November 16, 2022  ▶  4:00PM
in-person event
Location: Agave Room, Student Union
1303 E University Blvd., Tucson
Suggested parking: Second Street Garage

The abbot of a Chan/Zen monastery was regarded ex officio as a living Buddha around whom revolved the religious, social, and institutional life of the monastery. The Chinese Ōbaku abbots, in early modern Japan, were, moreover, the living embodiments of southern Chinese literati culture in Japan; they were agents for the transmission of the scientific, technological, religious, and artistic achievements of the late Ming and early Qing. As such, their portraits partook of their charisma and were highly esteemed objects of religious devotion. In this lecture, I will give an introductory overview of portrait paintings of the most renowned Ōbaku abbots, with special reference to images of Ingen, the lineage’s versatile and venerable founder.

ELIZABETH HORTON SHARF
Independent Scholar

Elizabeth Horton Sharf has a PhD in Asian Art History from the University of Michigan (1994) and is interested in East Asian Buddhist portraiture. Her dissertation features paintings of Ōbaku Zen abbots. She is also co-editor with Robert Sharf of Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context (Stanford, 2001). She is now helping curate an online exhibition celebrating the 350th death anniversary of Ōbaku Zen founder Ingen Ryūki (Yinyuan Longqi) organized by the Center for Buddhist Studies at the University of Arizona.

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