

# DHARMA SCROLLS AND THE SUCCESSION OF ABBOTS IN CHINESE MONASTERIES

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### *Introduction*

A dharma scroll <sup>1)</sup> is a religious genealogy. It traces the transmission of the dharma, that is, of the Buddhist law or truth <sup>2)</sup>. What has been transmitted is an understanding of this truth. Thus every dharma scroll begins by telling how the Buddha, Śākyamuni, wordlessly transmitted his understanding of the dharma to one of his disciples, Mahākāśyapa; how Mahākāśyapa transmitted it to his own disciple; and so on, generation by generation, down to the Chinese monk whose name appears last on the scroll in our hands. From each generation to the next there has in theory been a direct imprint of mind on mind <sup>3)</sup>. Just as a genealogical chart testifies to the authenticity of lineage and the rights of inheritance, so a dharma scroll is supposed to testify to the authenticity of a

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<sup>1)</sup> *Fa-chüan* 法卷.

<sup>2)</sup> The word dharma has both its meanings here: first, the law or order that governs man and the universe; second, the ordered components into which all phenomena can be analyzed.

<sup>3)</sup> *Hsin-hsin hsiang-yin* 心心相印.

monk's understanding and his right to teach. What he teaches has come ultimately from the Buddha himself.

When the Fifth Patriarch of China transmitted the dharma to the Sixth Patriarch, he gave him his robe and bowl. There is no mention of a scroll. It is unclear when scrolls first came to be used. Indeed the very term "dharma scroll" appears to be unknown except to the Chinese Sangha. It is not to be found in the Buddhist dictionaries of Mochizuki and Ting Fu-pao<sup>4)</sup>, nor is it familiar to the Japanese specialists in Buddhism with whom I have discussed the question. They were curious where I had gotten the information. When I explained that it was from monks who had scrolls themselves, they warned me that oral evidence, without documentary evidence to support it, might not be believed. This difficulty had not occurred to me before and it gives me pause as I sit down to piece together what I have gathered in a year of interviews with a dozen dharma masters. In the natural sciences a statement is accepted if it is experimentally verifiable. So I can only urge skeptics to make haste in seeking out Chinese Buddhist monks while there are still some to be found, and test as much as possible of what is stated below.

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<sup>4)</sup> A term which is found in the dictionaries is *yin-k'o* 印可. The *yin-k'o* is an attestation of a disciple's accomplishment given by his master. It may be verbal, but even where written, it differs in format and function from the dharma scroll.

In Western literature there is, so far as I know, only one allusion to the system of dharma scrolls that I shall describe below. K. L. Reichelt devotes a page to it in *Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism* (p. 271), giving a fairly accurate account of the main features of the system, but never mentioning the existence of the scrolls themselves. He may have heard something about them, however, for he brings up the phrase *cheng-fa yen-tsang* 正法眼藏 (see note 144), which means, as he explains it, "something approaching a right of inheritance and a legitinuatc right to decide about the monastery and the landed property".

In Chinese there must be references to the existence of dharma scrolls, but the only one that I have encountered is in the July, 1962, number of *Bodhedrum* 菩提樹, published in Taichung, which prints photographs of a private dharma transmission to a Korean monk.

I do have some documentary evidence: the scrolls themselves. I have photographed three of them and chosen the most interesting one to reproduce and translate below as an appendix to this article. They are simple enough as documents, but the history of their development and multifarious functions is very complicated indeed. This is because within perhaps the last three centuries, dharma scrolls have come to be associated with the control of monasteries. They have acquired administrative as well as spiritual significance. At many a monastery in central China one could only become the abbot if one's name had been entered on its dharma scroll, usually many years before.

The office of abbot was more important in China than it has been in the Christian world. In the first place, the Buddhist monastery also played the role of the parish church. It was not cut off from the outside world, though parts of it (like the meditation hall) were normally closed to visitors. Laymen went to the monastery to have funeral services performed, to chat with the monks, to receive religious instruction, and even to take the ordination of the Five Vows. The abbot presided not only over the monastic life, but over pastoral care.

