

similar portrayals. It is unlikely that there would not have been deities painted during the period between the Ming pantheon and the present scroll, showing gods from the three religions. The philosophy behind these assemblies of gods is definitely connected with the popular belief in the need for an effective protection against the evils of the world, and a belief in the invaluable assistance that the gods could offer in the achievement of prosperity and happiness in this life. The portrayal of the world of gods in a pantheon was hence in accordance with the ideas and concepts its user had formed in his immediate local environment. The pictures do not represent the special philosophies and religious traditions of the individual religions, but they show a wide and diffuse world of ideas that the average Chinese considered relevant and useful.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE CH'AN MASTER YÜN-MEN WEN-YEN

BY

HENRIK H. SORENSEN

University of Copenhagen

Introduction

During the second half of the T'ang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.) Ch'an Buddhism was one of the most dominating and vital forces on the religious scene of China. By the time of the Five Dynasties Period (906-960 A.D.) five major Ch'an schools (Ch. *wu-chia*) had arisen; they were the Kuei-yang School, the Lin-chi School, the Ts'ao-tung School, the Fa-yen School, and finally the Yün-men School, the founder of which is the topic of the present article.¹ In later Ch'an chronicles Ch'an master Yün-men Wen-yen² is revered as one of the most capable and dynamic teachers of the entire tradition, whose brand of Ch'an combined the use of "live words" (Ch. *sheng-hua*)³ with a radical directness in the teaching situation. One of the pedagogical devices said to have been employed by him during the customary exchange of questions and answers (Ch. *wen-ta*) between master and disciple was the use of abrupt one-syllable words, the so-called "one word barrier" (Ch. *i-tzu-kuan*).⁴ While his public sermons were full of eloquence and humour, like the majority of T'ang Ch'an masters his approach to the goal of the Buddhist teaching was basically trans-intellectual. He was not opposed to the scriptural teaching, however. Wen-yen is known to have made full use of older cases and themes from the Ch'an Buddhist

¹ For general information on the Five Ch'an Schools, see Isshu Miura & R. F. Sasaki, *Zen Dust*. N.Y., 1966, pp. 148, 149, 166-167, 251, 349-350, 359-360, 365 and 427.

² Named after the mountain in present day northwestern Kuangtung Province where his temple was situated.

³ "Live words" are words and expressions which reveal or point to the absolute reality.

⁴ For a discussion of *i-tzu kuan* see Miura & Sasaki, *Zen Dust*, p. 161. For examples of Wen-yen's use of this "one word barrier", see *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* (*Taishō Shinshū Daizōyō*) (hereafter *T.*) 2076, Ch. 19, p. 358c.

history, the so-called *kung-an*,⁵ and it appears that together with his master Hsüeh-feng I-ts'un (822–908)⁶ he was among the pioneers in using the examples of former masters in his public discourses. Eventually this practice developed into the *kung-an* system which became prominent in the Lin-chi School during the Sung Dynasty (960–1279 A.D.).⁷ Except for a handful of poems, the most lengthy of which are the two different songs both entitled, *shih-erh shih ko* (*Song of the Twelve Periods*),⁸ he left no other written works behind.

Despite the relative importance of Wen-yen and the Yün-men School for an understanding of Buddhism of the Five Dynasties Period as well as the Sung Dynasty, surprisingly little research has centered on this Ch'an master and virtually none exists in a Western language.⁹ Hence, the primary purpose of this article is to throw light on the life of Wen-yen along historical lines, that is, to attempt to present a picture of the man divorced from later hagiographies and myths. Secondly, we will try to show how important the master's connection to the rulers of

⁵ Although a *kung-an* normally consists of a whole case or a dialogue between a master and a disciple, as a topic for meditation it is only its "essence" or pivotal expression which is used.

⁶ Biography in *Chodang chip*, (*Zengaku gyōsho* Vol. 5, ed. by Yanagida Seizan, Kyoto, 1976), Ch. 7, pp. 142a–150a. See also his "recorded sayings" and *nien-p'u*, *Hsüeh-feng yü-lu* (*Zengaku gyōsho* Vol. 3), Ch. 3, p. 286ab.

⁷ The use of *kung-an* as teaching devices has a long history in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism. Previously it was thought that this practice originated with Ta-hui Tsung-kao (1089–1163), an eminent Ch'an master from the Lin-chi School, but recent research has shown that proto-*kung-an*, i.e. abstruse and illogical statements, as themes for meditation were used as early as the first half of the 8th century by the so-called Northern School of Ch'an. See *Leng-chia shih-tzu chi* (T. 2837), pp. 1284c, 1285a, 1290a and 1290c. For a brief discussion of this see John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*, *Studies in East Asian Buddhism* 3. Honolulu, 1986, pp. 91–93.

⁸ Included in *Yün-men K'uang-chen Ch'an-shih kuang-lu* (T. 1988), Ch. 2, p. 553bc.

⁹ For one of the earliest studies on Yün-men Wen-yen, see Tokiwa Daijō's *Chugoku bunka shiseki kaisetsu*, Vol. I–VI. Tokyo, 1964–66 (reprint 1975), Vol. 1, pp. 81–98. More recent studies are Suzuki Tetsuo. "Unmon Bunen to Nan Kan", in *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* (hereafter *IBK*) XXXIII,1 (1984), pp. 90–95, Shiina Kōyū, "Unmon Korōku toso no shoroku bun no keito," in *Shūgaku kenkyū* (hereafter *SK*), Vol. 21 (1982), pp. 189–196, and "Unmon junichi jichi ni kantsuru ichi kosatsu," in *IBK* XX,1 (1971), pp. 148–149. At the time of writing a major study of Yün-men and his *Yün-men K'uang-chen Ch'an-shih kuang-lu* is being undertaken by Mr. Urs App of Temple University. This study is likely to give full credit to the genius of Wen-yen as well as presenting his Ch'an teaching in a new light. Supposedly a full translation of the *KL* will appear in this study too.

the Southern Han Dynasty (918–978)¹⁰ was to his success in establishing his monastery and subsequent tradition.

1. The sources and the problems they present

There exists a number of biographical sources on the life of Wen-yen, among which the following are the most important: the *Yu-fang i-lu* (*Bequeathed Record of Pilgrimage*)¹¹ (hereafter *YFIL*), an entry in the *Yün-men K'uang-chen Ch'an-shih kuang-lu* (*The Extensive Record of Ch'an-master K'uang-chen*), and the *Yün-men Shan Kuang-t'ai Ch'an-yüan K'uang-chen Ta-shih hsing-lu* (*Record of the Deeds of the Great Master K'uang-chen from Kuang-t'ai Ch'an Monastery on Mt. Yün-men*)¹² (hereafter *YKCKK*), the Korean work *Chodang chip* (*Collection of the Patriarch's Hall*)¹³ (hereafter *CDC*), as well as the two stele inscriptions, the *Ta Han Shao-chou Yün-men Shan Kuang-t'ai Ch'an-yüan ku K'uang-chen Ta-shih shih-hsing pei* (*The Stele of the Venerable K'uang-chen, the Great Master shih-hsing from Kuang-t'ai Ch'an Monastery in Shao-chou of the Great Han*),¹⁴ (hereafter *TSYKK*), and the *Ta Han Shao-chou Yün-men Shan Ta-chüeh Ch'an-ssu Ta-tz'u Yün-k'uang Shen Hung-ming Ta-shih pei* (*The Stele of the Great Master Ta-tz'u Yün-k'uang Shen Hung-ming from Ta-chüeh Ch'an Monastery on Mt. Yün-men in Shao-chou of the Great Han*)¹⁵ (hereafter *TSTYH*). All these biographical records are here considered primary sources as they were composed within a period of fifty years after the master's death. Other useful biographical information can be found in such works as *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* (*The Transmission of the Lamp from*

