4.243

	“Zhang Chengxiang caoshu yi zi bus hi qizi”	the characters he wrote in cursive script			
2	當出汝詩示人 “Dang chu ru shi shi ren”	I ought to take out your poem and show it to people	9.80	9.74	---
3	昌州海棠獨香為佳郡 “Changzhou haitang du xiang wei jia jun”	Changzhou is a good prefecture because only there are the crabapple blossom fragrant	9.80-81	9.74	4.246
4	鶴生卵 “He sheng luan”	The Crane lays an egg	9.81	9.74-75	4.243
5	課術有驗無驗 “Ke shu you yan wu yan”	Fortune telling is sometimes accurate and sometimes not	9.82	9.75	---
6	郭注妻未及門而死 “Guo Zhu qi wei ji men er si”	Guo Zhu dies before his [new] wife reaches the door	9.82	9.75	4.238
7	癡人說夢夢中說夢 “Chi ren shuo meng, meng zhong shuo meng”	Stupid people speaking about a dream in which they talk about dreaming	9.83	9.75-76	---
8	不欺神明 “Bu qi shenming”	You can’t deceive the spirit	9.83	9.76	4.234
9	聞遠方不死之術 “Wen yuan fang bu si zhi shu”	Hearing that far away there is someone who is skilled in immortality	9.83-84	9.76	4.258
10	惠遠自以宗教為己任 “Huiyuan zi yi zong jiao wei ji ren”	Huiyuan takes the [Chan] lineage and the teachings of Buddhism as his responsibility	9.84	9.76	4.227
11	筠溪快山有虎 “Yunxi Kuaishan you hu”	There are tigers in the Kuai Mountains of Yunxi	9.84	9.76-77	---
12	劉野夫約龔德莊觀燈免火災 “Liu Yefu yue Gong Dezhuang guan deng mian huozai”	Liu Yefu arranges to watch the lanterns with Gong Dezhuang, thereby dodging a fire	9.85	9.77	---
13	開井法禁蛇方 “Kai jing fa jin she fang”	Method for water dowsing and a technique for getting rid of snakes	9.85-86	--- (not included)	4.232 4.244
14	三十六計走為上計 “Sanshi liu ji zou shang ji”	Of the thirty-six strategies, running away is the best	9.86	9.77	---
Juan 10					
1	陳瑩中此集食豬肉鰣魚 “Chen Yingzhong ci ji shi zhurou shi yu”	Chen Yingzhong in this collection; eating pork and shad fish	10.87-88	10.78-79	1.55 5.292 n.
2	蠹文不通辨譯 “Du wen bu tong bian yi”	The ‘worm writings’ are untranslatable	10.88	10.79	4.225

3	淨璉可謂佛弟子 “Jing, Lian ke wei fo dizi”	Jing and Lian can be considered disciples of the Buddha	10.89	10.79	4.226
4	道人識歐公必不凡 “Daoren shi Ougong bi bu fan”	The Monk who knew Ouyang Xiu must be extraordinary	10.89	10.79-80	4.225
5	觀道人三生為比丘 “Guan Daoren sansheng wei biqiu”	The Monk Guan was a *bhikṣu* for three lifetimes	10.90	10.80	---
6	羊肉大美性暖 “Yangrou da mei xing nuan”	Mutton is extremely delicious, and its property is warm	10.90-91	10.80-81	4.223
7	趙悅道日延一僧對飯 “Zhao Yuedao ri yan yi seng dui fan”	Zhao Yuedao invites a monk to eat with him every day	10.91	10.81	4.251
8	魯直悟法雲語罷作小詞 “Luzhi wu Fayun ba zuo xioaci”	Luzhi understood Fayun’s words and stops writing song lyrics	10.91	10.81	4.220
9	東坡山谷瑩中瑕疵可笑 “Dongpo, Shangu, Yingzhong xiaci kexiao”	The flaws of Dongpo, Shangu, and Yingzhong are amusing	10.92	10.81	4.241
10	問歐陽公為人及文章 “Wen Ouyang gong weiren ji wenzhang”	Inquiring about the kind of person and writer Ouyang gong was	10.92-93	10.81-82	---
11	《證道歌》發明心 “*Zhengdaoge* fa ming xin”	The Song of Enlightenment expresses my true thoughts	10.93	10.82	---
12	寧安和尚不視秀僧書 “Ning’an Heshang bu shi Xiu Seng shu”	Master [Fa]an of Wuning didn’t look at Monk [Fa]xiu’s letter	10.93	10.82	---
13	饌器皆黃白物 “Zhuan qi jie huangbai wu”	The serving dishes were made of gold and silver	10.94	10.82	---
14	三代聖人多生儒中兩漢以下多生佛中 “Sandai shengren duo sheng Ru zhong, lianghan yi xia duo sheng Fo zhong”	During the Three Dynasties [Xia, Shang, and Zhou] the sages were mostly were born among our *ru* scholars. Starting from the two Han Dynasties [Western and Eastern], the sages have mostly been born among the Buddhists	10.94-95	10.83	---
15	磚若無縫爭解容得世間螻蟻 “Zhuan ruo wu feng zheng jie rongde shijian louyi”	If there are no gaps in the bricks then how can they admit worldly ants?	10.95	10.83	---
16	范文正公麥舟 “Fan Wenzheng gong mai zhou”	Fan Wenzheng’s [Fan Zhongyan] boat full of wheat	10.95	10.83	---

