

A Pliable Life: Facts and Fiction about the Figure of the Chinese Meditation Master Wolun*

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I Object of Research

The Chinese meditation master Tanlun – better known to posterity by his nickname Wolun – passed away in 626 AD at the age of over eighty years in Zhuangyan monastery in Chang'an, officially leaving behind one lay student and no work that was included in the Buddhist canon. Judging from the scarce biographical material available, Wolun is under no account representative of the whole, rather heterogeneous movement of early Meditation Buddhism in China. Instead he must even be regarded as an isolated case that after his decease has seemingly left little to no impact to the immediate Meditation Buddhist movement in China proper. Nonetheless, a number of Chinese and Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts and autochthon Tibetan texts witness Wolun's posthumous fame. Those materials prove that a meditation practice connected to a certain Wolun belong properly within a regional current of Chinese Meditation Buddhism, known as Cig car ba (sudden teaching), prevailing in Dunhuang and Tibet from the 8th and 9th centuries.¹ Then, it seems that the knowledge of the supposedly forgotten 6th century meditation master Wolun travelled back to China via Dunhuang. Wolun is mentioned once more in the 9th century by Zongmi (780–841) in the preface to his doxographical treatise on Meditation Buddhist Schools, in the *Chanyuan zhuquan ji duxu*. Very much in the tradition of his own teacher Shenhui (684–758) Zongmi's material is presented with an underlying doctrinal agenda, to reinforce the classification of sudden and gradual teachings and to show the superiority of the former to the latter. Eventually a verse attributed to Wolun – extant in Dunhuang manuscripts – takes its own course and reappears at the beginning of the 11th century in a hagiography of none other than the great advocate of the sudden teachings, Huineng himself. Here the figure Wolun is put into action as a direct adversary of Huineng.

The aim of the present paper is twofold: Firstly, the historical Wolun will be portrayed on the basis of the available biographical information. Secondly, by shedding light on the complex context surrounding the *fictional* figure Wolun, I will picture how over the course of 500 years this admittedly not very outstanding historical personality posthumously enjoyed fame in Dunhuang and Tibet and that he was eventually even incorporated into a particular doctrinal agenda of the Southern School of Meditation Buddhism in Song China. Thus this case study will exemplify how a 6th century meditation master, who during his lifetime was completely

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1 Some of the Tibetan materials are not discussed in the present paper. They have already been treated in Meinert 2006.

outside the mainstream, came to represent different doctrinal positions in different cultural settings hundreds of years after his death – perhaps in fact only by historical accident!

II The Historical Wolun

The biographical sources concerning Wolun are very scant. Daoxuan alone honours Wolun less than twenty years after his decease in 645 AD with a brief biography in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*.² The only other source is the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* authored by Huixiang 680–683. Here is mentioned a short episode of Wolun's life in an entry to the Tang master Haiyun.³

These two only sources concerning Wolun's life raise a number of questions. Although both materials were edited relatively soon after Wolun's death, it is not clear where they draw their information from. There is no known epigraphic material that could have served as a model.⁴ In the case of the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* it is possible that Daoxuan could fall back on an oral tradition. This might explain the anecdotic character of the hagiography and its lack of concrete historical facts. Daoxuan himself took residence at Ximing monastery in Chang'an in the Wude years (618–627), at a time when Wolun was living in Zhuangyan monastery in Chang'an as well.⁵ Theoretically Daoxuan could relate episodes about Wolun's life that were told to him by contemporaries in the capital. Nonetheless it remains uncertain why many anecdotes cannot be grasped historically. In the case of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* it is likewise obscure on which source Huixiang's related episode is based – over fifty years after Wolun's death – since it is not mentioned by Daoxuan either.

With his compilation of the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Daoxuan pursues a particular aim, namely, to describe the life of a monastic not simply against a secular background, but to interpret his life story religiously motivated and as an expression of the Buddhist law and the principle of cause and effect.⁶ Only the merging of secular and religious elements enables the individual to transcend the ordinary levels of human existence so that even thaumaturgy becomes plausible. This mode of presentation is meant to address Chinese educated aristocrats since their values are also cultivated by Buddhist monks.⁷ An ideal career of a monk could be like the one of Wolun's contemporary Sengchou (480–560): birth into an aristocratic family, study of secular classics, appointment at court, renunciation of secular life, years of learning as a novice, ascetic years, breakthrough and realisation, years of vagrant life and performance of miracles, compassionate deeds in secular setting, appointment as a Buddhist master to court, and finally an

2 XGSZ 20.598a.20–c.4. A translation of this hagiography is attached in appendix A. Appendix C provides a chronological time table listing all sources concerning Wolun, most of which are mentioned in the present article as well.

3 GQLZ 2.1097b.17–29. A translation of this passage is given in appendix B on p. 202. The episode mentioned by Huixiang is copied in two other sources: in *Hongzan fabao zhuan* (7.35a.18–b.2) compiled shortly after Huixiang's *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and in Haiyun's hagiography in *Song gaoseng zhuan* (SGSZ 27.882c.9–11).

4 However, in the hagiography in the XGSZ are certain markers (*run*, *you*, etc.) that possibly hint to the existence of various textual sources from which the different episodes have been put together for the present form.

5 SGSZ 14.790b.5–791b.26.

6 The XGSZ is a continuation of Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan*, the first Chinese collection of hagiographies compiled between 519 and 533. The *Gaoseng zhuan* describes life stories of monks, following precisely the criteria for the period from 670 to 519 mentioned above (Wright 1990:4).

7 Wright 1990:74–80.

epigraph on the occasion of his death.⁸ Only very few of these characteristics apply to Wolun as well. Thus Wolun did not necessarily meet an ideal that Chinese historiography aimed to hand down. Nonetheless, he must have gained a certain degree of recognition in order to merit being included in the collection of hagiographies of *eminent monks* (*gaoseng*).

Concerning the biographical information about Wolun, Daoxuan's *Xu gaoseng zhuan* and Huixiang's *Gu Qingliang zhuan* provide a few short episodes, mention several years and places of names connected to certain events and a number of contemporary masters. Very little is told about Wolun's teachings. There is no mention of any scriptures composed by Wolun. On the one hand, both sources depict an image of a meditation master who enjoys a rather secluded life, devoting himself to an equivocal meditation practice. On the other hand, he is granted protection by the court in the capital Chang'an and gives teachings to some of the most renowned contemporary masters. Although he is especially prominent as a meditation master, he nonetheless is active beyond the limits of his own sect and associates with exegetes, debaters and Vinaya masters as well.

Concretely, Daoxuan's hagiography relates that Wolun was ordained as a monk at the age of twelve, circa 557 AD, by a certain meditation master Duan in his apparent hometown Bianzhou, present day Kaifeng in Henan province. This particular Duan is difficult to identify properly. Although the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* mentions a master named Jingduan (possibly 542–606) who is also renowned for his meditative absorption (*xixing dingye*),⁹ many details seem to contradict the notion that he is Wolun's first teacher. Because Jingduan is hardly older than Wolun – assuming the dates are correct –, it seems that he lived in his early years in the northeast, in Yangzhou, and was ordained at the age of fourteen shortly before Wolun.¹⁰ However, this Jingduan fits well into Wolun's surroundings due to later events and his imperial connection, as will be referred to again below.

In any event, the hagiography explains that Wolun and this Duan had different opinions about meditation from an early stage: while Duan practiced a gradual insight meditation (*guan*), Wolun takes the more radical view that nothing exists that could hold the mind. Already in his early years Wolun surprises his teacher with his talent to enter in a state of meditative absorption (*ruding*) even in everyday affairs, like when getting meals in the dining hall. Thereby he stands out against his fellow monks and to a certain degree lets himself appear as a thaumaturge.

Already after his full ordination (which usually takes place around the age of 20, that is circa 565 AD), Wolun decides neither to study canonical scriptures nor to venerate the Buddha. Instead, in all circumstances of life he practices the meditation of transcending thoughts (*li nian*).¹¹ Unfortunately, Daoxuan does not explain any further the meaning of this practice. Yet according to him this meditation practice seems to be the core of Wolun's teachings. Further down it is described as an unsurpassable principle (*miao li*) that is not widespread. This is all that the hagiography tells about Wolun's teachings.

Daoxuan states another episode from Wolun's daily life at the monastery. At the time when he was responsible for administrative duties – again there is no mention of time and place – Wolun appears particularly attentive and circumspect. It is told that family members fed the dogs at the monastery with the monk's meals. Wolun is upset about their careless attitude. The situa-

8 Andel 1995:35.

9 XGSZ 18.576b.27–c.27.

10 XGSZ 18.576b.17–28.

11 For the practice of *li nian*, cf. McRae 1986:223 and Zeuschner 1983.

tion is solved when all the dogs vomit these meals as if on Wolun's command so that he could rebuke the family members for their behaviour. Again this is an odd episode, which merely points to a strength in character or even describes Wolun as a thaumaturge. However, in the wider historical context this episode is part of a tradition that is taken up systematically at the latest in Song times in the genre of *Chuandeng lu*. In retrospect everyday situations are described in order to take the awakening and insight of Tang masters out of the context of abstract Indian Buddhist philosophy and put it instead into the actual words and deeds of *real* human beings. This kind of transformation attaches even to peculiar things a touch of ordinariness so that the Buddhist teachings move considerably closer to the sense of life of lay people.¹²

One of the few concrete years mentioned in Wolun's hagiography is the year 602 AD. But even in this case the actual information concerning Wolun is rather scanty, although the historical context is clear and well documented in other sources. Daoxuan relates:

仁壽二年獻后亡背。興造禪室召而處之。還卽拵關依舊習業。時人目之爲臥倫也。

When empress Xian passed away in the second year of Renshou (602), a meditation hall was built, and Lun was summoned to take up residence there. After his return he retired and followed his activities as before. His contemporaries called him *Reclining Lun* (Wolun).¹³

The exact historical context surrounding this event can be precisely reconstructed according to other hagiographies in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* and other historical materials. It is again surprising that Daoxuan chose to give detailed accounts in other master's hagiographies, whereas this historical event is dismissed with merely one sentence in the case of Wolun. A lack of information is certainly not the true reason.