¹⁰ Established by scions of the Liu clan after the collapse of the T'ang. It controlled all of Kuangtung and parts of Kianghsi. See Ou-yang Hsiu, *Wu Tai Shih* (Shanghai edition, 1974), Ch. 65, pp. 810–813. For an annotated translation of this chapter, see Edward H. Schafer, *The History of the Empire of the Southern Han: According to Chapter 65 of the Wu Tai Shih of Ou-yang Hsiu*. In *Jinbun kagaku kenkyūshō*, ed. Kyoto University, (Silver Jubilee Volume), Kyoto, 1954, pp. 339–369. See also Denis Twitchett & John K. Fairbank (gen. ed.), *The Cambridge History of China* Vol. 3 (Sui and T'ang China 589–906), Part 1, pp. 787–789.

¹¹ *KL*, Ch. 3, pp. 573b–575a.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 575c–576a. For a full translation of this important record see appendix.

¹³ For biographical information on this important work of Korean origin see note 6.

¹⁴ Contained in *Yün-men Shan chih* (hereafter *YMSC*), ed. by Ch'en Hsüeh-lu, Hong Kong, 1951, pp. 180–186.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 186–193.

the *Ching-te Reign*)¹⁶ (hereafter *CTL*), and the *Ch'an-lin seng pao-chuan* (*The Precious Transmission of the Monks from the Ch'an Forest*).¹⁷ Useful secondary sources are the *Yü-men Shan chih* (*The Record of Mt. Yün-men*)¹⁸ and the study by Tokiwa Daijo.¹⁹

As is to be expected many of these biographies include hagiographical elements, a phenomenon which becomes increasingly evident in the later sources. Despite this most of early biographical accounts seem relatively reliable from a historical point of view, that is, they contain a fair amount of verifiable data which not only correspond with other information but also give a reasonably coherent picture of Wen-yen. That is not to say that discrepancies in these sources are absent, but to a large extent they combine to present us with a useful outline of the master's life and times. Among the primary sources the *YKCKK*, *TSYKK* and the *TSTYH* are by far the most important, and consequently our attention shall focus on these three inscriptions.

2. Early years

All the biographies under consideration here agree that Wen-yen was born into the Chang family in the Chia-hsing Prefecture near Su-chou. None of our sources state directly the date of his birth, but from the stele inscriptions we learn that Wen-yen was 86 years old at the time of his death, which took place in the 7th year of the Ch'ien-ho reign period, a date corresponding to 949 A.D. Consequently we can ascertain that he was born in the year 864 A.D.²⁰

Nothing much is mentioned about his childhood except that he showed the usual signs of a "great being" at an early age, a stereotype found in most Buddhist biographical accounts. There is some uncertainty as to which year he left his parents' home to embark on the career of a Buddhist monk. In the *TSYKK* it is stated that the master's *dharma* age (Ch. *fa-ling*) was 72 years and that he had been a monk for

¹⁶ T. 2076.

¹⁷ *Hsü ts'ang-ching* (hereafter *HTC*) (Lung-men reprint, Hong Kong, 1967), Vol. 118. The section on Wen-yen can be found on pp. 439a-443a.

¹⁸ See note 13. Although not a scholarly work this compilation on the history and rebuilding of Wen-yen's old temple on Mt. Yün-men contains a wealth of information. It is especially useful for its fine punctuated recensions of the *TSYKK* and the *TSTYH*.

¹⁹ See note 8.

²⁰ *TSYKK*, p. 184 and *TSTYH*, p. 190.

66 years. This would mean that he received the traditional ten precepts (Ch. *shih-chieh*) of a novice and his religious name (Ch. *fa-ming*) at the age of fourteen in the year 878 A.D. We may presume that he had left his parents' home shortly before that time. The *YKCKK*, which is our earliest source, states that he already wished to leave his parents' home at an early age, but that he did not do so before coming of age.²¹

Wen-yen entered the K'ung-wang Temple, a local temple situated not very far from his home town, under the tutelage of the monk Chih-ch'eng (d.u.), who is variously said to have been a *vinaya* master or a Ch'an master. Wen-yen served as his teacher's attendant for several years during which time he perused the Buddhist *vinaya* and in addition is said to have mastered the doctrines of the Middle Way, i.e. *mādhyamika* (Ch. *chung-tao*).²² At the age of twenty Wen-yen received the complete ordination as a monk on the ordination platform set up in Chang-chou, the regional capital.²³ This important event in the master's life took place in the year corresponding to 883 A.D., according to the *TSYKK*.²⁴ It is not known how long Wen-yen stayed with Chih-ch'eng after having become a monk. The biographies insofar as they mention it, say "several years". However, a period of 4 or 5 years after his ordination would seem probable.

²¹ If we take into account that he was born in 864, then the only *chi-mao* date possible, would be the year corresponding to 895 A.D. for his *bhikṣu* ordination, which would make him 31 years old at that time. This seems to be quite a late date when taking into account that the normal age for the full ordination at that time was around twenty years for males. See *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* (T. 2035), Ch. 42, pp. 384c and 392b for information on ordination requirements in the years 825 A.D. and 951-959 A.D.

²² *CDC*, Ch. 11, p. 216b.

²³ Situated to the southwest of Hang-chou. It is identical with present day P'ai-sha in northwestern Chekiang Province.

²⁴ *TSYKK*, p. 184. With regard to the time when the master entered the *saṅgha* and became ordained as a full monk, the *CDC*, Ch. 11, p. 216b, supplies the following data:

At the age of seventeen he (i.e. Wen-yen) followed Ch'an master Ch'eng Lu from K'ung-wang Temple. From him he received in a certain year on a *chi-mao* date the complete *śīla* (Ch. *shih-lo*) precepts of the *Fourfold Vinaya* (*Ssu-fen lu*).

If Wen-yen first became a *śrāmaṇera* at the age of seventeen it would have taken place in 881 A.D. and if our reading of the *chia-tzu* date is correct, his full ordination would have taken place in 883 A.D. Whereas the first date deviates from the information given in the stele inscriptions, the latter date tallies perfectly with them. Hence our date for his full ordination is rather trustworthy.

3. Enlightenment and Ch'an pilgrimage

Sometime around 888–889 A.D. Wen-yen had become disillusioned with his study of the Buddhist scriptures and was encouraged by Chih-ch'eng to pay a visit to a famous Ch'an master residing in Mu-chou²⁵ in order to further his understanding of the higher truth of Buddhism. That year Wen-yen, now in his late twenties, left K'ung-wang Temple and journeyed south. We may presume that he arrived in Mu-chou around 889 A.D. and immediately went to Lung-hsing Temple, an old abandoned temple where master Tao-tsung (d.u.), also known as Chen Ts'un-su (Old Rev. Chen), lived.²⁶ Tao-tsung was a disciple in direct line of descent from the celebrated Ch'an master Huang-po Hsi-yün (d. ca. 849), and a teacher and *dharma* brother to the illustrious Lin-chi I-hsüan (d. 867).