17	東坡讀《傳燈錄》 “Dongpo du Chuan deng lu”	“Dongpo reads the *Chuan deng lu.*”	10.96	10.83	---
18	詩當作不經人語 “Shi dang zuo bu jing ren yu”	Poetry should be created with language not typical of human experience	10.96	10.84	---
19	嶺外梅花 “Lingwai meihua”	The plum blossoms in Lingwai	10.96-97	10.84	---
20	詩忌深刻 “Shiji shen ke”	Taboos against making poetry too deeply etched	10.97	10.84	---
21	蔡元度生沒高郵 “Cai Yuandu sheng mo Gaoyou”	Cai Yuandu [Cai Bian] was born and buried in Gaoyou	10.97	10.84	4.242

Appendix B:

Chronology of Key Events in Huihong's Life

The dates in this table have been determined by careful analysis of primary and secondary sources, in particular "Silent Sound's Own Preface" (*Jiyin zixu* 寂寞自序) by Huihong and Zhou Yukai's *Song seng Huihong xinglü zhushu biannian zongan.* See Appendix C for a full translation of the preface. Many discrepancies with regard to the dates of his incarcerations are found in secondary material. These have been addressed in chapter two.

Date	Location	Event
1071 熙寧四年	Yunzhou: Xinchang county,[1]	Born into a family with the surname Peng 彭.
1084-1086 元祐元年	Xinchang	At age fourteen, orphaned; Briefly adopted by a family probably with surname Yu 喻. Becomes a "temple youth" under Master Jing 靜 at Sanfeng Mountain at Baoyun Temple. Devotes himself to the study of poetry.
1087	Xinchang, Dong Mt.	Begins to study with Zhenjing Kewen 真淨克文 at Dongshan洞山.
1088	Shanggao county: Jiufeng	Follows Kewen to his new position as abbot of Jiufeng 九峰 in Shanggao 上高 county and studies with him for two years.
1090 (Age 20)	Bianjing capital	In the fall, sits the Buddhist canon examination in Bianjing (the capital, modern day Kaifeng) and becomes ordained, appropriating the name "Huihong." He becomes well known for

[1] Present day Yifeng 宜豐 county in Jiangxi.

		lecturing on the *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論[2] under the tutelage of Master Xuanmi 宣秘.[3]
1094- 紹聖元年 1098 元符元年 1099	Lushan; Hongzhou	Begins a period of prolonged study with Kewen, first at Guizong Temple on Lushan, and later at Shimen (Baofeng) Monastery in Hongzhou.[4]
1099- 1102 崇寧元年	Hongzhou; Dongwu	Early in 1099, leaves Baofeng Monastery. Soon after, he comes across Song Di's 宋迪 set of paintings entitled, "Eight Scenes of Xiaoxiang" 瀟湘八景 and composes eight colophon verses in response.[5] Travels around, visiting monasteries and interacting with Huang Tingjian, Chen Guan, Zhang Shangying, and Weiqing 惟清.[6] He is in Changsha, at Daolin Temple when he hears of the passing of his teacher, Kewen, in 1102.
1103	Daolin Temple, Changsha	Goes to Jing'an county with his dharma brother Xizu Chaoran 希祖超然 to pay respects to Kewen's pagoda. Spends time with Chen Guan.
1104	Fenning, Long'an	Declines requests by Zhang Shangying to become abbot of Tianning Temple 天寧寺 and Chuanning Temple 傳寧寺 respectively.