The year 602 AD marked the death of empress Wenxian (553–602), the spouse of the founder of Sui dynasty, Sui Wendi, the former general Yang Jian (541–604). In this context historical background information is necessary, particularly in regard to the state's relationship with Buddhism during the Sui dynasty. In 566 AD Yang Jian married a daughter of the Dugu clan, the latter empress Wenxian. In 573 AD, their own daughter Yang Lihua was married to Yuwen Yun, who shortly thereafter inherited the throne of his father Yuwen Yong of the Zhou dynasty. To Yang Jian this alliance meant his entry and ascent within the imperial family. When Yuwen Yun proved incapable to properly carry on with the heritage of his father, Yang Jian usurped the throne in 581 AD. Yet this sudden takeover did not find real approval with the people. Although Yang Jian is described as a rather sober character, he is said to have looked for any explanations – particularly prophesies of fortune-tellers – to legitimise the claim of power by his family. In the year 600 AD, having completed his sixtieth year, a moment when he traditionally would abdicate, he singularly failed to do so. There is good reason to doubt his inclination toward and tolerance of Buddhism and Daoism since the year 600 AD. He had hoped to find both new supporters and other-worldly protection against the consequences of his own arrogance. Eventually in 601 AD he issued a decree to establish Buddhism and Daoism as favoured by the state; from that point onward any slander of Buddhist and Daoist images was regarded as a criminal act. His spouse, empress Wenxian, went down in history as a fervent Buddhist. Upon her death in 602 AD the augury Wang Shao apparently tells that Wenxian was said to be an emanation of Avalokiteśvara who protects Yang Jian

12 Foulk 1993:153.

13 XGSZ 20.598b.10–12.

beyond death.¹⁴ This background information proves how much the state was intermingling with Buddhist affairs and even trying to “guide” its development.

In some other hagiographies of the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* it is mentioned that the Sui Emperor Wendi erected the Changding temple in Chang’an in honour of the late Wenxian. By imperial decree, Buddhist masters from all over the country were invited to take up residence there. In this context, it is mentioned in the episode about Wolun in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* that a certain lay practitioner named Gao Shoujie, disciple of master Haiyun from mount Wutai, was sent to Wolun to the Changding temple.¹⁵ Thus, Wolun was one among the invited celebrities who came to live in the new monastery. The way he received this honour remains up to speculation. Maybe he was introduced to the court by master Jingduan – in which case *he* was his earliest master. In Jingduan’s short hagiography it is mentioned that he was teaching in the court already at the time when Wenxian was still alive. He was also among the masters invited to the newly founded Changding temple. Another invited monk was a certain Baogong (541–621).¹⁶ He seemed to have had a more responsible administrative duty, so that he was granted the title “Great Virtues One” (*da de*) 620 AD as one of ten monks.¹⁷ This award clearly demonstrates that among the invited monks some were more important than others. Wolun must have been only one among many invited monks and maybe significant enough for Daoxuan to simply mention this event in a few words.

Furthermore, Daoxuan refers to several other masters who appear to have associated with and received teachings from Wolun regularly – presumably in the capital. The first to be mentioned is Dharma master Can from Xingshan monastery. He is identified as meditation master Sengcan (529–613) who – like Wolun – originated from Bianzhou. He is renowned as one of the most famous debaters of the country and in 591 AD comes through the favour of the emperor to Xingshan monastery in Chang’an. In later years he enjoys more imperial protection. In 610 he distinguishes himself as the winner in a debating competition of more than thirty invited debaters.¹⁸ In his hagiography Daoxuan praises Wolun in an interaction with Sengcan. Wolun could meet one of the most famous contemporary debaters with the result of Sengcan prostrating to Wolun in admiration. Sengcan seems to have challenged the so-called teaching of *meditation of reclining* (*wochan*). His victory over Sengcan in debating qualifies Wolun as an eminent master of his time.

This assumption is also confirmed by the fact that other well-known masters received teachings from Wolun, namely Dharma master Jinglin (565–640),¹⁹ Vinaya master Xuanwan (562–636)²⁰ and his disciple Sengjia (Sangha). Jinglin as well as Xuanwan associated with the highest Buddhist circles and were among the closer disciples of master Tanqian (542–607). In the late

14 Boodberg 1979:320–333, who, however, does not give the correct names. For the proper names of members of the imperial families, see Chen 2002:235, 238–39.

15 *GQLZ* 2.1097b.21–22.

16 *XGSZ* 18.576bc.15–23. Chen Jinhua (Chen 2002:188) mentions Wolun and Baogong among a group of twelve monks who entered the Changding temple at that time.

17 *XGSZ* 11.512c.24–a.4 und *FGDCD* 371b. The term *da de* renders Sanskrit *bhadanta* “a virtuous, highly esteemed person”. Cf. *HYDCD* 2:1391b and *DCBT* 346a.

18 *XGSZ* 9, particularly 500b.05, 500c.22–501a.2.

19 For the hagiography of Dharma master Jinglin, see: *XGSZ* 20.590a.3–591b.14.

20 For the hagiographies of Vinaya master Xuanwan, cf. *XGSZ* 22.616a.1–617c.12 and *Fozu tongji* 39.364c.2–26.

570s Tanqian secured in north China a copy of Paramārtha's translation of the Yogācāra treatise *She dacheng lun*. Following the Buddhist persecution in 574 AD he fled to the south. Upon returning to the north after the foundation of the Sui Dynasty, he was teaching this text in the imperial palace in Chang'an since the early 580s.²¹ He ranks with the most learned Buddhist monks of the time and all famous monks in Chang'an visited his lectures.²² He does not belong to a certain lineage of Meditation Buddhism but is more like Wolun an isolated case. In his teachings he merges his experience in meditation practice, which is his earliest encounter with Buddhism, with the learning of the Yogācāra philosophy.²³ The *Xu gaoseng zhuan* gives the impression that Wolun attracted even disciples from far more famous and erudite masters and in this regard even ranks him on a similar level with someone like Tanqian.

In this context master Jinglin is of particular importance.²⁴ Daoxuan says about Jinglin in his hagiography that after the study of Buddhist texts like the *Shidi lun* in his early years, he eventually gave up teaching in order to practice meditation (*xi chan*). One of his practices was the transcending of thoughts (*li nian*), the same practice Wolun is renowned for. Even after Jinglin has met and studied with the famous master Tanqian, he continued to practice meditation in seclusion.²⁵ Although it is not clear whether he learned the transcending of thoughts from Wolun, nonetheless the preference for meditation brings him very close to Wolun.

Finally, it is said in Wolun's hagiography that he passed away in 626 AD in a place close to the Zhuangyan monastery after a serious illness. In the above-mentioned hagiography of master Baogong it is told that the name of Changding temple – built in honour of the late empress Wenxian – was changed to Zhuangyan monastery in 619 AD.²⁶ Wolun must have lived at this monastery or close by since at least around 603 AD. Moreover, before his death Wolun is taken care of by Sengjia, about whom it was said that he came to Wolun regularly together with the masters Jinglin and Xuanwan. Sengjia is a disciple of Xuanwan and often accompanies his teacher on his ways. He was particularly fond of the quiet,²⁷ so that it made perfect sense that he was drawn to Wolun practicing quiet meditative absorption. The picture given of Wolun shortly before his death is that of a fearless master who exactly knows the time of his death. This again makes him appear as a thaumaturge – a characteristic that resonates in many of the mentioned anecdotes.