In the second place, Chinese Buddhism had no equivalent to pontiff, cardinal, or bishop. In modern China, at least, the abbot held the highest administrative office <sup>5)</sup>. During the past fifty years

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<sup>5)</sup> In speaking of "Chinese Buddhism", I mean to exclude Buddhism of the Tibetan and Mongolian varieties, which were much more hierarchical. The title of "national teacher" (*kuo-shih* 國師), conferred by Chinese emperors on the most eminent monks of their day, entailed no administrative responsibilities. The Ch'ing government did appoint certain monks as Sangha officers (*seng-kuan* 僧官) at the national, provincial, and district levels, as many previous dynasties had done. They were supposed to act as intermediaries between the government and the Sangha. In practice (during the last years of the Ch'ing, at least) they had no duties and no authority, nor were they persons particularly eminent in Buddhist circles. This information comes from two monks who were ordained in 1895 and 1898 and who travelled widely through China in the years following ordination.

a small number of eminent monks served as abbots of one famous monastery after another. They were often invited to give courses in the sūtras at the lay Buddhist associations that had sprung up in the cities. They administered the Tree Refuges to lay disciples, sometimes to thousands at a time. They founded seminaries, schools, orphanages, and clinics. I do not mean that only abbots were doing such things, for there were other eminent monks who refused to accept administrative responsibilities. But in general a man's fame as a teacher was reinforced by—or perhaps began with—the fame of the monastery where he served as abbot. Since in most cases he could not serve as abbot without receiving the dharma, the dharma scroll was a matter of some importance in his career, and in the whole monastic system.

When I say that he could not serve as abbot without receiving the dharma, I mean it in two senses: sometimes receiving the dharma was the prerequisite for becoming abbot; sometimes becoming abbot was the prelude to receiving the dharma. In still other cases, the dharma had nothing to do with abbotship. The practice differed from monastery to monastery, and any one of them could change its practice as circumstances required. There was no authority outside and above the individual monastery that could appoint its abbots, make it conform to a uniform system of appointment, or penalize it for violation of the rules. Therefore what we have to deal with is unsystematic in the extreme—or, at any rate, polysystematic. It is probably best to begin with a concrete example and, using this as a base, to work our way out.

#### *Monastery Scrolls*

In recent decades the most famous monasteries in China have been the Chiang-t'ien Ssu at Chin Shan <sup>6)</sup>, the Kao-min Ssu in

<sup>6)</sup> 金山江天寺 in Chenkiang 鎮江. It is usually referred to as Chin Shan.

Yangchow 7), and the T'ien-ning Ssu in Ch'ang-chou 8). These are the names that spring to the lips of almost any monk when he is searching for a model. All of them were in Kiangsu. All of them were strict, ancient, large, and rich. At all of them the dharma was the key to authority.

At Chin Shan in 1919 there was a monk called Tsung-yang 9). He had been inscribed on Chin Shan's dharma scroll as the fourth of the five dharma brothers 10) of the 44th generation in the Lin-chi line 11). That is, his name was listed fourth among them on the scroll. He and his brothers were, however, equal. All four members of the previous generation were equally their masters and all five members of the next generation were equally their disciples 12). The fact that he was the fourth brother did not necessarily mean that he ranked fourth in age. The order in which brothers' names were listed depended not on their age or years in the Sangha, but on their maturity and readiness to hold office. Ranking fourth meant simply that after his three elder brothers had served as abbot, he would serve. In the meantime he held the title of overseer 13) of

7) 揚州高旻寺.

8) 常州天寧寺.

9) 宗仰.

10) *Fa hsiung-ti* 法兄弟. This term can also mean "dharma cousin" of the same generation.

11) Lin-chi 臨濟 was the most widespread of the five sub-sects of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism. The other four were Ts'ao-tung 曹洞, Kuei-yang 潯仰, Yün-men 雲門 and Fa-yen 法眼.

12) *Fa-shih-fu* 法師傅 and *fa-t'u* 法徒. The term *fa-shih* is ambiguous. It is the standard form of address (see note 75) and it may also be used to mean "a monk". If one says "he is a *fa-shih*", it probably means that he is a monk who may or may not be a dharma master. If one says "he is my *fa-shih*", it almost certainly means that he is a dharma master.

13) *Chien-yüan* 監院. This term is explained below on p. 101.

the monastery. All the members of each generation were overseers from the moment their names were inscribed on the dharma scroll. But this did not necessarily mean that they did the work of overseer, as we shall see.