Wen-yen's meeting with Tao-tsung and subsequent awakening has been one of the most celebrated enlightenment cases in later Ch'an literature.²⁷ The earliest accounts, however, are singularly terse, offering very little information beyond indicating that Wen-yen attained enlightenment under the old master. Having arrived at Tao-tsung's temple Wen-yen was denied an interview twice before he could meet the Ch'an master. The *TSYKK* gives the following account of Wen-yen's meeting with the old Ch'an master:

The Ch'an master asked (from behind the locked door): "Who are you?" The master (i.e. Wen-yen) said: "Wen-yen". The Ch'an master opened the door and said: "What have you come here for?" The master said: "The personal affair of this practitioner has not been solved (i.e. I am still unenlightened)." The Ch'an master said: "An old drill from Ch'in!"²⁸ With his hand he pushed him out of the door, and in consequence of this treatment the master attained an awakening.²⁹

Following his awakening Wen-yen was given free access to the instructions of Tao-tsung. The length or nature of Wen-yen's stay with Tao-tsung is not known. The early sources do not make much out of the relationship between the two, which probably is an indication that the young monk did not attain a complete awakening while in Mu-chou. Later records have him stay a couple of years there during which time he is said to have befriended the local magistrate Ch'en Ts'ao (d.u.), a lay disciple of Tao-tsung.³⁰

The *YKCKK* tells us that after some time Tao-tsung informed Wen-yen that he was not his master, and that his karmic link was with another Ch'an master, namely with Hsüeh-feng I-ts'un, who was the abbot of a large monastery in Fu-chou.³¹

Accordingly the young pilgrim left Mu-chou and went to Hsüeh-feng's temple on Mt. Hsiang-ku. A later record, the *Hsüeh-feng yü-lu*, mentions in its *nien-p'u* section in the entry under I-ts'un's 73rd year, i.e. 894, that Wen-yen "became a disciple together with Hsüan-sha (835–908),³² Ch'ing-leng (854–932)³³ and Ku-shan (863–939)".³⁴ Although this record is a late work and does not necessarily imply that all four monks became disciples of I-ts'un in that very year, it is highly

²⁵ Present-day Chien-te in the western part of Chekiang Province.

²⁶ Biography in *CDC*, Ch. 19, pp. 365b–367a and *CTL*, Ch. 12, pp. 291a–292b. For his recorded sayings see *Mu-chou yü-lu* in *HTC* Vol. 118, pp. 112a–118b.

²⁷ According to the popular account in the *Wu-teng hui-yüan*, (hereafter *WTHY*) the young monk having arrived in Mu-chou sought an interview with Tao-tsung, but in vain. Twice he went to knock on his door without getting an answer, and when he knocked a third time the old master suddenly opened the door, took hold of him and demanded that he speak up. As the young monk fumbled for an answer the old Ch'an master pushed him out and slammed the door on his leg which broke. From the surprise and pain caused by this rough treatment Wen-yen is said to have attained enlightenment. See *WTHY* (Peking ed. 3 vols., 1984), Ch. 15, p. 922. Some scholars consider this incident a later fabrication as it does not occur in the early accounts of Wen-yen's life. However, a reference by Wen-yen in the early *yü-lu* material to "having one's leg broken in the Ch'an master's door" would seem to lend some credence to the story. See *KL* (T. 1988), Ch. 1, p. 547a, *CTL* (T. 2076), Ch. 19, p. 357b as well as the later *Wu-chia yü-lu* (*Zengaku gyoshō*) 3, Kyoto, 1983, Ch. 5, p. 164b.

²⁸ Meaning a useless tool.

²⁹ *TSYKK*, p. 182.

³⁰ Another possibility for the stress in the later Ch'an tradition on Wen-yen's connection to Tao-tsung could be a wish to "imitate" Lin-chi I-hsüan's earlier enlightenment under the same master.

³¹ For biographical information see note 6.

³² Biography in *CDC*, Ch. 10, pp. 189a–192a. Together with Wen-yen, Hsüan-sha is considered the greatest among Hsüeh-feng's disciples.

³³ *Ibid.*, Ch. 10, pp. 203a–208b.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Ch. 10, pp. 199b–200b. This information is given in *Hsüeh-feng yü-lu*, p. 286ab.

probable that Wen-yen joined the master's congregation around that time.

Concerning Wen-yen's relationship with I-ts'un the information in the early sources is almost as scanty as was the case of his relationship with Tao-tsung. All we are told is that I-ts'un was expecting Wen-yen and that the latter continued his Ch'an training under him. Eventually he attained the full fruits of the Way and was given the seal of approval, thus becoming an heir to I-ts'un's *dharma*. The *TSTYH* elaborates somewhat on this, trying to show that Wen-yen was the most able of all the disciples, however we may rule out much of this as pious embellishment, for the simple reason that Wen-yen did not succeed to the position of abbot in that monastery after the demise of I-ts'un. Again, the later records go into much detail concerning Wen-yen's training under I-ts'un, giving their supposed dialogues. However, none of this can be found in the early material. In any case Wen-yen's stay with his master does not appear to have lasted more than four or five years.³⁵

At an unspecified date Wen-yen, now a recognized master of Ch'an, continued on his "Ch'an pilgrimage" with the purpose of visiting famous masters and testing their insight against his own. The early sources mention this pilgrimage, but do not give any details to speak of. The later records devote much attention to this period of the master's life, and the *Yü-fang i-lu* section of the *KL* specifically deals with Wen-yen's interviews with famous masters of Ch'an.³⁶

According to the *Yü-fang i-lu* the master visited the following Ch'an masters: First he journeyed to Ch'ang-ch'ing Monastery to see master Hui-leng (854–932), who was also a disciple of I-ts'un. Next he went to Tung-yen K'o-hsiu (d.u.), also a *dharma* brother, whose temple was situated in Yüeh-chou in present-day southern Chekiang Province. From Yüeh-chou he went to visit Ch'an master Shu-shan Kuang-jen (837–909) in present-day northeastern Kiangsi Province. Kuang-jen was a disciple of the famous Tung-shan Liang-chieh (807–869), the founder of the Ts'ao-tung School. Another of Liang-chieh's disciples with whom Wen-yen is said to have had an exchange of questions and

³⁵ *The Pi-yen lu* (T. 2003), p. 145c mentions that Wen-yen's stay with I-ts'un only lasted three years.