Following Wolun's own hagiography is attached another short biography of the lay disciple Bao Cishi. In his formal arrangement, Daoxuan follows the secular historiography. There, traditionally a short biography of the son of the protagonist is added to the main biography.²⁸ Only scant information is given about Wolun's disciple Bao. He appears to be of high social standing, yet does not keep with his station in his outer appearance, renounces a secular life at an early age and practices meditation with Wolun for over twenty years. Oddly enough, this lay person is the only mentioned disciple. Therefore, it is not clear whether Wolun actually associated himself with aristocratic lay circles on a wider scale or whether his disciple Bao was

21 Chen 2002:15–17.

22 Paul 1984:43–45. For Tanqian and, *Wang shifei lun*, one of his few extant texts, cf. Lai 1983:65–87.

23 Lai 1983:73.

24 Chen Jinhua (Chen 2002:43, 45, 47–48) also mentions Jinglin.

25 XGSZ 20.590a.15–b.11.

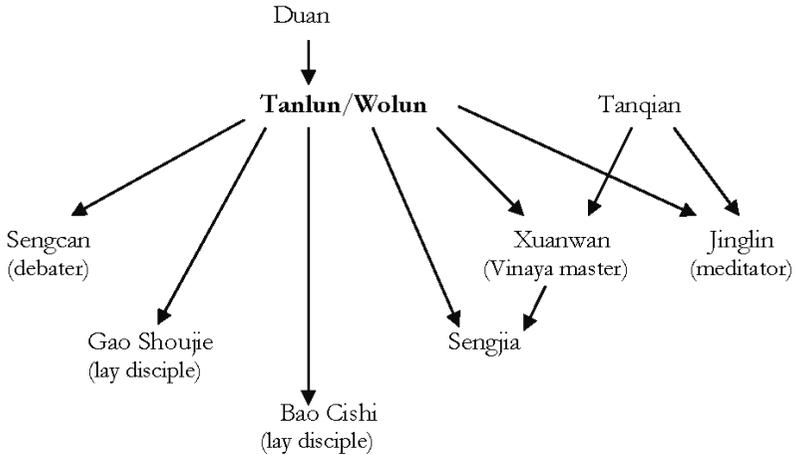
26 XGSZ 11.513a.2–3. According to Chen Jinhua (Chen 2002:184), there is another source which dates the renaming one year earlier (618 AD).

27 XGSZ 22.617c.7–9.

28 Wright 1990:80.

merely an exception. Thus Wolun may rather be regarded as a solitary figure in the Meditation Buddhist movement of the late 6th and early 7th centuries. Nonetheless, for the *Xu gaoseng zhuàn* it is somewhat unusual to have a biography of a lay person attached and not of a monk. This fact suggests that Wolun was not only vital for advocates of various Buddhist schools but also held an important position in the lay tradition.

To summarise, the historically documented surroundings of Wolun may be shown in the following graph (the arrows express a teacher-disciple relationship):



The historical Wolun, who was renowned for the meditation practice of transcending thoughts, was active during his lifetime on the periphery of several important contemporaries in the capital. Some of them enjoyed a much higher degree of imperial protection than Wolun himself. According to the picture sketched in the historical sources compiled shortly after his death, Wolun's influence in his time seems to have been nonetheless marginal. However, posthumously the fictitious figure Wolun gained a much greater importance first in Dunhuang and Tibet and then in China as well.

III Posthumous fame of the fictitious Wolun

The posthumous rise of Wolun is documented by three sources.²⁹ Firstly, Wolun's importance in Dunhuang and eventually in Tibet becomes evident in the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscript P. tib. 116, that dates most likely from the earlier years of the Tibetan dominion over Dunhuang (about 780–841),³⁰ and secondly, Wolun is again re-evaluated in two Chinese sources, 833 AD in Zongmi's doxographical treatise concerning all Meditation Buddhist sects in Tang China, the *Chanyuan zhuquan ji duxu* and again in 1004 AD in the *Jingde chuanheng lu*. All three

29 There are also a number of Dunhuang manuscripts extant, dealing with the actual teachings of a certain Wolun, namely the *Wolun chanshi kanshin fa*, *Wolun fashi jie* and *hSam gtan gyi mkeban po Nyal ba'i 'kebor lo sems bde bar bz'ag pa'i rab tu byung ba'i yon tan ben [chos]*. Yet the textual history of the various copies of these manuscripts is too complex and beyond the scope of the present paper. I will discuss it in a separate forthcoming article. However, I briefly touched on these manuscripts in an earlier publication (Meinert 2006).

30 Kimura 1981:188, footnote. 15.

materials trace a development of the Meditation Buddhist movement and thus also of Wolun that evidently took place after the death of the historical person Wolun. Here Wolun is seen as taking over different fictitious roles.

The question of how the news of a Wolun in the Sui capital Chang'an reached Dunhuang some 150 years after the death of the historical person is up to speculation today. The Dunhuang manuscript P. tib. 116 gives a short quotation of Wolun whose name is here rendered as 'Gya lun.³¹ The quotation is a Tibetan translation from the beginning of the *Wolun chanshi kanxin ja*, which is extant in the three Dunhuang manuscripts Tokushi Yūshō, S. chin. 1494, and S. chin. 6103.³² Of particular interest here is the context in which the quotation occurs. In order to prove that the Cig car ba doctrine, that is Chinese Meditation Buddhism, is "in complete harmony with the instructions of sagacious masters",³³ P. tib. 116 lists eight masters each with a quotation: (1) Nāgārjuna, (2) Bodhidharma, (3) Wuzhu, (4) Xiangmo Zang, (5) Ardasīr (A rdan hvar), (6) Wolun (Gya lun), (7) Mahāyāna und (8) Āryadeva.³⁴ Even if the text does not explicitly speak about a lineage of transmission, it is likely that the names of these masters were of local or regional importance – although most of these masters never lived in Dunhuang. It is certainly not a lineage of teachers and their disciples, since their respective living places and lifetimes vary greatly. Not all of these men actually played a role in the context of Dunhuang Meditation Buddhism. (1) Nāgārjuna and (8) Āryadeva, his most important disciple, are clearly mentioned in order to link the local current to the Indian tradition; and (2) Bodhidharma, the posthumously appointed first patriarch of Meditation Buddhism in China, is mentioned in order to connect this series of masters to the Central China mainstream. (3) Wuzhu (714–774) is the head of a local Sichuanese tradition, the Baotang School (*baotang zong*).³⁵ According to the Chinese account of the great debate of bSam yas, the *Dumnu dacheng zhengli jue*, (4) Xiangmo Zang is one of Mahāyāna's teachers, the advocate of the sudden teachings. Though Chinese historiography does not mention this teacher-student relationship, nonetheless two major anthologies of hagiographies list Xiangmo Zang as one of the main disciples of the famous Northern School master Shenxiu.³⁶ He receives ordination by the meditation master Mingzan at Guangfu monastery near Luoyang (present day Henan) who is himself a student of Puji (652–739).³⁷ Xiangmo Zang, together with Shenxiu and his disciple Puji, eventually advocates sitting meditation (*zhuochan*). Moreover, the *Song gaoseng zhuan* also lists a certain Yifu and Xiaofu among Shenxiu's most important disciples. The former seemed to have been a teacher of the above-mentioned Mahāyāna.³⁸

Concerning (6) Wolun, he neither had a teacher called Ardasīr nor a disciple named Mahāyāna. (5) Ardasīr is mentioned in the manuscript P. tib. 996 where he is renowned as a Central

31 P. tib. 116:VIb, f. 167.2.

32 Cf. footnote 29 above.

33 P. tib. 116:VIb, f. 163.4; cf. also Faber 1985:71.

34 P. tib. 116:VIb, f. 164.1–168.2.

35 *Lidai fabaoji*, 186a.15–195c.15.

36 *JDCDL* 4.232b.18–19; *SGSZ* 8.760a.9–27.

37 John McRae (McRae 1986:68–69) mentions Mingzan as the most important advocate of the Northern School in southern China at mount Heng.

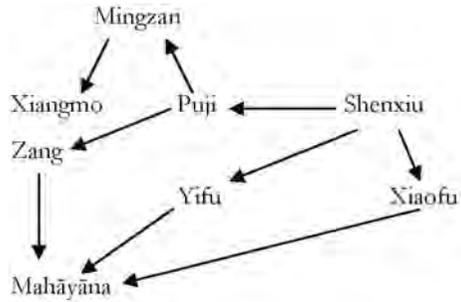
38 Demiéville 1973:26. Dafu as Mahāyāna's teacher, cf. *ZIJ* f. 157a and Demiéville 1987:161.

Asian meditation master active in the first half of the 8th century in Kuchā.³⁹ He is most likely of Persian origin.⁴⁰ And, of course, (7) Mahāyāna is renowned as one of the main protagonists of the legendary 8th century Sino-Indian controversy – well documented in the *Dunhuang zhenli jue*.⁴¹ Thus P. tib. 116 presents a context where Wolun is ranked among other eight century masters who were well-received in Dunhuang. Although Wolun is the only figure who did *not* live in the eighth century, this fictitious Wolun was in fact even integrated in a regional current of Meditation Buddhism in Dunhuang. I would put forward the hypothesis that moreover a textual tradition was attached to this fictitious Wolun, namely the *Wolun chanshi kanxin fa*, *Wolun fashi jie* and the Tibetan *bSam gtan gyi mkhan po Nyal ba'i 'khor lo sems bde bar bz'ag pa'i rab tu byung ba'i yon tan bcu*. Yet this is a topic beyond the scope of the present paper and will be discussed in detail separately. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that these corrupt Dunhuang manuscripts made the fictitious Wolun become a central figure of the Cig car ba tradition even in Tibet. It is documented in a list of six Cig car ba titles mentioned in the 12th century by the Tibetan Nyang Nyi ma 'od zer.⁴²

To conclude the discussion of P. tib. 116, the following table illustrates how Wolun was included in a regional current in 8th century Dunhuang, one that apparently mirrors the situation before the split of the Meditation Buddhist movement in a Northern and Southern School (arrows point to historically documented teacher-disciple relationships):

representation from the perspective of Dunhuang in P. tib. 116 account according to other historical sources

- (1) Nāgārjuna
- (2) Bodhidharma
- (3) Wuzhu
- (4) Xiangmo Zang
- (5) Ardasir
- (6) **Wolun**
- (7) Mahāyāna
- (8) Āryadeva



Roughly fifty years after the posthumous rise of the fictitious Wolun in Dunhuang, he is reconsidered in Tang China again. Zongmi briefly mentions Wolun in the context of four other branches of Meditation Buddhism that existed besides Bodhidharma's teachings. Although these

39 Lalou 1939:506.

40 Faber 1985:73, footnote 106.

41 *ZLJ*, f. 157a and Demiéville 1987:161.