Tsung-yang, it turned out, never became the abbot of Chin Shan. Not far off outside Nanking was another famous monastery, the Ch'i-hsia Ssu<sup>14</sup>). It had fallen into decay. Most of its buildings had been destroyed by the T'ai-p'ing rebels fifty years or so before. A handful of monks still lived in it, but they were unable to attract the lay support that would make its reconstruction possible. In 1919 Tsung-yang happened to stop there on his way back from a pilgrimage to Chiu-hua Shan. The abbot, Fa-yi<sup>15</sup>), asked him to take over the abbotship and restore the Ch'i-hsia Ssu to greatness.

The reason Fa-yi gave for making this request was that he had been led by a dream to expect the monastery's restorer. His real reasons may have been more practical. First, Tsung-yang was not only an overseer at Chin Shan, but also a rector<sup>16</sup>). To hold such titles at such a famous monastery gave a prestige in Buddhist circles that would facilitate the raising of funds, quite aside from the talents without which, presumably, the titles would never have been

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<sup>14</sup>) 棲霞寺. Its full name is Ch'i-hsia Ch'an-ssu 禪寺, but it is commonly referred to as Ch'i-hsia Shan 棲霞山, although the mountain on which it stands is actually She Shan 攝山.

<sup>15</sup>) 法意.

<sup>16</sup>) *Shou-tso* 首座. This is the highest of the Four Great [ranks of] Instructors (*ssu-ta pan-shou* 四大班首) in the meditation hall. It is a permanent rank (*hsü-chih* 序職) that does not terminate at the end of each semester as do all the offices (*lieh-chih* 列職). Normally only one rector is on active assignment to the meditation hall, that is, he has the work as well as the rank of rector, comes next to the abbot in giving religious instruction, and is consulted by the abbot on all important matters, religious or administrative. Even if a rector is not on active assignment, however, his prestige is such that the abbot may often consult him.

conferred. In fact, Tsung-yang was a man of many talents. He was a painter, poet, and calligrapher, as well as being a religious teacher and a man with experience in monastery administration. He was also (and this is probably the second reason why he was chosen) a friend of Sun Yat-sen<sup>17</sup>). Thus he had connections that might be useful in dealing with government officials. Thirdly, as a younger dharma brother, his turn as abbot of Chin Shan had not yet come: he was available.

He agreed to Fa-yi's request and in the same year, 1919, he moved to the Ch'i-hsia Ssu and became its abbot. He took with him Jo-shun<sup>18</sup>), a younger monk who was his dharma disciple of the 45th generation on the Chin Shan scroll. Although not all members of the 44th generation—Tsung-yang's generation—had yet served as abbot, they had already transmitted the dharma<sup>19</sup>). This was because Chin Shan was a large establishment with about three hundred monks in permanent residence and another hundred usually living in the wandering monks' hall<sup>20</sup>). Many overseers were required to manage its various departments. There was also the fear that if a generation delayed transmitting too long, it might through some misfortune die without disciples.

When Tsung-yang and Jo-shun reached Ch'i-hsia Shan they energetically set about restoring it to its ancient splendour. A

<sup>17</sup>) A two-page biography of Tsung-yang and a specimen of his calligraphy are given in a collection of Dr. Sun's correspondence published by the KMT History Bureau, *K'ai-kuo ming-jen mo-chi 開國名人墨蹟*, Taipei, 1961, chüan 1, p. 16-17, 9-10.

<sup>18</sup>) 若舜.

<sup>19</sup>) *Ch'uan-fa 傳法*.

<sup>20</sup>) The *shang-k'o t'ang 上客堂*. It was also called the "cloud-water hall" (*yün-shui t'ang 雲水堂*) because wandering monks were supposed to be as unattached as drifting clouds or flowing water. For a general discussion of this and other phases of monastic life, see my article „The Buddhist Career”, *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. II, 1962, p. 37-48.

library, refectory, hall of guardian kings, abbot's quarter's, guest department, and all the usual offices were built one by one, many of stone. A great shrine that could hold a thousand monks at devotions was put up in 1925-1926. Just as the Ch'ien-lung Emperor had a suite<sup>21)</sup> at Ch'i-hsia Shan, where he stayed in all five times, so an apartment was now kept for the use of Chiang Kai-shek. The money for this building program was gradually collected by Tsung-yang from lay donors in many parts of China—in Shanghai and Canton as well as Nanking. The extensive landholdings of over 1400 *mou*, which produced a rental income of up to 200,000 catties of grain a year, were also acquired gradually, some presented by lay donors, some purchased by the monastery with accumulated income. The only important building that had yet to be put up when the Communists took Nanking in 1949 was the meditation hall.