³⁶ According to the study of Shiina Kōyū "Unmon korōku toso no shoroku bun no keito," pp. 192–195, this section of the *KL* is a later addition which does not appear until 1267 as part of the work *Ku ts'un-su yü-lu*.

answers (Ch. *wen-ta*) was Ts'ao-shan Pen-chi (840–901), later considered the co-founder of the Ts'ao-tung School. Other masters whom Wen-yen is said to have met include T'ien-t'ung Hsien-ch'i (d.u.) and O-hu Chih-fu (d.u.), Kuei-tung Tan-chüan (d.u.), Kan-ming Kan-feng (d.u.), and a certain Lao Su about whom nothing is known. The *Yü-fang i-lu* also has the master meet Ch'en Ts'ao, who at that time is said to have held the post as magistrate in Chiu-chou, present day Chiu-chiang in Kiangsi Province on the shore of Lake P'o-yang.³⁷

We may assume that Wen-yen cemented his reputation as a Ch'an master during these years of wandering, which probably lasted from sometime in the late 890s to 911 A.D. At this time Wen-yen's peregrination had carried him down to Ling-ling, more precisely Shao-chou in present-day northern Kuangtung Province, where he went to the Pao-lin Temple at Ts'ao-ch'i to worship the *stūpa* of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng.³⁸ The *Ta-shih i-piao* section of the *KL* mentions that Wen-yen's pilgrimage lasted 17 years which probably indicates the period from when he left Tao-tsung until he settled in Ling-shu in 911.³⁹ If we count back 17 years from 911 we arrive precisely at 894, the year Wen-yen is said to have become a disciple under Hsüeh-feng I-ts'un according to the *Hsüeh-feng nien-p'u*.⁴⁰

4. Sojourn at Ling-shu

Having arrived in Shao-chou, then a main trade center and important strategic town, Wen-yen went to stay at the Ling-shu Temple on Mt. Ling-shu.⁴¹ This probably happened after his alleged visit to Ts'ao-ch'i. The *YKCKK* as well as the two later stele inscriptions all relate that the resident Ch'an master on Mt. Ling-shu, Chih-sheng, also known as Ling-shu Ju-min (d. 918),⁴² in accordance with his own prophecy had

³⁷ *KL*, Ch. 3, pp. 573b–575a.

³⁸ *TSYKK*, p. 182. In Wen-yen's time Hui-neng was undoubtedly the most important Ch'an patriarch as all the current lines of transmission traced their ancestry back to him.

³⁹ *KL*, Ch. 3, p. 575a.

⁴⁰ *Hsüeh-feng yü-lu*, p. 286ab.

⁴¹ The exact location of this temple is no longer known. Presumably it was situated in or near the town of Shao-chou proper. Very brief information can be found in the local gazeteer *Shao-chou fu-chih*, Ch. 26, p. 536b.

⁴² Biography in *CDC*, Ch. 19, pp. 367ab and in *CTL*, Ch. 11, pp. 286c.

patiently been waiting for Wen-yen to come and fill the position as head monk (Ch. *shou-tso*) in the meditation hall.⁴³ The accounts of the relationship between the older and younger Ch'an master are quite brief. However, Chih-sheng posthumously appointed Wen-yen as his *dharma* successor, thereby making him the heir of yet another important transmission line in Chinese Ch'an.⁴⁴ Although clear evidence is lacking, it appears that Chih-sheng had entertained a close relationship with the Liu clan, the de facto rulers of the area, and Wen-yen, as the successor of the old master, inevitably came to enjoy their favours too. In fact, the actual founder of the state of Southern Han, Liu Yen, who ruled as Kao-tsu Ti from 917–942, took part in the installation of Wen-yen as abbot of Ling-shu Monastery. According to the three early accounts Chih-sheng had written a spiritual testament in which he appointed Wen-yen as his successor and which he then placed in a box. After the old abbot's death his disciples presented the king with the testament which said that "The eye of men and gods is the head monk in the [Ch'an] hall."⁴⁵ The *TSTYH* describes the incident as follows:

In the year 918 Kao-tsu T'ien-huang Ta-ti (i.e. Liu Yen) went on an Imperial Tour of Inspection of Shao-shih.⁴⁶ When he arrived at Ling-shu, Chih-sheng had already passed away after having written down his aforementioned wishes (i.e. that Wen-yen become abbot of the monastery after his death). By imperial command the body was cremated and the *śarira*⁴⁷ collected. A statue (in the likeness of Chih-sheng) made out of clay was placed in the abbot's room. At that time Wen-yen was given an imperial audience, and special favours were conferred upon him.⁴⁸

Wen-yen, now 54 years old, had become abbot of one of the most important Ch'an centers in the region, and the following year he was summoned by imperial command to the capital Kuang-wang Fu, present day Kuang-chou, to preside at the opening of a memorial hall for

⁴³ See appendix, p. 126.

⁴⁴ That is the Ch'ang-ch'ing branch of the Nan-yüeh Line.

⁴⁵ See appendix, p. 126.

⁴⁶ Another name for Shao-chou.

⁴⁷ Crystalline relics found in the bones and ashes of eminent monks after cremation.

⁴⁸ *TSTYH*, p. 182. See also the account in *CTL*, Ch. 11, p. 286c.

those fallen in the wars in which Southern Han was engaged at that time. The military commander of Shao-chou together with the Prime Minister Ho Hsi-fan (d.u.),⁴⁹ who is also mentioned as a royal prince, came to Ling-shu together with the minor local officials to convey the wish of Liu Yen to see the master in the capital for the opening of the memorial hall. The "Ch'ing-shu" section of the *Kuang-lu* mentions Ho as a disciple of the master, which claim also seems to be supported by the two stele inscriptions.⁵⁰ In the *TSYKK* following brief dialogue between Wen-yen and the Prime Minister is recorded:

The Regional Protector (Ch. *chün-shou*) Ho Kung Hsi-fan ceremoniously stepped forward and said: "I beg you to instruct me." The master said: "There is no divergent path before you!"⁵¹

The master's answer is normally interpreted as a token of warning to Ho, who supposedly was planning to rebel against his king, Liu Yen.⁵²

Following the summons to court the master left for the capital where he gave lectures at the opening of the memorial hall for the war victims. At court Wen-yen made the acquaintance of several high ministers and influential officials. As part of the expanded records on Wen-yen's life a number of *wen-ta* supposedly took place between the master and some of these officials.⁵³

5. On Mt. Yün-men: Later years

As the master's reputation increased Ch'an monks and pilgrims from all over China as well as from Korea began to arrive in great numbers at Ling-shu. The temple was transformed into a bustling religious center which was not conducive for the training of Ch'an monks. Consequently Wen-yen began to look for a more suitable place to carry

⁴⁹ This important Southern Han official became a close disciple of the master. For some reason he is not mentioned in the *Wu-tai shih*. He figures, however, prominently in both the *TSYKK* and *TSTYH*.

⁵⁰ *KL*, p. 576a.

⁵¹ *TSYKK*, pp. 182–183.

⁵² Later Ch'an records such as the *CTL* and *WTHY* have Liu Yen ask the master this question.