42 I discussed and identified the titles in this list in Meinert 2006.

were not transmitted from one generation to the next, they were nonetheless widely spread. Zongmi differentiates them as follows: (1) meditators, (2) exegetes, (3) thaumaturges and, (4) the clergy at court. In an auto commentary to (1) the masters who primarily practice meditative absorption, Wolun is listed together with Guṇabhadra and Huichou.⁴³ Unfortunately Wolun is not mentioned there for a second time. The meaning of this passage is, however, explained by a different passage that says “Guṇabhadra, Huichou and others”.⁴⁴ Zongmi summarises the one-pointed meditative absorption (*yixing samei*) of these masters in one of the three categories that characterise the branches of Tang Meditation Buddhism. Guṇabhadra and Huichou are filed in the category of those masters who “extinguish falsity and cultivate the mind” (*xinwang xiuxin*).⁴⁵ Although Wolun is not explicitly mentioned again here, he would nevertheless fit within this category according to the above-mentioned order. Zongmi describes this category as follows:

初息妄修心宗者。說眾生雖本有佛性。而無始無明覆之不見故輪迴生死。諸佛已斷妄想故見性了了。出離生死神通自在。當知凡聖功用不同。外境內心各有分限。故須依師言教背境觀心息滅妄念。念盡即覺悟無所不知。如鏡昏塵。須勤勤拂拭。塵盡明現即無所不照。

Firstly, the sect which taught the stopping of falsity and the cultivation of mind: Although it is said that all sentient beings innately possess the Buddha nature, yet the nature cannot be seen as it is covered up by beginningless ignorance, and they are, therefore, dragged within the wheel of birth and death. When Buddhas have eliminated false thought, they see their nature in its fullest extension; they are freed from the bondage of birth and death and acquire super-natural powers and independence. One should be aware of the different functions of common men and saints, and this difference exists both in their treatment of external objects and in their mind within. It is, therefore, necessary for [disciples to] rely on the spoken teaching of a master, to detach themselves from outward objects and contemplate their mind, thus to extinguish false thoughts. When thoughts are completely extinguished, one immediately attains awakening, which is omniscient. It is like a mirror obscured by dust; one has to cleanse it diligently; only when the dust is wiped out completely, does the mirror become bright and able to reflect all things.

又須明解趣入禪境方便。遠離憤鬧住閑靜處。調身調息跏趺宴默。舌拄上齶心注一境。One should also have a clear understanding about skilful means to enter into the realm of meditative absorption: to keep oneself far away from confusion and noise, to stay in a quiet place, to harmonize one's body and breath, and sit cross-legged in silence, putting the tongue upward against the palate and concentrating the mind on one point.

南佉北秀保唐宣什等門下。皆此類也。牛頭天台惠稠求那等。進趣方便跡即大同。見解即別。

Master [Zhi]shen of the South, Master [Shen]xiu of the North, members of the Baotang monastery [Wuzhu in Sichuan] and the disciples of Master Xuanshi are all classified in this division of teaching.

43 *CYZQJ* 2B.412c.15–27. The *Chanyuan zhuquan ji duxu* is interspersed with auto commentaries that partly appear in only one of the many editions that were the basis for the Taishō edition. However, in the present case the auto commentary exists in all versions and indicates that it is actually a commentary by Zongmi himself.

44 *CYZQJ* 1B.402c.2.

45 Zongmi in fact differentiates seven currents of Tang Meditation Buddhism, yet subsumes them ideologically into three categories, regarding their meditation practice. The two other categories include those masters who teach “absolute annihilation” (*mingjue wuji*), the sect of emptiness, and those masters who teach “direct revelation of the nature of mind” (*zhibixian xinxing*). Cf. *CYZQJ* 1B.402b.17–18, and also Jan 1972:28–29 and 38–39.

Other people like those of the Oxhead and Tiantai School, Huichou and Guṇa[bhadra] all followed approximately these external practices as skilful means for professing, but their views were different.⁴⁶

This classification of Zongmi banishes some of the most important advocates of the Northern School, namely Hongren's disciples Shenxiu, Zhishen and Xuanshi to the lowest of the three levels of his comprehensive systematisation. Likewise does he position Huichou and Guṇabhadra – and thus also Wolun – and thereby separates all these masters from the tradition he deems authentic and supreme: their meditative absorption is inferior to the Southern School of Shenhui and Huineng.⁴⁷

According to Zongmi's comments, the Northern School does not recognise the inseparability of the Buddha nature and illusions that seemingly cover the Buddha nature. Long years of gradually extinguishing defilements, do not lead to ultimate awakening, but merely to complete exhaustion of dualistic thinking. With this critique, Zongmi is fully in accord with his own teacher Shenhui (684–758), who in a polemic speech in 732 AD for the first time puts forward the terms Northern School (*beizong*) and Southern School (*nanzong*).⁴⁸ This marks the beginning of gradualism versus subitism and the Southern School establishes itself as the orthodox branch based on the well-known legend of transmission.⁴⁹

What do we know about Huichou and Guṇabhadra whom Zongmi mentions simultaneously with Wolun? When the Southern School begins to acknowledge Bodhidharma as the founder of the later Chan movement, at the same time it rejects Guṇabhadra, the first patriarch according to the *Lengjia shizijī*, the translator of the *Lankāvatārasūtra*.⁵⁰ Thus the mentioning of Wolun in Zongmi's treatise is part of a critique in the 8th century, that seeks to create an orthodox tradition with Bodhidharma as the first patriarch instead with Guṇabhadra and eventually supports the split of the Meditation Buddhist movement in two schools.

In case that the *Lengjia shizijī* is a starting point of Zongmi's criticism, then there is behind the name Huichou also Jingjue's name, the author of the *Lengjia shizijī* – who regarded himself

46 *CYZQJ* 1B.402b.22–29, 402c.1–3. The translation is adapted with minor changes from Jan 1972:37–38; cf. also McRae (1986:4). Zhishen (609–702) was one of the most important disciples of Hongren among the Meditation Buddhist sects in Sichuan. Before his encounter with Hongren, he also studied with the translator and scholar Xuanzang. Wuzhu from Baotang School is already mentioned above in the context of P. tib. 116 (cf. p. 191, footnote 35 above). Xuanshi likewise is a disciple of Hongren and seems to have devoted himself to practices of the Pure Land School. However, very little is known about him (McRae 1986:37–38, 272, footnote 13).

47 The most superior teachings of the third category, namely to directly reveal the nature of mind, are transmitted over six generations and finally represented by Zongmi's own teacher Shenhui. Cf. *CYZQJ* 1B.405b.12–13.

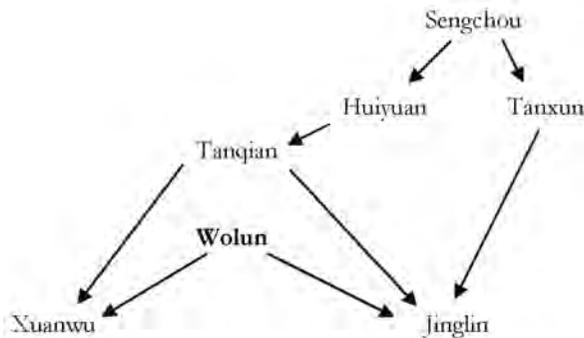
48 Cf. Shenhui's speech in *Putidamo nanzong ding shifei lun*, where Shenhui uses the term Southern School (*nanzong*) in connection with Bodhidharma (in Hu 1919:162). Nonetheless, in content Shenhui seems to announce a separation of gradual and subitist teachings even before that, namely in this exposition of the three teachings gradual (*jian*), subitist (*dun*) and complete (*yuan*) in his *Yuanming lun* (cf. McRae 1986:211 and his translation of this text in 149–171).