During the 1920's and 1930's there were usually 50-60 monks in residence at Ch'i-hsia Shan. Ordinations were held every spring. In 1933, for example, about 170 novices were ordained as monks and 120 as nuns, while the Five Vows were taken by 40 lay men and women. This was the time when among those ordained were twelve Europeans under the leadership of the celebrated Hungarian adventurer, Ch'ao-k'ung<sup>22)</sup>.

Ch'i-hsia Shan had been restored and Tsung-yang was the monk who restored it. Therefore on the dharma scroll of Ch'i-hsia Shan he is termed "the venerable restorer of Ch'i-hsia, Tsung-yang [whose dharma name is] Yin-leng<sup>23)</sup>".

Where had the scroll come from? It was a new document, copied

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<sup>21)</sup> *Hsing-kung* 行宮 .

<sup>22)</sup> 照空, alias Trebitch Lincoln. He was already a monk himself and had prepared them for ordination as their master in Shanghai.

<sup>23)</sup> See below p. 149.



from the Chin Shan scroll when Tsung-yang assumed the post of abbot of Ch'i-hsia Shan in 1919. Up through the 43rd generation it was identical in wording with the Chin Shan scroll. In the 44th generation, it bore only the name of Tsung-yang. In the 45th generation it bore only the name of Jo-shun. In the 46th it listed four disciples, in the 47th three, and in the 48th five. All were overseers of Ch'i-hsia Shan and all have either served as abbot or would have served as abbot if they had not become refugees.

In most Chinese monasteries there was only one overseer<sup>24</sup>), who headed the treasury<sup>25</sup>). As such he was in ultimate charge of receipts and disbursement of cash, which were handled under his supervision by the bursars<sup>26</sup>). He was also in charge of the collection of grain-rents, issuance of grain to the kitchen, sale of grain and other products, purchase and issuance of tea, oil, salt, sauce, vinegar, building materials and all other miscellaneous business, which were handled under his supervision by the bursars and storage stewards<sup>27</sup>). The overseer gave general supervision to all other departments of the monastery and could take action in answer to a request for help or on his own initiative. In important matters he usually consulted the provost<sup>28</sup>), an older monk who had, in most cases,

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<sup>24</sup>) *Chien-yüan* 監院. The term "manager (*tang-chia* 當家)" may be used synonymously. J. Prip-Møller (*Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, Copenhagen, 1937, p. 224 footnote) states that "*tang-chia*" is used by the monks themselves, whereas "*chien-yüan*" is used by people outside the monastery. My sources say more or less the opposite: "*chien-yüan*" is the correct, professional term, whereas "*tang-chia*" is colloquial and better known to laymen. "*Tang-chia*" may be applied to the head (*chu-ch'ih* 住持) of a small temple; "*chien-yüan*" may not.

<sup>25</sup>) *K'u-fang* 庫房.

<sup>26</sup>) *Fu-ssu* 副寺. I shall give a much more detailed description of monastic offices in the book on modern Chinese Buddhism that I am now preparing.

<sup>27</sup>) *K'u-t'ou* 庫頭.

<sup>28</sup>) *Tu-chien* 都監.

once served as overseer himself. If the matter was important enough (e.g., the expulsion of a monk from the monastery for a serious disciplinary offense), the overseer could not take action on his own, but only recommend a course of action to the abbot.

What I have just described is the *functional* overseer. He was to be found in the ordinary monastery that had no dharma scroll. In contrast to him were the *titular* overseers we are discussing. They were to be found only in monasteries with scrolls and they had the title only if their names appeared on the scroll. Whereas the ordinary monastery had one overseer, here there could be several. Although "overseer" was their title, they might be doing work that in ordinary monasteries would be done by other officers. At Ch'i-hsia Shan, for instance, in 1948 the first overseer<sup>29)</sup> headed the treasury. The second overseer<sup>30)</sup> headed the guest department<sup>31)</sup>. The guest prefects<sup>32)</sup>, one of whom would have headed it elsewhere, worked under him. The third overseer headed the sacristy<sup>33)</sup>. The abbot did not appoint the officer, who would have headed it elsewhere. The fourth and fifth overseers had no duties as such. They ranked as junior instructors<sup>34)</sup> in the hierarchy of the meditation hall, but since Ch'i-hsia Shan had no meditation hall, this was an empty title too. The ranking of these overseers from first down to fifth was in accordance with the order in which their names were listed on Ch'i-hsia Shan's dharma scroll. All of them had the borrowed lineage of Chin Shan.