⁵³ See *WTHY*, Ch. 15, p. 924.

out his work, and he sent his disciples on tours of inspection in order to locate such a place. Wen-yen eventually decided to settle on Mt. Yün-men in the northern part of the Ju-yüan district northwest of Shao-chou. The sources reveal no details concerning the choosing of Mt. Yün-men as the location for Wen-yen's new monastery, but the *YKCKK* seems to indicate that there were some dilapidated buildings on the site before the monastery was constructed.⁵⁴

In 923 the master received royal approval to have a monastery built on Mt. Yün-men, and in the same year clearing of the grounds commenced (Ch. *k'ai-shan*). The master moved to the mountain before the monastery was finished in order to supervise the work of construction which was completed after several years. After the monastery had been finished the king bestowed the plaque giving the monastery's name as K'uang-t'ai Ch'an Monastery written in his own hand.⁵⁵

Wen-yen, who now became known as Ch'an master Yün-men, remained in his new temple for the next decade training his many disciples, who are said to have numbered more than one thousand. It is presumed that the majority of the master's great disciples joined his assembly during this time. All three inscriptions agree that Pai-yün Shih-hsing (d.u.)⁵⁶ was considered the main heir among the master's disciples, and he set up his own temple, Tzu-kuang Yüan on Mt. Pai-yün while Wen-yen was still alive.⁵⁷ In addition, it is thought that the bulk of the master's recorded sayings (Ch. *yü-lu*) were compiled from discourses given during his stay on Mt. Yün-men.⁵⁸

In 938 Wen-yen was again invited to give teachings in the royal palace. During his stay the king questioned the master about Budd-

⁵⁴ See appendix p. 127.

⁵⁵ *TSYKK*, p. 183. For information on this temple see *YMSC*, pp. 1-2, 8-10, and Tokiwa Daijo, *Chügoku bunkan shiseki kaisetsu*, pp. 88-98. According to recent reports from visitors to the temple, it is now functioning again as a center of Ch'an.

⁵⁶ Also known as Pai-yün Tzu-hsiang. Biography in *CTL*, Ch. 22, p. 384bc and *WTHY*, Ch. 15, pp. 934-935. It would seem that Shih-hsing still was considered the foremost among Wen-yen's disciples in Nan Han when the texts of the two steles were composed in 958 and 964, respectively.

⁵⁷ *TSYKK*, p. 184 and appendix p. 127. Shih-hsing's temple was also situated in the northwestern part of Kuangtung. It is no longer extant.

⁵⁸ The *CDC* is undoubtedly the earliest published work containing teachings of Wen-yen, and like the *CTL*, the section on him was compiled – or based on material compiled – before his death in 949. This can be ascertained since neither compilation mentions his death, but both record his move to Mt. Yün-men, which we know took place during the early 920s.

hism, and if we are to believe the account, Liu Yen was not completely unfamiliar with the doctrines of Ch'an:

The king asked: "What is Ch'an?" The master answered: "His Majesty has a question. This monk has the answer!" The king said: "What gives birth to this answer?" The master said: "Invited to the royal audience I am scrutinized in front of His Majesty!" The king said: "The wise master is self-confident. Shall I pay my respects at this morning audience?"⁵⁹

On this occasion Wen-yen received the title, K'uang-chen Ta-shih, and was requested to stay on as a palace monk. He was furthermore given the authority as royal *sangha* supervisor in charge of the monks from two quarters of the capital. Liu Yen did his very best to keep the master in the palace, and not until the passing of one month was he finally absolved from his duties and allowed to return to Mt. Yün-men.

In 942 the king passed away and it appears that Wen-yen's relations with the Southern Han court decreased considerably. This coincided with the political disturbances surrounding the power struggle between the two following rulers, Liu Pin (reigned 942-943) and Liu Sheng (reigned 943-958). In addition, Southern Han had to fight off invasions from its neighbours. During these violent years the master remained at peace on his secluded mountain guiding his followers.

6. The Master's death and indestructible body

During the year 948 Wen-yen's health began to deteriorate and he had premonitions of his approaching passing. At the beginning of the following year he made a general announcement to the disciples of his imminent death and made his last will known. Having seated himself in the full lotus posture in the abbot's room he answered questions from his disciples. Then he said: "Coming and going is continuous. I must be on my way!"⁶⁰ The *TSTYH* states:

⁵⁹ *TSYKK*, p. 183.

⁶⁰ *TSTYH*, p. 190.

When the time of his death came, he crossed his legs (in the lotus posture) and with a cheerful expression on his face he passed away.⁶¹

This took place on the tenth day of the fourth moon in the year 949, the age of the master being 86 years, his *dharma* age 72 years, and his age as an ordained monk 66 years.⁶² The *TSTYH* also includes the master's last words to the king, Liu Sheng:

After I have passed away you should not take any trouble considering worldly customs such as wearing mourning garments, lamenting or providing a funeral carriage for my body. Otherwise you will go against the Buddhist regulations and bring confusion to the Ch'an School.⁶³

This interesting passage shows that the master feared that the sovereign would make a "worldly" show out of his death and thereby upset the usual proceedings after the passing away of a Ch'an master. It is highly likely that Wen-yen otherwise would have been subjected to a state funeral, becoming for a deceased minister, since he had been closely associated with the forebears of the present king and had rendered spiritual service to the state on several occasions.

Memorial services were held on Mt. Yün-men, in the Southern Han capital and in several of the major temples of the kingdom. In Kuang-chou, government officials and lay people alike attended the services in large numbers. Two weeks after Wen-yen's death his body, still sitting in the lotus posture, was placed in a *stūpa* in the abbot's room on Mt. Yün-men.⁶⁴ It is said that the corpse looked fresh as if the master was still alive. During the following summer the palace official Lei Yüeh completed a short biography of Wen-yen. This is the *YKCK* that we have referred to throughout the present study.

As for the heir to Yün-men Ch'an, all three inscriptions agree that Pai-yün Shih-hsing was the chosen successor among the master's many disciples. In fact the *YKCK* stresses that Shih-hsing already had been

appointed an heir long before Wen-yen's death and was already leading his own congregation on Mt. Pai-yün. Consequently a monk from the community on Mt. Yün-men, one Fa-ch'iu (d.u.),⁶⁵ was chosen to carry on the founder's work there.⁶⁶ However, there is little doubt that Shih-hsing ranked as the most important among Wen-yen's followers by the time of the master's death. To this effect the *TSYKK* states that:

He (i.e. Wen-yen) handed down the *dharma* to the Great Master Shih-hsing of Mt. Pai-yün, the True Master Chih-hsing, whose assembly constituted an extensive crowd.⁶⁷

In this regard it is interesting to note that neither Shih-hsing nor Fa-ch'iu had left any extensive records behind, and that in comparison with other younger disciples of Wen-yen, the status of their transmission lines has been negligible in the later history of the Yün-men School.

However, our account of Yün-men Wen-yen's life does not end here. The master's immense popularity and obvious charisma did not allow him to be forgotten so soon and continued to exercise quite an influence for several years after his passing. In 958 almost ten years after the death of the master the stele inscription by Lei Yüeh was completed, ingraved on stone and set up in the monastery on Mt. Yün-men. Then there is a lapse of six years before we hear about the master again.⁶⁸ In the eighth month of the sixth year of Ta-pao, i.e. 963, the magistrate of Shao-chou, a certain Juan Shao-chuang (d.u.), saw the master in a dream. According to this dream Wen-yen was sitting on his seat in the Buddha Hall of his monastery and told the official that he had already been long enough inside the *stūpa*, and that Juan should inform the royal palace attendant Li T'o (d.u.),⁶⁹ so that his body could be taken

⁶⁵ Nothing is otherwise known about this monk. He does not figure among Wen-yen's disciples in the early Sung Ch'an records. However, he does have a short entry in the *WTHY*, Ch. 15, pp. 958-959, but with no biographical details.

⁶⁶ See appendix, p. 127.

⁶⁷ *TSYKK*, p. 184.