[2] *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi śāstra*; (Discourse on accomplishing Consciousness-Only).

[3] "Silent Sound's Own Preface" notes that it was on the basis of these lectures that he became well known throughout the Buddhist lecture halls.

[4] In "Silent Sound's Own Preface," Huihong states that he studied with Kewen for a total of seven years. But there are only about five years counting from the time he arrived in Lushan in 1094 until he left Kewen in early 1099. Zhou Yukai counts six years by counting 1099 as an entire year (even though Huihong left early that year) and suggesting Huihong was also with Kewen in 1093 when he went to Jiufeng 九峰while Kewen was there. See *Song seng Huihong*, p. 32. However, a simpler explanation is that Huihong is including the two years he spent studying with Kewen before he became ordained, which he records in "Silent Sound's Own Preface."

[5] Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, 49-50. It is in the title of this set of poems where Huihong refers to the paintings as being described as "soundless poems" and his own poems as "paintings with sound": "Song Di zuo ba jing juemiao…," *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 8.540-541. These poems are referred to in chapter three, p. 146.

[6] According to Zhou Yukai, his travels during these years took him to Shuzhou, Hangzhou, Changzhou, Changsha, Dongshan in Xinchang, and by 1102 he is back in Hangzhou. See *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 42-65.

1105	Baizhang Mountain	While at Baizhang mountain, he lives in a hut he calls "Lengzhai."[7]
1107 大觀元年	Linchuan[8]	At the request of Zhu Yan 朱彥 (style name Shiying 世英), he agrees to became abbot of Bei Jingde Chan Monastery 北景德禪寺in Linchuan. That same year, he builds a hut called Mingbai 明白庵 and starts using Mingbai as a sobriquet.[9]
1109	Jinling[10]	In the fall, he is invited to become abbot of Qingliang Temple 清涼寺. Before a month is out, accused by "crazy monks" for "appropriating the name Huihong" and sent to the Jinling prison.
1110 (Age 30)	Jinling	In the fifth month, released due to an imperially decreed universal pardon. With Zhang Shangying's help, is re-ordained under the new ordination name Dehong.[11] Obtains the imperially bestowed title "Baojue Yuanming" thanks a request made by Guo Tianxin 郭天信.
1111 政和元年		In the tenth month, accused of having close ties with Zhang Shangying (recently demoted from position of grand counselor) and Guo Tianxin. Briefly put into the Kaifeng jurisdiction prison and sentenced to exile to the army prefecture of Zhuya jun朱崖軍 (in Yazhou 崖州).
1112	Hainan: Qiongzhou, Yazhou	At the beginning of the year, crosses the ocean to Hainan. On route he creates the nickname for himself "Sweet Dew *Nirvāṇa*" (see Ch. 2, p.78). Arrives in Qiongzhou 瓊州 in the second month, where he begins his commentary on the *Lengyan jing*. By the fifth month, he arrives in Yazhou.
1113		In the fifth month is graced with a pardon. Visits places Su Shi stayed at while in exile on his return and writes several poems "supplementing" Su poems.[12] At the end of the year or early in the next year, arrives back on the mainland.
1114	Bingzhou	Incarcerated in the Taiyuan 太原prison for a few months.

[7] Baizhang was in Hongzhou. He may have adopted Lengzhai as a sobriquet at this point.

[8] Present day Fuzhou.

[9] Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 115-116.

[10] Present day Nanjing.

[11] For a detailed account of the debates over Huihong's ordination names, see chapter two, p. 72.

[12] For a discussion of Huihong's poems supplementing those of Su Shi, see chapter two, p. 113.