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<sup>29)</sup> *Cheng chien-yüan* 正監院.

<sup>30)</sup> *Erh chien-yüan* 二監院.

<sup>31)</sup> *K'o-t'ang* 客堂.

<sup>32)</sup> *Chih-k'o* 知客.

<sup>33)</sup> *I-po liao* 衣鉢寮.

<sup>34)</sup> *T'ang-chu* 堂主.

The process of borrowing the dharma lineage of one monastery to establish or re-establish another is called "dividing the lamp"<sup>35</sup>), that is, the lamp of the dharma. The term can mean any transmission that divides the lineage into two independent lines of succession<sup>36</sup>). Sometimes the monk who establishes a monastery has served as the abbot of another institution and so acquired its dharma, which he "brings over". (This happened, for example, in the case of the Tz'u-en Ssu, founded in Shenyang during the early years of the Republic.) Sometimes the head of a small temple that is long-established, but has no dharma, wants to raise its status. He can borrow the lineage of a big monastery by "requesting its dharma"<sup>37</sup>) for himself. The lineage he thus acquires becomes the lineage of his temple.

Before we get involved in variants, however, we should see a little more clearly how the dharma was transmitted at Ch'i-hsia Shan. Let us consider the 46th generation. After Tsung-yang died in 1921, Jo-shun, who succeeded him as abbot, established a sub-temple<sup>38</sup>) in Hong Kong. As the years went by, he wanted to spend more time there. Furthermore the pressure of business at Ch'i-hsia Shan had increased so that quite aside from the sub-temple he needed assistants. He decided to transmit the dharma to four young monks.

All those whose names have been inscribed on a monastery's dhar-

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<sup>35</sup>) *Fen-teng* 分燈. Thus Ch'i-hsia's dharma was "brought over from Chin Shan in a division of the lamp 由金山分燈過了".

<sup>36</sup>) It is used in this sense on the dharma scroll reproduced below; see p. 148. On what the division means in practice, see p. 139 ff.

<sup>37</sup>) *Ch'iu-fa* 求法. On the Tz'u-en Ssu, see below, p. 127.

<sup>38</sup>) *Hsia-yüan* 下院; so called because it is "down below" whereas the monastery is usually on a mountain. The sub-temples may also be called "branch-temples" (*fen-yüan* 分院). Under either name they are the property of their parent monastery and under the control of its abbot.

ma scroll are members of a dharma family. They can no more take a disciple without consulting their seniors than a Chinese father could adopt a son. In theory, therefore, each generation must consult all living members of earlier generations before they may transmit the dharma. In practice, they consult only those who are interested and available. They may also talk it over with the elders of neighboring monasteries<sup>39)</sup>, especially if no senior "kinsmen" have survived. In this case, Jo-shun went to Chin Shan and explained his plans to Yin-k'ai, one of his dharma masters<sup>40)</sup>. He did not consult Yin-ch'e, another of his masters, who was then abbot. Yin-ch'e was preoccupied with the meditation hall and not particularly interested in Ch'i-hsia Shan, whereas Yin-k'ai, already retired as abbot, had always shown an avuncular enthusiasm. The other members of the 44th generation were all dead.

Yin-k'ai approved of the candidates and Jo-shun, on his return to Ch'i-hsia Shan, called them to his quarters one by one and invited each to become his dharma disciple. "Please help the establishment by becoming an overseer", he said<sup>41)</sup>. After they had all accepted, an auspicious day<sup>42)</sup> was set, and on it the dharma was transmitted in a simple ceremony as follows.

The elders of neighbouring monasteries, the local gentry, former officers of Ch'i-hsia Shan, and all of its present residents<sup>43)</sup> fore-

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<sup>39)</sup> *Chu-shan chang-lao* 諸山長老. This includes abbots, ex-abbots, and sometimes senior officers of monasteries that were considered to be in the same area. The limits of this area cannot be precisely defined, but it was usually within fifty miles.