⁶⁸ There is some problem with the chronology in that the *TSTYH*. Here it is stated that the following happened 17 years after the master's death here, which would make it the year 966, p. 190. This must be a mistake of calculation on the part of the compiler since the stele dates to 964, p. 193.

⁶⁹ An influential eunuch official who rose to power during the reign of Liu Ch'ang around 962, when his adopted daughter was given as a consort to the king. See *WTS*, Ch. 65, pp. 818-820 and *NHCS*, Ch. 5, pp. 58-59.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁶² *TSYKK*, p. 184 and *TSTYH*, p. 190.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

out.⁷⁰ Juan went accordingly to the capital and reported the matter to Li T'o. After having delivered his report the magistrate returned to Shao-chou, where the military governor Liang Yen-o (d.u.) together with all the local officials was ordered to go to Mt. Yün-men and open the *stüpa*. To everybody's great surprise the master's body was intact, the eyes half open and glistening, the mouth slightly open with all the teeth remaining. The beard was fully grown and the body was surrounded by a halo of light. The *TSTYH* mentions that more than a thousand people were witness to this miraculous event.⁷¹ The body was then taken out of the *stüpa* and brought in procession to the capital where it was exhibited in the royal palace. The king, Liu Ch'ang (958-971)⁷² bowed to the body of the master terming it "vajra" or "indestructible body" (Ch. *chin-kang shen*). A great vegetarian feast was given in honour of the successors of the Yün-men School and the master received a new posthumous name; Great Master Ta-tz'u Yün-k'uang Shen Hung-ming, and the monastery's name was changed to Great Enlightenment Ch'an Temple. After one month the body was returned to Mt. Yün-men by Li T'o. Having been returned to the mountain the body supposedly was embalmed and coated with lacquer.⁷³ In 964 a new memorial stele was completed and set up in the temple. This is the *TSTYH* by Ch'en Shou-chung with the full account of the "indestructible body".

7. Wen-yen's relationship with the Southern Han court

In order to understand fully the nature of the relationship between Wen-yen and the rulers of Southern Han, which in many ways was of mutual benefit, it is necessary to briefly review the political situation prevailing in southern China around the end of the 9th century and the collapse of the T'ang Dynasty.

The aftermath of the Huang Ch'ao Rebellion in 878 paved the way for the rise of a series of semi-independent military-governors in Nan

⁷⁰ *TSTYH*, p. 190.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* pp. 190-191.

⁷² The last ruler of Southern Han. According to the *WTS* he favoured Taoism as represented by the priestess Fan Hu-tzu (d.u.), Ch. 65, pp. 817-820. Buddhism is not mentioned at all in connection with his person.

⁷³ According to recent reports the body of Wen-yen is still kept in the founder's hall in the temple on Mt. Yün-men. For a photo of this "indestructible body" see Charles Luk, *Secrets of Chinese Meditation*. London, 1964, title page.

Hai (modern Kuangtung). Among these were Liu Yin (d. 911), the chief-magistrate of Feng-chou,⁷⁴ who with the help of his two brothers Liu Yen and Liu T'ai (d.u.) successfully had taken possession of several counties by 905. Liu Yin died in 911 and his titles and power were transferred to the younger brother, Liu Yen, an able warrior and crafty statesman. Between 911 and 917 most of Nan Hai was in a perpetual state of war between the local war lords. Eventually Liu Yen's army prevailed and in 917 after the conquest of Shao-chou, he founded the state of Ta Yüeh and ascended the throne as Kao Tsu with Kuang-wang Fu (Kuang-chou) as his capital.

The year following his meeting with Wen-yen, he renamed his dynasty the Great Han (Ta Han). In 928 war broke out between Southern Han and the newly founded neighboring state of Ch'u (927-953). In 930-931 the realm was disturbed by internal troubles, and throughout Liu Yen's reign the political relations to the neighbouring states of Wu (902-938 A.D.) and Min (909-946 A.D.), which bordered on Southern Han to the north, were strained. Hence, the rulers of Southern Han sought in all possible ways to secure their position through military strategy as well as divine protection.

That Liu Yen already had Buddhist leanings is indicated by the fact that he was on intimate terms with Chih-sheng of the Ling-shu Monastery in Shao-chou. The exact nature of their relationship is not known, but we may infer on the basis of the available material that Liu Yen, if not a disciple of Chih-sheng, then at least sought his counsel in spiritual and possible political matters.⁷⁵ This may also account for the readiness with which he later accepts Wen-yen. That Liu Yen did indeed find the master to his liking is obvious from the fact that he wanted to keep him as his personal advisor in the royal palace. The inscriptions which all originated in government circles indicate that the master was highly regarded by the Southern Han rulers. To them he guaranteed that the

⁷⁴ This prefecture is identical with present-day Chiang-k'ou (also known as Feng-k'ai) on the upper Li River in Kuangtung.

⁷⁵ The phenomena of eminent Buddhist monks functioning as politico/spiritual advisors has a long precedence in Chinese and East Asian history. However, it appears that it was a particularly widespread practice during the late T'ang - Five Dynasties Period. As an example of this we can refer to the close relationship between King Chung-i of Wu-Yüeh (907-978) and T'ien-t'ai Te-shao (891-972), an influential master of the Fa-yen Ch'an School. See *CTL*, Ch. 25, p. 407bc, *Sung kao-seng chuan* (T. 2061), Ch. 7, p. 752b, and *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* (T. 2035), Ch. 8, p. 190c; Ch. 10, p. 206c.

Heavenly Mandate (Ch. *lien-ming*) belonged to the dynasty and in various ways foresaw that they would prevail in the wars with the neighbouring states as well as in internal power struggles. In addition to the accounts of the master's relationship to the Southern Han court, already given in the account of his life above, various passages in his recorded sayings contain information – albeit sometimes cryptic – on Wen-yen's views on the fortunes of Southern Han. Below follows a number of the more interesting of these passages:

Someone asked: "When turning our back to Ch'u, we face Wu. In such a situation, what shall we do?" The master said: "By facing south you will see the Dipper!"⁷⁶ The other asked again: "As the six countries are still not at peace, what should be done?" The master said: "For a thousand *li*, how bright it is!"⁷⁷ The other asked further: "But as it is not bright, then how about it?" The master said: "Trust that it has now occurred that the Way has been accomplished!"⁷⁸

Another dialogue goes:

Someone asked: "When you are in the private room in the lofty palace,⁷⁹ how is it then?" The master said: "Upside down!" The other pressed further saying: "How do you go about the affairs of the palace?" The master said: "With importance."⁸⁰

In yet another dialogue we find the theme of the six countries repeated. It goes as follows:

⁷⁶ "To face south" is what a Chinese ruler traditionally does in his hall of state. The Dipper or Seven Star is the constellation which controls the changes of the seasons. Hence the master's remark is a poetic but still clear expression of support to the mandate of Southern Han.

⁷⁷ I.e. the future is bright for Southern Han.

⁷⁸ *KL*, p. 549b.

⁷⁹ Referring to the master's dialogues with Liu Yen.

⁸⁰ *KL*, p. 549b.