49 McRae 1986:5–10 and Yampolsky 1967:1–121.

50 Zongmi mentions in this third category, the master who directly reveal the nature of mind, just Bodhidharma with his meditation practice “wall-examination” (*biguan*). Cf. *CYZQJ* 1B.405a.27–b.5. Guṇabhadra, however, is mentioned as the first patriarch in *LJSZJ*, 1283c.26–1284c.20. Cf. also the entry to Guṇabhadra in: *Kaoyuan shijiao lu* 5.528c.27–530b.5.

as an heir of Huichou.⁵¹ Huichou, better known under the name Sengchou, ranks with the most important meditation masters of the 6th century. He belongs to those monks who had a lasting effect on the formative phase of the Meditation Buddhist movement. His fame is well-documented in some Dunhuang manuscripts;⁵² nonetheless after the event he was removed from the tradition and fell into oblivion as well.⁵³ In the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Daoxuan still dedicates to Sengchou an extensive and detailed hagiography that shows the influence and recognition during his lifetime.⁵⁴ His teachings must have been much more popular in northern China and in the capital Chang'an than the teachings of the posthumously famous contemporary Bodhidharma.⁵⁵ He is deemed innovative in the field of meditation, so that Sengchou attracts several famous disciples as well. One of his close students is Tanxun (520–599) who himself is the teacher of Jinglin – a disciple of Wolun as well as shown above. Another one was Huiyuan (523–595), one of the teachers of the famous Tanqian – with whom two of Wolun's disciples, Jinglin and Xuanwan, studied the *She dasheng lun*.

The following diagram illustrates once again how closely Sengchou and Wolun are indirectly related to each other through other masters and disciples (the arrows mark a teacher-disciple relationship):



Furthermore, Daoxuan relates that Sengchou is the main rival of Bodhidharma.⁵⁶ A more general account concerning the meditation masters in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* says that Sengchou and Bodhidharma are like two wheels of the same vehicle: whereas Sengchou emphasises the meditation of the four carefulness (*si nianchu*)⁵⁷ – a practice that has easy and clear guidelines,

51 Faure 1986:109.

52 Jan 1983:51. Concerning the Dunhuang manuscripts of Sengchou cf. Anderl 1995:67–108, Ran 1990a:77–85 and Ran 1990b:100–102. Cf. also Jiang Boqin 1992:11.

53 Anderl 1995:2.

54 XGSZ 16.553b.25–555b.25. This hagiography is translated and annotated in Anderl 1995:9–34. For biographical information to Sengchou in other sources, cf. Anderl 1995:34–41.

55 In a more general part to the exposition of Meditation masters (XGSZ 20.596c.4–5) Daoxuan relates: “Only these two worthies [Sengchou and Sengshi] had successors whom they handed down the flame. The spread [of their teachings] and their influence are still unbroken.”

56 Ryōshō Tanaka (Tanaka 1976:107–112) also emphasises that Sengchou was known as an opponent of Bodhidharma's wall-examination.

57 This meditation practice of Sengchou is described in detail in Anderl 1995:48–53.

Bodhidharma focuses on emptiness that is difficult to grasp in its profound meaning.⁵⁸ Therefore, even in the 7th century there exists an opposition between Sengchou and Bodhidharma, one that Zongmi might have further elaborated with his account.

In this context of Bodhidharma mentioned by Daoxuan, Bernhard Faure talks about a literary paradigm.⁵⁹ The legends about Bodhidharma by far exceed the historical facts about him. Therefore, more important than the historical person Bodhidharma are the questions about the function of his name and his interaction with other protagonists in the Meditation Buddhist history. B. Faure assesses the opposition Bodhidharma/Sengchou as a typical literary device that reveals more about the author Daoxuan than about the two masters and strongly reminds one of the later contrasting pair Huineng/Shenxiu of the Southern and Northern School.

From a structural point of view the two figures Bodhidharma and Sengchou are symmetrical and contained in one another. According to B. Faure, the two represent one “narrative agent” that is polarised in two contrasting figures. This fact is also mirrored in their hagiographies, which are, strictly speaking, to be regarded as a whole – since Daoxuan’s literary device influences the character of the biographies. Therefore, it is impossible to strictly separate these two, with each other interwoven hagiographies. Bodhidharma’s life becomes part of a greater pattern that also incorporates parts of other master’s life stories. Consequently, the contrast between Bodhidharma and Sengchou is structurally analogous to the later rivalry between Huineng and Shenxiu. Whereas Bodhidharma and Sengchou still represent a complementary pair that reflects the situation before the split of the Meditation Buddhist movement in a Southern and Northern School, have Huineng and Shenxiu turned into a contrasting pair that crystallises doctrinal oppositions. B. Faure sees reflected in these two pairs on one side the complement and on the other the contrast of the two truths, absolute and relative.

It is well-accepted amongst scholars that the actual split of the Meditation Buddhist movement in a Northern and a Southern School preceded a substantial impact on the later so-called gradualist, Shenxiu, without whom the subitist Southern School could not have come into existence.⁶⁰ Shenxiu’s teachings again are based on his own teacher Hongren (600–674) and his predecessor Daoxin (580–651).⁶¹

In this context the research of David Chappell is relevant. Chappell roughly distinguishes three phases for the development of Meditation Buddhism in China.⁶² On the whole, phase one represents the situation before the split in two schools as it is captured in the earliest texts from the 6th to the 8th centuries, like the *Erru sixin lun* attributed to Bodhidharma, the *Xiuxin yaolun* attributed to Hongren and Jingjue’s *Lengjia shizij ji*. Common to the texts of this period is a rejection of meticulous exegesis and instead an approval of personal experience. In phase two, the Meditation Buddhist movement aims to establish itself against scholastic traditions as a school in its own right and eventually legitimises itself as a Southern and Northern School of

58 XGSZ 20.596c.14–15. Cf. also Christoph Anderl (Anderl 1995:57), who quotes a book of Bernhard Faure which was not accessible to me: *Le Bouddhisme Ch’an en Mal d’Histoire – Genèse d’une Tradition Religieuse dans la Chine des T’ang* (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1989):30.

59 Faure 1993:126–131. B. Faure also wrote an earlier article on this topic that was not available to me: “Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm” (*History of Religions* 25/3, 1986):187–198. Cf. also Anderl 1995:132–137.

60 John McRae meticulously proves the great importance of the so-called Northern School. Cf. McRae 1986.

61 McRae 1986:36.

62 Chappell 1988:190–198.

Chan. The own teachings are identified with canonical treatises and through the compilation of genealogies laid down in the past. This results in the new genre of *Chuangeng lu* in the 8th century.⁶³ Finally, in phase three the literature of the partly very comprehensive encounter-dialogues (*yulu*) is further systematised in koan collections (*gong'an*). A classical example is the *Jingde chuandeng lu* from Song times. The lineages of transmission established in the genealogies are even more structured along the lines of legitimised masters with the result that masters without immediate connections are deleted from the tradition.

Against this background of schematic distinction in three phases is Zongmi's assessment a direct product of the split in a Northern and Southern School of the above-mentioned second phase. However, within the present context the texts attributed to Wolun and Sengchou belong to the first phase. Because the posthumous rise of Wolun since the 8th century in Dunhuang clearly occurred independently of simultaneous trends in Central China. Thus the tradition of Chinese Meditation Buddhism that spread to Dunhuang and Tibet in the 8th century is represented by early masters like Wolun and Hongren⁶⁴ and is known as Cig car ba, a sudden teaching that contradicted other Tibetan and Indian gradual teachings of the Rim gyis pa system. Nonetheless texts attributed to these early Chinese masters date from the first phase of the development of Meditation Buddhism and are therefore a product from the time before the split in a Southern School of subitism and a Northern School of gradualism.⁶⁵

Via Dunhuang the fictitious Wolun experienced another posthumous rise also in China at the beginning of the 11th century. Within the corpus of Dunhuang manuscripts are two nearly identical copies of the *Wolun chanshi ji*⁶⁶ which can be dated around the 10th century.⁶⁷ The text comprises three verses the first of which appears 1004 AD in the *Jingde chuandeng lu* in the section of occasions (*jinyuan*) at the end of the biography of the sixth patriarch of the Southern School, Huineng.⁶⁸ This passage is quoted twice again in the Buddhist historiography, once slightly different in *Cishou Huaishen chanshi guanglu* of the Song master Huaishen (1077–1136)⁶⁹ and finally literally in the 1291 edition of the *Tanjing*, attributed to Huineng and compiled by Zongbao.⁷⁰

63 The *Jingde chuandeng lu* is the first work (1004) that uses the term *Chuangeng lu* already in its title. However, John McRae (McRae 1986:85) has shown in detail that the first mention concerning the theory of *Chuangeng lu* is found in an epigraph of Faru written 689 shortly after his decease. He (loc. cit. 86–91) further argues that the 8th century *Chuan jabao ji* and *Lengjia shizi ji* are strongly influenced by Faru's epigraph. Against this background the *Jingde chuandeng lu* can be understood as the first mature fruition of this genre.

64 I have identified Wolun and Hongren as masters to whom a tradition was attached in Tibet which is mentioned in a list of titles in the 12th century by Nyi ma 'od zer. Cf. Meinert 2006.

65 McRae 1986:71.

66 S. chin. 6631 and S. chin. 5657.

67 Ueyama 1982:90–116 and Ueyama 1990:401–423. For a summary of Daishun Ueyama's research, see Broughton 1999:98–104, 152–153.

68 JDCDL 5.245b.6–13.

69 *Cishou Huaishen chanshi guanglu* 1.272c.9–15.

70 *Linzhi dashi jabao tanjing*, 358a.26–b.3.

In the *Jingde chuandeng lu* this first verse of Wolun is contrasted with a verse by Huineng. The passage reads as follows (modifications are underlined>):

Wolun chanshi jie

Wolun *has no* cleverness,
Is able to *pacify* innumerable thoughts.
Mental defilements are thereby abandoned
And awakening grows day and *night*.