1116		In the summer, finishes his commentary on the *Lengyan jing*.[13]
1118 重和元年	Nanchang, Jiangxi	Accused by "crazy Taoists" of being a member of the rebel Zhang Huaisu's 張懷素 band. Thrown into Nanchang You Prison 南昌右獄. At the end of the year, released due to a widespread imperial pardon decreed when the reign changed.[14]
1119 宣和元		
1119 宣和元年 1120	Changsha	Builds another "Mingbai Hut" at Nantai Temple 南臺寺and writes "Mingbai an bing xu" 明白庵銘并序 (Inscription and Preface for the Hut of Understanding).[15]
1121		Making final revisions on *Lengzhai yehua*.[16]
1122		Finishes a first edition of the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan*.[17] Is presented with a handwritten copy of *Night Chats* from his disciple Master Ying 英.[18]
1123		Completes his commentary on the *Fahua jing* 法華經 and writes "Silent Sound's Own Preface" 寂音自序.[19]
1126 靖康元年		Re-ordains and is granted the use of his original ordination name.[20]
1127 建炎元年		
1128	Jianchang county[21]	Passes away at Tong'an Temple 同安寺 at the age of 58.

[13] The commentary survives today in *Lengyan jing helun* 楞嚴經合論 (Combined commentaries on the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*), compiled by Zhengshou.

[14] Zhou, Song seng Huihong, 240-241.

[15] Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 258.

[16] Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 275; Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 137

[17] Zhou, *Song seng Huihong*, p. 283; p. 361.

[18] Zhou, Song seng Huihong, p. 294

[19] His commentary on the *Fahua jing* was combined with Zhang Shangying's in *Fahua jing helun* 法華經合論.

[20] See chapter two, p. 98, note

[21] Present day Yongxiu xian 永修縣in Jiangxi.

Appendix C:

"Silent Sound's Own Preface" 寂音自序[1]

Silent Sound describes himself: I was originally a son of the Yu clan of Xinchang county [present day Yifeng 宜豐] in Yunzhou prefecture, Jiangxi province. At age fourteen, my mother and father died in the same month, and I became a temple youth dependent on Dhyana Master Sengfeng Jing.

寂音自敘: 本江西筠州新昌喻氏之子。年十四父母併月而歿，乃依三峰靚禪師為童子。

At nineteen, I took the Buddhist canon exams at Tianwang Temple in the eastern capital and became ordained, appropriating the name of Huihong. With support from Great Master Xuanmi Shengong, I lectured on the *Treatise on Accomplishing Consciousness-Only*, and I became quite well known in the lecture halls [in the capital]. After four years of serving and working diligently [for Master Shen], I took my leave and returned south to rely on Dhyana Master Zhenjing [Kewen] at Guizong temple at Lushan. When Zhenjing moved to Shimen Monastery in Hongzhou, I accompanied him there. From start to finish I was with him for seven years.

十九試經於東京天王寺，得度，冒惠洪名。依宣祕大師深公講《成唯識論》，有聲講肆。服勤四年，辭之南歸，依真淨禪師於廬山歸宗。及真淨遷洪州石門，又隨以至，前後七年。

When I was twenty-nine [1099], I traveled around Dongwu [modern day Jiangnan], and the next year I traveled to Hengyan. After three years [1102], Zhenjing passed away at [Yun]an. I returned from Xiangzhong to pay respects to his pagoda [1103], and in the end decided to seclude myself at Huanglong. But the District Planner Zhu Yan Shiying invited me to become abbot of Beichan Monastery in Linchuan [in Fuzhou].[2] After two years [1107], I gave up the post and traveled to Jinling.

年二十九乃遊東吳，明年遊衡嶽，又三年，而真淨終於庵。自湘中歸拜塔，將終藏於黃龍，而顯謨朱彥世英請住臨川北禪。二年，退而遊金陵。

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[1] Huihong, *Shimen wenzi chan, j.* 24, (J 23: B135.696a25-b28; *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1437-39).

[2] Zhu Yan 朱彥 (*jinshi* 1076), style name Shiying 世英.