Someone asked: "As the six countries are still not at peace, what should be done?" The master said: "When the clouds lift, the rain (becomes) coloured (?)"⁸¹

Despite the fact that Wen-yen's answers are extremely ambiguous, there can be little doubt that to the rulers of Southern Han they were interpreted as both auspicious and indicative of Heaven's favourable disposition toward the realm. In addition, the master's readiness to travel to the capital to teach as well as to participate in ceremonies for the war dead amply proved his loyalty to the cause of the ruling house.

The abundance of honours and more concrete favours which were heaped upon Wen-yen and disciples clearly shows that the master was considered a saint by the Southern Han monarchs, and although Ou-yang Hsiu's account of the state of Southern Han in his *Wu-tai shih* (*History of the Five Kingdoms*) makes no mention of Wen-yen, it does essentially nothing to change this view.⁸²

8. Conclusion

As an example of a Buddhist monk, who was highly successful both spiritually and politically. Yün-men Wen-yen stands out among the majority of the contemporary Ch'an masters. Not only was his life a dedicated struggle for spiritual clarification and preservation of the Ch'an tradition, but also one of an ongoing relationship with the secular world, in this case represented by the rulers of Southern Han. For this reason Wen-yen personified the ideal of a Ch'an master, who while preserving the essence and wisdom of the Way, did not hesitate to let it function for the benefit of his fellow men.

Wen-yen's religious career followed along the traditional path trodden by most of the eminent Ch'an masters during the T'ang Dynasty. Showing a deep and sincere spiritual longing at an early age, he single-mindedly sought the great awakening offered by the Ch'an tradition. Studying under both Tao-tsung and Hsüeh-feng he became heir to

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 549c. Here the master's answer is a bit more ambiguous than the preceding ones. It should however still be taken as an expression of his faith that Southern Han will eventually prevail.

⁸² It is commonly acknowledged that Ou-yang Hsiu consciously wanted to reduce or minimize the importance of Buddhism in his historical works of which *Hsin T'ang Shu* is considered the most important.

the two most powerful Ch'an lineages of the time, namely the Nan-yüeh Line and the Ch'ing-yüan Line, both considered as having come down from Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch. In addition he succeeded Ling-shu Chih-sheng, who also belonged to the Nan-yüeh Line, thus uniting in his own person the mainstream of T'ang Dynasty Ch'an. The originality of his own interpretation and teaching of Ch'an, although not the subject of the present study, lent a vitality and strength to the tradition which in time became part of the Ch'an heritage that has come down to us today.

That Wen-yen did not shrink from an active participation in government affairs shows another side of his personality. For him there was no separation between the "spiritual realm" and the "worldly realm", and he accepted his role as advisor to the kings of Southern Han as a natural duty. The idea of a ruler taking an eminent monk as imperial or royal advisor in times of national need has a long history in East Asia, and although the primary concern of the Southern Han rulers was no doubt to secure divine protection through the spiritual power of Wen-yen, there can be little doubt that a deep respect for the master as well as pious concerns and a belief in religious merit (Ch. *te*) played important roles as well. On the other hand we should not be blind to the possibility that the sources, which after all were produced by government officials, may have exaggerated Liu Yen's interest in Ch'an Buddhism as a means of flattery.

Where the state benefited spiritually and was guaranteed divine protection of Buddhism as well as dynastic legitimation, Wen-yen and his successors could rely on official goodwill and support as well as an economic basis on which to found their temples. That the support received from the government and also from local magnates was considerable, is borne out by the fact that the Yün-men School flourished greatly a few decades after the passing of the founder. Numerous temples were built and adherents of the school could be found all over South China. The Sung unification which brought the territories of Southern Han under the control of the new dynasty in 971 A.D. did not hinder the expansion of the Yün-men School. On the contrary a series of Yün-men masters worked in K'ai-feng, the Sung capital, where they enjoyed imperial favours. By the early 11th century the Yün-men School had attained the status of one of the most influential Ch'an schools in China.

Appendix

YÜN-MEN SHAN KUANG-T'AI CH'AN-YÜAN
K'UANG-CHEN TA-SHIH HSING LU
YKCKK, T.

1988, pp. 575c-576a

Recorded by Lei Yüeh of the Chi-hsien tien

The master's given name was Wen-yen and his family name was Chang. His family had for generations been natives of Yung-hsing in Su-chou. In fact he was a descendant in the 13th generation of [Chang] Han, an advisor of the Eastern Office to the Chin Prince Ssu-ma Chiung. The master showed signs of spiritual ability at an early age in accordance with circumstances. While still very young he turned his back on the world and consequently left his home to become a disciple under the Vinaya master Chih-ch'eng of K'ung-wang Temple. Through his intelligent disposition he acquired wisdom, and his *prajñā* eloquence was bestowed by Heaven. In general when he recited the various scriptures he never thought it troublesome to read them more than once, and Ch'eng esteemed him highly.

Coming of age he shaved his head and received the complete precepts on the ordination platform. Later he returned to Ch'eng and lectured there for several years mastering the meaning of the *Fourfold Vinaya* as well as the discipline according to the *Sūrangama Sūtra*. As his capacity for enlightenment was issuing forth from deep inside him he then took his leave of Ch'eng and went to Ch'an master Tao-tsung in Mu-chou.

Tsung was a [direct] descendant of Huang-po. Knowing the Way he did not dwell in the world, but lived by himself in retirement in an old temple. Even though he had said farewell to the world, still he was highly revered. When he received those who came to meet him he took the opportunity to discuss with vigorous wit, and no one was permitted to stand and deliberate. When the master (i.e. Wen-yen) first came for an interview he had to knock three times on his [Tsung's] door. Tsung then opened the door but when the master wanted to enter, Tsung took a hold of him saying: "A drill from Ch'in times!" With this he [Wen-yen] suddenly had a vivid enlightenment. After this he had interviews [with the Ch'an master] for several years and penetrated deeply into the profound and the subtle. Tsung knew that his spiritual capacity was extensive and as a vehicle of enlightenment he was qualified for a

position [as a teacher of Ch'an]. Consequently he addressed [Wen-yen] saying: "I am not your [real] master. At present there is the Ch'an master Hsüeh-feng I-ts'un. You should go to his place and call on him. There is no further reason for you to stay here!"

Complying with his (i.e. Tao-tsung's) wishes the master entered Ling and went to Hsüeh-feng where he deepened his study [of Ch'an]. His way tallied with Ts'un's and consequently the transmission of the school was secretly given to him. Having completed his training the master left Ling and visited the masters everywhere in all directions, examining them carefully according to his own outstanding norm. With his sharp eloquence he became known throughout the realm.

Later he went to the *bodhimanda* of Ch'an-master Ling-shu Chih-sheng. Chih-sheng already knew of his coming and suddenly beat the drum calling the assembly together and requesting them to go and bid the head monk welcome. At that time the master (i.e. Wen-yen) really arrived. Prior to this Chih-sheng had stayed at Ling-shu for several decades, but the head monk's place in the [Ch'an] hall had been empty. The assembly had repeatedly questioned the abbot on this matter, but Chih-sheng had not complied. He once said: "The head monk is now travelling around!" When the master arrived, a head monk was appointed for the first time.