Jingde chuandeng lu

A monk raises the verse of Meditation master Wolun:
“Wolun *has* cleverness,

Is able to *abandon* innumerable thoughts.

The mind does not follow objects

And awakening grows day by *day*.”

Upon listening, the sixth patriarch Huineng replies: “This verse does not illuminate the ground of mind. If one relies on this and practices, this is a cause for increasing entanglement.” [Huineng] thereupon presents a verse:

Huineng has no cleverness,

Is not able to abandon innumerable thoughts.

The mind continuously follows objects,

How could awakening grow?

The way Wolun’s verse is arranged in the *Jingde chuandeng lu* and contrasted with Huineng’s verse, in structure strongly reminds one of the above-mentioned literary paradigm Bodhidharma/Sengchou and Huineng/Shenxiu.⁷¹ Whereas Daoxuan still understands the pair Bodhidharma/Sengchou complementary, the *Jingde chuandeng lu* clearly uses Huineng and Wolun as opposites. Here both verses are structurally parallel to the verses of Huineng and Shenxiu – as they are known in the *Tanjing* and mark the symbolic beginning of the Southern and Northern School. Due to the opposition to Huineng, Wolun appears to replace the position of Shenxiu at the beginning of the 11th century whose influence seems to have faded away. However, it remains uncertain, why suddenly Wolun becomes so influential and turns into the adversary of the key figure of the Southern School. Moreover, it remains uncertain why the *Jingde chuandeng lu* inserts Wolun’s verse at such an exposed position on one side, but on the other does not venerate the historical Wolun in an own hagiography. Perhaps this is another evidence for the relative significance of the *fictional* and the insignificance of the *historical* Wolun. A few decades before the compilation of the *Jingde chuandeng lu* a passage of the *Wolun chanshi kanxin fa* – extant in Dunhuang manuscripts – is handed down in the *Zongjing lu* compiled by Yongming Yanshou in 961.⁷² Therefore, it may be assumed that via Dunhuang the knowledge of Wolun found its way through to Central China. Texts connected with the name Wolun – *Wolun chanshi jie*, *Wolun fashi kanxin fa* – seemed to have been copied in Dunhuang in the 10th century and presumably contributed to a further posthumous rise of the figure Wolun that had fallen into oblivion in Song China.

71 Cf. p. 195 above.

72 *Zongjing lu* 98.942c.16–19.

Conclusion

To conclude, two points may be stressed in the light of the present research. First, the historical Wolun during his lifetime appeared as a master who brought the Meditation Buddhist teachings into the ordinariness of daily life as shown in some of the anecdotes. Moreover, the historical figure gained relative fame as a master skilled in the practice of meditation, and thus attracted disciples from various Buddhist sects and lay background. Therefore, he appears to have lived and taught at a crucial intersection in the Buddhist landscape, namely on the focus of direct experience and a straightforward meditation practice that could be integrated into many other contexts as well. Yet, like his famous contemporary Sengchou he did not fit into the agenda of the Meditation Buddhist movement after the split into a gradualist Northern and a subitist Southern school, so that as a result he was excluded from Chan Buddhist historiography.

Second, perhaps only by historical accident Wolun reappears in the history of Chinese Meditation Buddhism even as a “multi-cultural player” first in Dunhuang and Tibet and eventually again in China – yet now as the fictitious Wolun. This figure is fictitious as far as nothing but his name connected him to the historical figure. As a fictitious figure, he seemed to be so pliable that he was made to fit in different, even opposing, doctrinal positions. Whereas he was integrated in a regional current of Meditation Buddhism in Dunhuang that was perceived through Tibetan looking glasses as subitist (*Cig car ba*), he was transformed in Song China into a master of the gradual teachings opposing the subitist outlook of the key figure Huineng himself.

Appendices

A. Hagiography of Meditation master Wolun from the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*⁷³

釋曇倫。姓孫氏。汴州浚儀人。十三出家住修福寺依端禪師。然端學次第觀。便誠倫曰。汝繫心鼻端。可得靜也。倫曰。若見有心可繫鼻端。本來不見心相。不知何所繫也。咸怪其言。嗟其近學如何遠悟。故在衆末禮悔之時隨即入定。大衆彈指心恒加敬。

Shi Tanlun with the family name Sun came from Xunyi in Bianzhou.⁷⁴ At the age of twelve, he became a monk and lived at Xiufu monastery⁷⁵ taken care of by meditation master Duan.⁷⁶ However,⁷⁷ since Duan practiced gradual insight meditation,⁷⁸ he admonished Lun: “If you point your mind on the tip of your nose, you are able to attain the quiet.” Lun replied: “If one perceived an existing mind, one could point it to the tip of the nose. Yet when one does not originally perceive a characteristic of mind, what should one point to it?” Everybody was amazed and sighed over the fact that his most recent studies had triggered such a far-reaching awakening. Thus, [Lun] directly entered into meditative absorption when he once confessed according to the rites as the last one in the congregation. The assembly pointed with their fingers to his stability in mind and respected him even more.

73 XGSZ 20.598a.20–c.4.

74 Xunyi district is close to Bianzhou, nowadays Kaifeng in Henan province.

75 I could not identify Xiufu monastery.

76 Duan probably refers to Jingduan (poss. 542–606). His hagiography is in XGSZ 18.576b.27–c.27. Cf. the discussion above, pp. 186 and 188.

77 *Ran*. however. This term probably indicates that this passage was abridged from a more extensive hagiography, because *ran* here contrasts the fact that teacher and disciple disagree in their views.

78 *Guan*. the term seems to refer to insight meditation (*vipāśyanā*).

後送鉢上堂。未至中路卓然入定。持鉢不傾。師大深賞。

Later, when he came into the hall he brought along the bowl for the alms. Half way through unexpectedly he entered into meditative absorption without tilting the bowl. The master rejoiced.

異時告曰。令汝學坐先淨昏情猶如剥葱。一一重重剥却然後得淨。倫曰。若見有葱可有剥削。本來無葱何所剥也。師曰。此大根大莖非吾所及。不敢役使。

On another occasion [the master] said [to Lun]: “I would like you to practice sitting meditation: purity is only achieved when deluding thoughts [are eliminated], just like peeling an onion layer by layer.” Lun replied: “If one perceived an onion, one could peel it. Yet when one does not originally perceive an onion, what is there to be peeled?” Thereupon the master said: “He is a thick bulb and a strong stalk⁷⁹ that I am not able to reach. I don’t dare to give him servant duties.”

進具已後讀經禮佛都所不爲。但閉房不出。行住坐臥唯離念心以終其志。

After his full ordination,⁸⁰ [Lun] neither recited canonical scriptures nor venerated the Buddha, but simply locked himself in his chamber and did not leave it. No matter whether walking, standing, sitting or lying – his sole intention was to set the mind to transcend thoughts.

次知直歲。守護僧物約勒家人曰。犬有別食莫與僧粥。家人以爲常事。不用倫言。犬乃於前嘔出僧粥。倫默不及之。後又語令莫以僧粥與犬。家人還妄答云。不與。群犬相將於僧前吐出粥以示之。於時道俗咸伏其敬慎。

Subsequently, when he was holding an office for a year and responsible for possessions of the monastery, he admonished the members of the families⁸¹: “The dogs have something else to eat. Do not give them the monk’s meals.” The family members deemed it as unimportant and did not listen to Wolun’s words. Thereupon a dog vomited in front of him the food of the monk’s, yet [Lun] kept silent and did not talk about it. Later he ordered again that they should not give the dogs the meals of the monks. The family members lied: “We do not give them to [the dogs].” Then all the dogs came together in front of the monk and vomited the food of the monks. Thus, it was apparent. At this time all monastic and lay people bowed and paid their respect and showed due reverence.

又有義學論士爭來問者。隨言即遣無所罣礙。

Once, an exegete and debater came for a debate. [Lun] retorted every word immediately without hesitation.

仁壽二年獻后亡背。興造禪室召而處之。還即擯關依舊習業。時人目之爲臥倫也。

When empress Xian passed away in the second year of Renshou (602),⁸² a meditation hall was built, and Lun was summoned to take up residence there. After his return, he retired and followed his activities as before. His contemporaries called him *Reclining Lun* (Wolun).

有興善祭法師者。三國論首無學。不長。怪倫臥禪言問清遠。遂入房與語探究是非。倫笑曰。隨意相審遂三日三夕法樂不眠。倫述般若無底空華焰水無依無主不立正邪本性清淨。祭乃投地敬之讚歎。心路無滯。不思議乃如此也。

79 The metaphor is not very clear. The master seems to refer ironically to the example of the onion.

80 *Jinjin*: to reach the age of twenty and thus be admitted to full ordination (DCBT 392a).

81 *Jiaren*: family members. I am not sure about their position. It seems that the family members were partly responsible for the food of the monks. It is also possible that these were members of the so-called “*sangha* households” (*sangzhi hu*), a system that supported monasteries founded in the middle of the 5th century. The *sangha* households were made up by groups of families that gave a certain part of their harvest to the next monastery as a means of support (cf. Ch’en 1964:154–158).