<sup>40)</sup> See p. 149.

<sup>41)</sup> 請你幫忙常住作監院.

<sup>42)</sup> It was chosen from the "Yellow Calendar" (*huang-li* 黃曆). Some monks assert that Buddhism has no truck with auspicious and inauspicious days, and it is true that in most of the other cases I know of the ceremony was held on the birthday of Śākyamuni, Kuan Yin, or some other specifically Buddhist occasion, e.g., when an ordination was being conducted and the necessary witnesses were on hand anyway.

<sup>43)</sup> In other cases no one was invited to the ceremony except the elders of neighboring monasteries and dharma kinsmen. None of the resident monks would attend since, as a

gathered in the dharma hall <sup>44</sup>) at 7.00 o'clock in the morning. Jo-shun himself presided, sitting on a raised dais. If he had been one of several dharma brothers, the senior <sup>45</sup>) would have presided. The disciples stood before him in order of seniority. After a hymn was sung <sup>46</sup>) they did nine full obeisances on their kneeling cloths fully opened <sup>47</sup>). Jo-shun then unrolled the dharma scroll, on which their names <sup>48</sup>) had been inscribed before the ceremony, and read out the text, starting with Mahākāśyapa's smile of understanding at Vulture Peak and ending with the transmission from himself to the new generation. When he read their name *gāthās* <sup>49</sup>) at the end, it constituted the preaching of the dharma required for the occasion. After he had finished, they did one more full obeisance to express their thanks.

By this brief ceremony, which took perhaps an hour, all members of the new generation were committed to be responsible for the future of Ch'i-hsia Shan, and Jo-shun, their master, was committed to hand it over to one of them when he retired. He had conferred and they had accepted enscrollment <sup>50</sup>).

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family matter, it did not concern them. The elders had to be present as outside witnesses, who could testify, if need be, to the identity of the new generation.

<sup>44</sup>) *Fa-t'ang* 法堂.

<sup>45</sup>) I.e., the *ta fa-shih* 大法師. His brothers (the *erh fa-shih* 二法師, *san fa-shih* 三法師, etc.) would have sat beside him in that order.

<sup>46</sup>) I.e., one thurifer (*shao-hsiang* 燒香) and four acolytes (*shih-che* 侍者) recited the section of the missal (*k'e-pen* 課本) entitled "*hsiang-tsan* 香讚". Incense was then offered by the disciples.

<sup>47</sup>) "To make a full obeisance", *ting-li* 頂禮, is a practice peculiar to Buddhists. As the head is slowly touched against the floor, the hands rest flat on the floor next to the head, with the palms turned up, whereas in a kowtow the palms are down. Only on solemn occasions is the kneeling cloth fully opened (*chan ta chü* 展大具).

<sup>48</sup>) Each disciple was identified by two of his three names, that is, by his style and his dharma name, but not by his tonsure name. See p. 136 ff.

<sup>49</sup>) See p. 140.

<sup>50</sup>) I use the word "enscroll" as a translation for *shou-chi* 授記, which is practically

This was in 1928. The four brothers of the 46th generation served as abbot one by one, except where death intervened. In 1939, eleven years later, they decided amongst themselves that it was time to transmit the dharma. Jo-shun was then living in Hong Kong. They obtained his approval by letter and took three disciples. These, the 47th generation, decided to transmit soon after the Japanese

synonymous with *ch'uan-fa*, "to transmit the dharma". I use "to be enscrolled" as a translation of *shou-chi* 受記, which is practically synonymous with *shou-fa* 受法 "to receive the dharma". *Chi* is an abbreviation for *chi-pieh* 記別 (also written 記別). A *chi-pieh*, in Sanskrit *vyākaraṇa*, is a statement given by a Buddha to his disciples in which he foretold their future lives on the way to Buddhahood. The dictionaries (Mochizuki, Ting Fu-pao, *Tz'u-hai*) do not give the meaning that *chi-pieh* has in common usage today. A long process of development must lie between the historical and the present usage.

I offer below some examples of present usage of this and synonymous terms.

"X transmits the dharma to Y" may be rendered

1. 甲傳法給乙
2. 甲授記給乙
3. 甲付法給乙
4. 甲交一支法傳給乙

All of these may refer equally to monastery or private transmission (on the latter see p. 115 ff.), but I have the impression that the phrase 一支法 is used particularly in the case of private transmission.