When Chih-sheng was approaching death, he wanted the master to take his place. Placing a private letter in a box he addressed his disciples saying: "After my demise his majesty may come here, and I request that you give this to him." It actually came to pass that the king went to visit the mountain [on which the temple was situated]. However, when the royal carriage arrived, Chih-sheng, who had already foreseen this, had taken his seat in the hall and passed away while sitting in the full lotus posture. When the king arrived he was already dead. The king asked for the master's will and accordingly the disciples brought out the box and handed it respectfully to him. The sovereign opened the box and took out the letter which said: "The eye of men and gods is the head monk in the [Ch'an] hall!" The king thereupon ordered the prefect Ho Hsi-fan with full ceremonies to request the master to continue [as the head of] the Dharma Assembly. The sovereign admired him and invited him several times to come to the court to stay. Each time he consulted him [the master], his answers were always fitting like an echo. The sovereign furthermore bowed to him and bestowed upon the master the purple robe and a [honorific] name.

Later [the master] moved his abode to Mt. Yün-men. Clearing away the ruins [of a former temple?]. He had large new halls established. The master personally supervised the construction of the Patriarchs' Hall, and for twenty-five years his influence reached the four directions [causing] the *dharma* to flower greatly. The followers of Ch'an flocked to him and those who entered the gate of his house were countless. At the time the great master Shih-hsing of Mt. Pai-yün was the chief disciple.

In 949 on the 10th day of the 4th month he (i.e. Wen-yen) entered the silence. At dawn he wrote a letter in which he bade the sovereign good-bye, and expressed his last will. After this he seated himself in the lotus posture and passed away. Subsequently by royal order he was granted a *stūpa* and a stele inscription. In accordance with the master's will it was ordered that they place his intact body in the abbot's room. The sovereign himself wrote the inscription for the stele of the *stūpa* and hung it in the abbot's room, and there were to be no further activities. The disciples then, in accordance with the custom, enshrined the master in the *stūpa* in the abbot's room.

The master first transmitted his *dharma* to the disciple Shih-hsing so that he could continue the work of enlightenment. All acknowledge (?) that Shih-hsing already was transmitting the Way and bringing up his followers, and therefore they transferred the authority to the other disciple from the assembly, Fa-ch'iu, to carry on in the master's place.

Alas! The World Teacher spoke about *nirvāna*, so that we may practice the abstruse. I, Yüeh, saw the results of the master's teachings and know a general outline of his activity. How dare I not write about it in order to transmit it to posterity.

Recorded by Lei Yüeh of the Chi-hsien Hall on the 25th day of the 4th month in the year 949.

List of characters

Ch'an 禪
 Ch'an-lin seng pao-chuan 禪林僧寶傳
 Chang 張
 Ch'ang-ch'ing Szu 長慶寺
 Ch'en Ts'ao 陳操
 Ch'en Shou-chung 陳守中
 Ch'en Ts'un-su 陳尊宿
 Chia-hsing 嘉興
 Ch'ien-ho 乾和
 Chih-ch'eng 志澄
 Chih-hsing 志庠
 Chih-sheng 知聖
 chin-kang shen 金剛身
 Ch'in 秦
 Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu 景德傳燈錄
 Ch'ing-leng 慶稜
 Ch'ing-shu 請疏
 Chiu-chiang 九江
 Chiu-chou 九州
 Chodang chip 祖堂集
 chün-shou 郡守
 chung-tao 中道
 Fa-ch'iu 法球
 fa-ling 法齡
 fa-ming 法名
 Fa-yen Tsung 法眼宗
 Feng-chou 封州
 Ho Hsi-fan 何希範
 Hsiang-ku Shan 象骨山
 Hsüan-sha 玄沙
 Hsüeh-feng I-ts'un 雪峰義存

Hsüeh-feng yü-lu 雪峰語錄
 Huang-po Hsi-yün 黃蘗希運
 Hui-leng 慧稜
 Hui-neng 慧能
 i-tzu kuan 一子關
 Ju-yüan hsien 乳源縣
 Juan Shao-chuang 阮紹莊
 k'ai-shan 開山
 Kan-ming Kan-feng 乾明乾峰
 Kao-tsu Ti 高祖帝
 Kao-tsu T'ien-huang Ta-ti 高祖天皇大帝
 Ku-shan 鼓山
 Kuang-chou 廣州
 Kuang-wang Fu 光王府
 K'uang-chen Ta-shih 匡真大師
 K'uang-t'ai Ch'an-yüan 匡泰禪院
 Kuei-tsung Tan-chüan 歸宗澹權
 Kuei-yang Tsung 洵仰宗
 kung-an 公案
 K'ung-wang Ssu 空王寺
 Lao Su 老宿
 Lei Yüeh 雷岳
 Li T'o 李托
 Liang Yen-o 梁延鄂
 Lin-chi Tsung 臨濟宗
 Ling-ling 嶺嶺
 Ling-shu 靈樹
 Ling-shu Ju-min 靈樹如敏
 Liu 劉
 Liu Ch'ang 劉鋹
 Liu Pin 劉玠
 Liu Sheng 劉晟
 Liu T'ai 劉台

Liu Yen 劉巖
 Liu Yin 劉隱
 Mu-chou 睦州
 Nan Hai 南海
 Nan Han 南漢
 nien-p'u 年譜
 O-hu Chih-fu 鵝湖智孚
 Pai-yün Shan 白雲山
 Pai-yün Shih-hsing 白雲實性
 Pao-lin Ssu 寶林寺
 P'o-yang Hu 鄱陽湖
 Shao-chou 韶州
 sheng-hua 生話
 shih-chieh 十戒
 Shih-erh shih ko 十二時歌
 shou-tso 首座
 Shu-shan Kuang-jen 疏山光仁
 Ta Han Shao-chou Yün-men Shan Kuang-t'ai Ch'an-yüan ku K'uang-
 chen Ta-shih shih-hsing pei 大漢韶州雲門山光泰禪
 院故匡真大師實性碑
 Ta Han Shao-chou Yün-men Shan Ta-chüeh Ch'an-ssu Ta-tz'u Yün-
 k'uang Shen Hung-ming Ta-shih pei 大漢韶州雲門山
 大覺禪寺大慈雲匡聖弘明大師碑
 Ta-tz'u Yün-k'uang Sheng Hung-ming 大慈雲匡聖弘明
 Ta Yüeh 大越
 T'ang-chou 常州
 Tao-tsung 道蹤
 t'ien-ming 天命
 T'ien-t'ung Hsien-ch'i 天重咸啟
 Tokiwa Daijo 常盤大定
 Ts'ao-ch'i 曹溪
 Ts'ao-shan Pen-chi 曹山本寂
 Ts'ao-tung Tsung 曹洞宗

Tung-shan Liang-chieh 洞山良价
 Tung-yen K'ohsiu 洞巖可休
 Tz'u-kuang Yüan 慈光院
 wen-ta 問答
 wu-chia 五家
 Wu-tai shih 五代史
 Yu-fang i-u 遊方遺錄
 yü-lu 語錄
 Yüeh-chou 越州
 Yün-men K'uang-chen Ch'an-shih kuang-lu 雲門匡真禪師
 廣錄
 Yün-men Shan 雲門山
 Yün-men Shan chih 雲門山志
 Yün-men Shan Kuang-t'ai Ch'an-yüan K'uang-chen Ta-shih hsing-lu
 雲門山光泰禪院匡真大師行錄
 Yün-men Tsung 雲門宗
 Yün-men Wen-yen 雲門文偃