82 Empress Wenxian (544–602) is the spouse of general Yang Jian (541–604), who in 581 usurped the throne and unified the empire after two hundred years of dissipation. He governed the Sui dynasty as Sui Wendi until his murder in 604. For the biographies of empress Wenxian, see *Suishu* 36. 1108–1109 and *Beishi* 20.532–534.

There was the Dharma master Can from Xingshan monastery⁸³ who was best among the debaters over the course of three successive empires.⁸⁴ There was not one teaching that he did not master. [Can] was amazed about Lun's *meditation of reclining* (*wochan*) and about the fact that his speeches and questions were far-reaching (?).⁸⁵ So he went to [Lun's] chamber and talked with him in order to scrutinise [his teachings]. Lun said with a smile on his face: "Examine me as you wish!" Thereupon both did not sleep for three days and nights rejoicing in the Dharma. Lun explained that discriminating awareness (*prajñā*) has no ground and is [just like] an empty blossom and burning water – without support and without subject. It is beyond orthodox and unorthodox and in its innermost nature clear and pure. As a result, Can threw himself on the floor, paid his respect [to Lun] and sighed in admiration about the fact that the path of the mind was without obstacles. That was truly marvellous.

倫在京師。道俗請者相續。而機緣不一悟迷亦多。雖善巧方便令其醒悟。然各自執見見我爲是。故此妙理罕得廣流。

When Lun was a master in the capital, monks and lay people constantly invited him, although their abilities and prerequisites varied greatly and many were far away from awakening. Even though [Lun] tried with skilful means to bring about their awakening, nonetheless each one of them held on to his respective view and regarded it as the correct one. Therefore, this unsurpassable principle was rarely widespread.

有玄琬律師靜琳法師。率門人僧伽淨等往來受法。如此衆矣如魚子焉。

There were the Vinaya master Xuanwan,⁸⁶ the Dharma master Jinglin⁸⁷ who together with their disciples Sengjia, Jing and others regularly came [to Lun] to receive teachings. This happened very often. They were like fish spawn.⁸⁸

武德末年疾甚。於莊嚴寺傍看寂然。有問往生何處。答無盡世界。又便寂然。僧伽以手尋其冷觸。私報人曰。冷觸到膝四大分離亦應生苦。倫曰。此苦亦空。問曰。捨報云何。報曰。我主四大鬪在已到屈膝死後籬籬裏棄之莫作餘事。又曰。打五更鐘未。報曰未少時維那打鐘。看之已絕。年八十餘矣。諸門學等依言送於南山。露骸散於中野。

In the last year of Wude (626) [Lun] got very sick and took care⁸⁹ of the quiet⁹⁰ nearby Zhuangyan monastery.⁹¹ Someone asked him where he would be reborn and he replied: "In inconceivable

83 This is meditation master Sengcan (529–613) from Bianzhou. Cf. his hagiography in *XG.SZ* 9.500a.29–501a.10. He is supposedly the third patriarch of Chan Buddhism and mentioned in the inscription *Shuzhou shangyu si jueji ta suigu jingzhi chanshi beiming bing xu* (in *Quan Tangwen* 4, 3971b.17). For a discussion of this inscription, see Chen 1999:1–91.

84 In Chinese, *Sanguo lun* is a pun, since it is also another nickname of Sengcan (*FGDCD* 5745b). Sengcan studied in the three empires (*sanguo*) Qi, Chen and Zhou Buddhist scriptures (*lun*), so that he was called *Sanguo lun*, "debater of the three empires" (cf. *XG.SZ* 9.500b.2–4).

85 I am uncertain whether this is a correct translation for *guai lun woChan yanwen qingyuan*.

86 For the hagiography of Vinaya master Xuanwan (562–636), see *XG.SZ* 22.616a.1–617c.12 and *Fozu tongji* 39.364c.2–26.

87 For the hagiography of Dharma master Jinglin (565–640), see *XG.SZ* 20.590a.3–591b.14.

88 *Yuzi*: fish spawn. The metaphor remains obscure.

89 *Kan*: in the first tone *kan* has the meaning of "to consider with care/to pay attention to", in the fourth tone, however, "to look/gaze". In general, the character *kan* was read in the first tone in Tang times.

90 *Jiran*: quiet. It refers here to a state of meditative absorption. *Jiran* describes clarity and quietness of mind, a state in which the nature of phenomena may be recognised.

91 In *Jiaqing Chang'an xianzhi* 22.4b.8–12 it is said that Zhuangyan monastery is situated twelve *li* to the southwest of Chang'an, built under Sui Wendi in the Renshou years (601–604) as Changding temple and renamed as Zhuangyan monastery in the Wude years (618–626). It seems that the inscription *Ligong beshang beiji* about

worlds”, and then was quiet again. Sengjia checked with his hands his coldness and secretly reported to the people: “The cold already reaches his knees. When the four elements separate themselves, it will also cause suffering.”⁹² Lun responded to him: “Even this suffering is empty.” Thereupon that person asked again: “How about the relics (?)?”⁹³ [Lun] replied: “I master the four elements whose quarrels already reach to the knee bends. After my death, quickly wrap me up and take me away. Do not make much fuss about it.” [Lun] further said: “Did the bell ring five o’clock⁹⁴ yet?” Someone reported: “Not yet.” A little later the head [of the monastery]⁹⁵ rang the bell and looked [at Lun], but he had already breathed his last breath. He was more than eighty years old at the time. Followers of all traditions granted him the last escort to Southern mountain⁹⁶ and, according to his wishes, they openly left his body in the wilderness.

有鮑居士者名慈氏。弱年背俗愛樂禪觀。生不妻娶形無飾華。親承德音調心養氣守閑抱。素承餘業五十餘。年七十五矣。

There was the layperson, gentleman Bao with the family name Ci.⁹⁷ In his early years, he turned his back on worldly pleasures and found fulfilment in sitting meditation.⁹⁸ He was not married and his appearance was austere. He himself had received the teachings of the virtues one, brought the mind to balance, nurtured his life force, maintained his leisure and kept simplicity. When he received the teachings of Lun, he was already more than fifty years old. He passed away at the age of seventy-five.

B. Episode of Wolun in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan*⁹⁹

然於此誦經。凡歷三載。法華一部。甚得精熟。後聞長安度人。心希剝落。晨昏方便。諸師欲去。師曰。汝誦得法華經。大乘種子。今已成就。汝必欲去。當詢好師。此之一別。難重相見。汝京內可於禪定道場。依止臥倫禪師。

[The layperson Gao Shoujie] recited *sūtras* at this [place, mount Wutai,] over all for three years. He had a good command of the *Lotus sūtra*. Later, he heard that in Chang’an was someone who ordained people. He wished from the depth of his heart to be ordained so that he could comfortably [practice the Dharma] from dawn to dusk. To his teacher [Haiyun] he expressed his wish to go [to Chang’an]. The master replied: “You have successfully recited the *Lotus sūtra*, and have already accomplished the seed of the *mahāyāna*. If you absolutely wish to go, you need to find a good master. After this parting, it is difficult for us to see each other again. In the capital you can rely on meditation master Wolun.”

Zhuangyan monastery was written in the Qingli years (1041–1048) of the Song dynasty, yet I could not identify it (cf. *Xi’an fuzhi* 61.3a.8–9).

- 92 *Sida*: the four elements earth, water, fire and air. The term refers to the physical body (cf. *DCBT* 173a).
- 93 *Sheliao*: I could not identify it lexicographically. However, in the present context it seems to be used like *sheli* “relics”, here the physical remains after death (*DCBT* 278b).
- 94 *Geng*: a time span of two hours that originally refers to the time until the next change in guard at night (Mathews 1975:3346b).
- 95 *Weina*: a head of a monastery who is immediately subordinated to the abbot and who is responsible for distributing the duties (cf. *DCBT* 427b).
- 96 Nanshan: Southern mountain, a term frequently used for a mountain in the south of the respective location. Here it either refers to a place south of Zhuangyan monastery, or it refers to the much more important Zhongnan shan situated at a distance of 29 km to the west of Chang’an county (cf. *FGDCD* 4769c, 5374c).
- 97 The meaning of the family name Ci remains unclear. I also could not identify the name Bao.
- 98 *Changuan*: an abbreviation for *zuochan guanfa*, literally “meditation method of sitting” (in the sense of *dhyāna*) (cf. *FGDCD* 6483b).
- 99 *GQLZ* 2.1097b.16–29.

節。入京求度。不遂其心。乃往倫所。倫曰。汝從何來。答曰。從五臺山來。和尚遣與師為弟子。倫曰。和尚名誰。答曰。海雲。倫大驚歎曰。五臺山者。文殊所居。海雲比丘。即是華嚴經中善財童子祈禮。第三大善知識。汝何以棄此聖人。千劫萬劫。無由一遇。何其誤也。

Jie went to the capital in order to be ordained, but his wish was not fulfilled. Thus, he went to Wolun's abode. Wolun said: "From where do you come?" [Jie] replied: "I come from mount Wutai. The monk, [my teacher], sent me to become your disciple." Lun said: "What is the name of this monk?" He answered: "Haiyun." In great amazement, Wolun responded with a sigh: "Mount Wutai is the abode of Mañjuśrī. The monk Haiyun is praised in the *Avatamsakasūtra* by Sudhana¹⁰⁰ as the third best spiritual friend. How could you leave this wise man? For innumerable eons, there is no reason to meet him even once. What a mistake!"