After a long time, Chief Transport Commissioner and Academician Wu Jian Zhengzhong invited me to take charge of Qingliang Temple.[3] After I arrived, crazy monks falsely accused me of forging my ordination certificate and of involvement with the likes of the "crazy monk" Fahe and his slander scandal. I was put in the imperial order prison for a year, sentenced with [the crime of] appropriating the name Huihong. [Afterwards], I donned Confucian clothing, and entered the capital. Grand Councilor Zhang Shangying submitting a special memorial and I was able to be re-ordained. Military Commissioner Guo Tianxin submitted a memorial requesting an [imperial bestowed] monk's name [for me.]

久之，運使學士吳幵正重請住清涼。入寺，為狂僧誣，以為偽度牒，且旁連前狂僧法和等議訕事，入制獄一年，坐冒惠洪名。著縫掖入京師，大丞相張商英特奏，再得度；節使郭天信奏師名。

I was convicted for having close relations with Zhang and Guo resulting in banishment beyond the sea [far south] on the 26th of the 10th month of the first year of Zhenghe [1111].[4] On the 25th of the second month of the second year [1112], I arrived in Qiongzhou. On the seventh day of the fifth month of that year I arrived at Yazhou, and on the 25th day of the fifth month of the third year [1113], I was graced with a release. On the 17th of the eleventh month I crossed the sea northward.

坐交張、郭厚善，以政和元年十月二十六日配海外。以二年二月二十五日到瓊州，五月七日到崖州，三年五月二十五日蒙恩釋放，十一月十七日北渡海。

In the fourth month of the next year [1114], I arrived in Yunzhou and stayed at Hetang Temple. In the tenth month, I was again accused and incarcerated in Bingmen.[5]

以明年四月到筠，館於荷塘寺。十月又證獄併門。

In the summer of the fifth year [1115], I was at Dumen Temple. I traveled back and forth between Jiufeng and Dongshan for four years. I was to go from Xi'an to the Xiang River area and rely on my dharma brothers to see out my old age and live at Yunyan, but I was falsely accused once again, this time by crazy Daoists who said I was a member of Zhang Huaisu's band. Despite the fact that the officials all knew that [the crazy Daoists] had mistaken Zhang Shangying for Huaisu, the case had to be carried on according to the rules, so I was sentenced to Nanchang prison for over one hundred days. Fortunately, I met with two imperial pardons, and upon release I returned to Nantai Temple in Xiangshang.

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[3] Wu Jian Zhengzhong 吳幵正仲is recorded as "Wu Kai Zhengchong" 吳开正重 in *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* but this must be a typo for there is no such person. Wu Jian Zhengzhong was a literatus who lived from 1067-1144.

[4] According to several sources, Huihong was held in prison briefly before being exiled south. See Chen Zili, *Shi Huihong yanjiu*, p. 43. Zhou Yukai, *Song seng Huihong*, pp. 164-165.

[5] Some editions have Bingmen并門 instead of 併門.

五年夏於新昌之度門。往來九峰、洞山者四年。將自西安入湘上，依法眷以老，館雲巖。又為狂道士誣以為張懷素黨人。官吏皆知其誤認張丞相為懷素，然事須根治。坐南昌獄百餘日，會兩赦得釋遂歸湘上南臺。

In the summer of the fourth year of Xuanhe [1122], I began to detail this commentary [on the *Fahua jing*], and on the 4th of the third month of the following year, I completed it. I pause my brush to reflect on the many worldly hardships I've experienced, and my numerous thoughts turn to cold ash.

以宣和四年夏釋此論，明年三月四日畢。停筆坐念涉世多艱，百念灰冷。

Currently, I am fifty-three years. Endeavoring to describe Bodhidharma's Four Practices, I write four *gāthā*.[6]

"The Practice of Not Seeking" reads:

時年五十三矣。追繹達摩四種行，作四偈。《無求行》曰：

形恃美好　The body relies on being handsome and healthy,

今已毀壞　Now mine is already decayed and ruined.

置之世路　Placed on the roads of the world,

自覺塞礙　I realized for myself [the nature of] obstacles and hindrances.

始緣飢寒　Initially, I was destined to starve and freeze,

致萬憎愛　Resulting in ten thousand aversions and preferences.

欲壞身衰　With desires gone bad and the body deteriorating,

入此三昧　I enter this *samādhi*.

"The Practice of According with Conditions" reads: 《隨緣行》曰:

此生夢幻　This life: a dream, an illusion,

緣業所轉　Following wherever karma conveys me.

隨其所遭　Going along with whatever happens,

敢擇貴賤　Who am I to choose between rich and poor?

眠食既足　When sleep and food are already enough,

餘復何羨　Why hanker after extra blessings?

緣盡則行　Once the conditions come to an end, I'll be on my way,

[6] This part of the preface is discussed in the context of Huihong's biography on p. 107.

無可顧戀　With nothing to look back upon with regret.

"The Practice of Responding to Retribution" reads: 《報冤行》曰:

僧嬰王難　A monk who incites troubles at court,
情觀可醜　From a worldly perspective is disgraceful.
夙業純熟　Past karma can be purged completely,
所以甘受　On this basis I willingly accept it.
受盡還無　Having accepted it all, there is nothing left,
何醜之有　So what is there still to detest?
轉重還輕　Transforming heavy [karma] so that retribution is light,
佛恩彌厚　Is the result of Buddha's kindness, pervasive and deep.

"The Practice of Honoring the Dharma" reads: 《稱法行》曰:

本無貪瞋　Fundamentally, no greed or hatred,
我持戒忍　I maintain Precepts and Patience.[7]
食不過中　In eating, refraining after midday,
手不操楯　My hand is not holding a shield.[8]
風必頓息　The wind must come to a stop,
而浪漸盡　For the waves to gradually subside.
離微細念　Setting aside petty little thoughts,
方名見性　Only that can be called seeing the nature.

Having spoken these verses, I recorded them together here so that I may peruse them often. Alas! Sun Simiao's *Treatise on the Great Wind of Leprosy* says: "In *Biographies of Spirits and Transcendents* there are dozens of people who obtained the path of the transcendent because they suffered from leprosy. Why is this? To cast off the layers of dust, and foster the manner of Ying and Yang, this is how misfortunes beget blessings."[9] As for Silent Sound's

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[7] These refer to the second and third of the Six Perfections (*liudu*六度 /*pāramitā*), a key list of practices for the bodhisattva.

[8] Holding the shield seems to refer to the idea that he practices patience, so he doesn't need a shield to defend himself against attacks, i.e. he doesn't try to deflect the negative retribution but accepts it head on.

[9] Huihong may have borrowed the idea to quote this passage from Su Shi who used it in his essay "Yao song" 藥誦. See *Su Shi wenji* 64.1985. Ying and Yang is a reference to two virtuous recluses

misfortunes, they are inexplicable misfortunes. It was due to these misfortunes that I was able to completely probe the Buddhas' and Patriarchs' meaning. It is not through language that I can express my meaning in language. But if the principle is preserved into the future eras, then we can believe Simiao's theory.

既說是偈，併載於此，時省觀焉。嗚呼！孫思邈著《大風惡疾論》曰：“《神仙傳》有數十人，皆因惡疾而得仙道。何者？割棄塵累，懷穎陽之風，所以因禍而取福也。” 寂音之禍，奇禍也，因禍以得盡窺佛祖之意，不能文以達意，以壽後世，則思邈之論可信也。

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from ancient times, either Chao Fu巢父and Xu You許由 or Chao Fu and Bo Yi 伯夷. Ying refers to Yingshui 潁水, where Chao washed his ears after being asked by Emperor Yao to be his successor. Yang, as always located north of the river, may refer to the place where Xu You watered his ox downstream from Chao Fu. Or Yang may refer to Yangshan, the place where Bo Yi starved to death out of loyalty to the overthrown dynasty. For the Chao Fu/Bo Yi interpretation, see Zhang Bowei's note in *Zhu Shimen wenzi chan* 24.1441.

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Abbreviations

CBETA	Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association
J	*Jiaxing dazangjing*
j.	*juan* 卷 (chapter/fascicle)
SBCK	*Sibu congkan*
SKQS	*Siku quanshu*; see *Wenyuange Siku quanshu*
SKZM	*Siku quanshu zongmu*; see *Qinding Siku quanshu zongmu*
T	*Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*
Z	*Shinsan Dai Nihon Zokuzōkyō*

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