節。乃悟由來。恨不碎其身骨。而愚情眷眷。由希再睹。遂辭倫返跡。日夜奔馳。及至故處。都無所見。

Jie, for whom [Haiyun] was the source of awakening, [was struck] in his marrow and bones with tremendous horror that his foolish feelings had sized him (?).¹⁰¹ Longing to see [Haiyun] once again, he made his farewells to Lun and returned following his previous route. He hurried back day and night to the old abode, but he did not meet anybody.

C. Chronological table listing sources concerning Wolun

The following table includes all Chinese and Tibetan sources dealing with Wolun. For the sake of completeness there are also materials included which have not been discussed in the present paper. Some of the Tibetan sources have already been discussed by me in an earlier article.¹⁰² The Dunhuang manuscripts connected with Wolun will be object of a forthcoming article.

time	Chinese source	Tibetan source	content
645	<i>Xu gaoseng zhuan</i> 20.598a–c.		hagiography of Tanlun (circa 545–626);
680–683	<i>Gu qingliang zhuan</i> 2.1097b.17–29. also quoted in: <i>Hongzan fabiao zhuan</i> (second half of the 7th century) 7.35a.18–b.2. <i>Song gaoseng zhuan</i> (compiled in 982) 27.882c.9–11.		episode of Gao Shoujie meeting Wolun in Chang'an;
ca. 780–841 (?)		P. tib. 116, titel: <i>rGya yig nas bsgyur ba'i [...] mKhan po Nyal 'khor ba'i bsam gtan gyi mdo [...] VIb</i> : f. 167.2–3. also quoted in: <i>bSam gtan mig sgron</i> (9 th /10 th century): pp. 163.3 and 168.5–6.	beginning of <i>Wolun chanshi kanzhin fa</i> ,

100 *Shancai tongzǐ*. Sudhana. Sudhana is one of the bodhisattvas asking for teachings in the *Avatamsakasūtra*. He completely awakened in the encounter with bodhisattva Samantabhadra (cf. *FGDCD* 4888b and *DCBT* 369a).

101 This sentence is not clear to me. I translated the term *juan juan* "to wrap up" more freely as "to be sized by something".

102 Meinert 2006.

780–860 (?)		<i>bSam gtan gyi mskan po</i> Nyal ba'i 'khor lo sems bde bar bz'bag pa'i rab tu byung ba'i yon tan bcu [chos], P. tib. 811.	ten virtues of a monk;
833	<i>Chanyuan zhuquan ji</i> duxu 2B.412c.15–18. 1B. 402b.22–29.		Wolun with Guṇabhadra und Huichou further branch of Meditation Buddhism besides Bodhidharma; teaching to extinguish the falsity and cultivate the mind;
10 th century (?)	<i>Wolun chanshi kanxin fa</i> . S. chin. 1494, S. chin. 6103, Tokushi Yūshō. also quoted in: <i>Zongjing lu</i> (961 compiled) 98.942c.16–19.	quoted in: P. tib. 116: VIb, f. 167.2–3 (8 th century). <i>bSam gtan mig sgron</i> (9 th /10 th century): pp. 163.3 and 168.5–6.	term <i>kanxin</i> only in title, text about <i>anxin</i> ; partial quote from <i>Wolun chanshi kanxin fa</i> ; beginning of <i>Wolun chanshi kanxin fa</i> ;
10 th century (?)	<i>Wolun fashi jie</i> , S. chin. 6631, S. chin. 5657, P. chin. 4597; also quoted in: S. chin 985, <i>Dacheng yaoyu yijuan</i> (10 th century), 1206b.7–8. P. chin. 3360 Longya Heshang (835–923), 10 th century (?)		piece work in three verses; partial quote from <i>Wolun fashi jie</i> ;
1004	<i>Jingde chuanheng lu</i> 5.245b.6–13; also quoted in: <i>Cishou Huai-shen chanshi guanglu</i> (12 th century?) 1.126, 272c.9–15; <i>Linzhi dashi fabao tanjing</i> (compiled in 1291), 358a.26–b.3		modified verse of Wolun and reply by Huineng;
second half of the 12 th century		<i>Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud</i> , f. 425a.4–426a.5 (= Meisezahl 1985: Tafel 287.1–288.1). also quoted in: <i>sKyes bu dam pa nams la springs ba'i yi ge</i> (first half 13 th century), f. 3a.6–3b.2. <i>Bu ston chos 'byung</i> (written 1322), 188.	list of texts concerning spread Chinese Meditation Buddhism (Cig car ba) in Tibet; slightly modified list;

List of Chinese Terms

Bao Cishi	鮑慈氏	<i>miao li</i>	妙理
Baogong	保恭	<i>minjue wuji</i>	泯絕無寄
Baotang si	保唐寺	Nanshan	南山
beizong	北宗	<i>nanzong</i>	南宗
<i>biguan</i>	壁觀	Puji	普寂
Bianzhou	汴州	<i>ran</i>	然
Bodhidharma	菩提大摩	Renshou	仁壽
Chanding daochang	禪定道場	<i>mding</i>	入定
<i>changuan</i>	禪觀	Sanguo lun	三國論
Changan	長安	Sengcan	僧粲
<i>Chuandeng lu</i>	傳燈錄	Sengchou	僧稠
<i>Chuan fabao ji</i>	傳法寶記	<i>sengzhi lu</i>	僧祇戶
<i>da de</i>	大德	Shancai tongzi	善財童子
Daoxuan	道宣	<i>She dabeng lun</i>	攝大乘論
Duan	端	<i>shebao</i>	捨報
<i>dun</i>	頓	<i>sheli</i>	舍利
Dunhuang	敦煌	Shenhui	神會
<i>Erru sixin lun</i>	二入四行論	Shenxiu	神秀
Gao Shoujie	高守節	<i>Shidi lun</i>	十地論
<i>geng</i>	更	<i>sida</i>	四大
<i>guai lun wochan yamen qinguan</i>	怪倫臥禪言問清遠	<i>si nianchu</i>	四念處
<i>guan</i>	觀	Sui Wendi	隋文帝
Guṇabhadra	求那跋陀羅	<i>Tanjing</i>	壇經
Haiyun	海雲	Tanlun	曇倫
Hongren	弘忍	Tanqian	曇遷
Huaishen	懷深	Tanxun	曇詢
Huichou	惠稠	Tiantai	天台
Huineng	慧能	Wang Shao	王劭
Huixiang	惠祥	<i>Wang shifei lun</i>	亡是非論
<i>jiran</i>	寂然	<i>weina</i>	維那
<i>jiyuan</i>	機緣	Wenxian	文獻
<i>jian</i>	漸	<i>wochan</i>	臥禪
<i>jinju</i>	進具	Wolun	臥輪
Jingduan	靜端	<i>Wolun chanshi kanxin fa</i>	臥輪禪師看心法
Jinglin	靜琳	<i>Wolun fashi jie</i>	臥輪法師偈
<i>juan juan</i>	眷眷	Wude	武德
<i>kan</i>	看	Wuzhu	無住
<i>Ligong beshang beiji</i>	李公和尚碑記	<i>xi chan</i>	習禪
<i>li nian</i>	離念	Ximing si	西明寺
Mahāyāna (Moheyana)	摩河衍	<i>xxing dingye</i>	習行定業

<i>xinang xiuxin</i>	息妄修心	<i>yixing sanmei</i>	一行三昧
Xiangmo Zang	降魔藏	Yuwen Yun	宇文贇
Xiaofu	小幅	Yuwen Yong	宇文邕
Xingshan si	興善寺	<i>yuzi</i>	魚子
Xiufu si	修福寺	<i>yuan</i>	圓
<i>Xiuxin yaolun</i>	修心要論	Zhishen	智洗
Xuanshi	宣什	<i>zhexian xinxing</i>	直顯心性
Xuanwan	玄琬	Zhuangyan si	莊嚴寺
Xunyi	凌儀	Zongmi	宗密
Yang Jian	楊堅	<i>zuochan</i>	坐禪
Yang Lihua	楊麗華	<i>zuochan guanfa</i>	坐禪觀法
Yifu	義福		

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Abbreviations

- CYZQJ* *Chanyuan zhuquan ji duxu.*
- DCBT* *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, cf. Sotthill/Hodous 1982.
- DHBZ* Dunhuang baozang.
- FGDCD* *Foguang da cidian*, cf. Xingyun 1989.
- GQLZ* *Gu Qingliang zhuhan.*
- HYDCD* *Hanyu da cidian*, cf. Luo 1990–1995.
- JDCDL* *Jingde chuandeng lu.*
- LJSZJ* *Lengjia shizhi ji*, S. chin. 2054.
- P. chin. Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts from the Pelliot collection preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.
- P. tib. Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts from the Pelliot collection preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.
- S. chin. Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts from the Stein collection preserved in the British Library in London.
- SGSZ* *Song gaoseng zhuhan.*
- T. Taishō shinshō daizōkyō.
- XGSZ* *Xu gaoseng zhuhan.*
- ZLJ* *Dunwu dacheng zhengli jue*, P. chin. 4646; cf. Demiéville 1987 and Rao 1970.
- ZZ* Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō.

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