"Y receives the dharma from X" may be rendered

1. 乙同甲受法
2. 乙同甲接法
3. 乙同甲受記
4. 乙受甲的法

If one is referring to monastery transmission one may say "Y is enscrolled at Chin Shan":

乙在金山受記

Or more loosely, "Y receives the dharma of Chin Shan":

乙受金山的法

*Shou-chi* 受記 may also be used as a noun to refer to a monk who has been enscrolled:

他是金山的一個受記

I have heard all these phrases used myself.

surrender. There were some likely candidates serving as officers of the monastery, and there were others at neighbouring monasteries, some of whom were invited to come to Ch'i-hsia Shan and serve as officers too. None of them were told, however, that they were being looked over as candidates for enscrollment. After they had served one or more semesters in office (depending on when they had arrived), the brothers of the 47th generation decided which were the most competent. By this time not only Jo-shun, their dharma grandfather<sup>51</sup>), but two of their dharma masters had died. They obtained the approval of the surviving two and held the ceremony on Kuan Yin's birthday, the 19th of the second lunar month, 1946. There has been no further transmission at Ch'i-hsia Shan. Its dharma disciples have scattered. One is in South Vietnam; one is in Taiwan; one is teaching at a Buddhist girls' school in Hong Kong; two are living in the sub-temple there. According to news indirectly received, the last brother of the 47th generation is still abbot, but he lives in Shanghai, his office stripped of all authority. At Ch'i-hsia Shan, as at most other mainland monasteries today, authority is entirely in the hands of an overseer who is chosen for the post by the new Chinese Buddhist Association (rather than by the abbot as heretofore) after one or two years of political indoctrination at the Chinese Buddhist Institute in Peking.

These details of dharma transmission at Ch'i-hsia Shan are typical of the practice at the big public monasteries<sup>52</sup>) of Kiangsu province in the first half of this century. They illustrate some of the underlying principles. Other principles equally important have yet to be made clear.

First, although all the brothers of a given generation were normally enscrolled in one ceremony, they might be enscrolled sepa-

<sup>51</sup>) *Shih-kung* 師公 or *shih tsu* 師祖.

<sup>52</sup>) *Shih-fang ts'ung-lin* 十方叢林.

rately and at different times if circumstances required it. Circumstances might also bring about an exception to the rule that the brothers served as abbot in the order their names appeared on the scroll. I know of a case that illustrates both exceptions. A certain abbot wished to retire, but found that one of his two disciples had gone off to another part of the country without leaving an address, while the other was still too young to take office. Thereupon the abbot consulted his predecessor, that is, his elder brother. The latter now headed another monastery nearby. It had a seminary, and among the students at the seminary was a promising young monk about to graduate. On the elder brother's recommendation, they took him as their dharma disciple. Thus he belonged to the same generation as the two monks who had become disciples separately in an earlier enscrollment, but were unavailable to serve. Immediately after he received the dharma, he was made abbot, enabling the incumbent to retire as he had wished. After three years in office, the new abbot also retired in favour of the brother who had formerly been considered under-age, but now had acquired sufficient years and experience. This was, of course, his elder brother, whose name appeared on the scroll ahead of his own. Thus it was an exception to the usual order of succession. Exceptions also took place in case of death. If, for instance, the third brother in a generation had died, the second would hand the abbotship to the fourth. If the abbot himself died without either brothers or disciples, then one of his ancestors could transmit the dharma again. If all his ancestors had died, then his successor would be chosen by "selection of the worthy" <sup>53</sup>).

A younger brother could be passed over if he were incompetent and the abbot feared to place the future of the monastery in his hands. But if an incompetent brother were the last member of a

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<sup>53</sup>) *Hsüan-hsien*. See p. 129 ff.



generation who had not served, there was no way of passing over him, and the conscientious abbot would simply have to continue in office. His younger brother could not force him to retire while he, on the other hand, could hand the abbotship to no one but his younger brother. There was a way out of the impasse if some of the previous generation were still alive; they could transmit again, as we have seen. Otherwise the incumbent could only postpone the evil day. Enscrollment had conferred on the younger brother a nearly inalienable right to become the abbot.

It was not altogether unalienable. Any abbot or abbot-elect could be impeached<sup>54</sup>) and expelled. The officers of the monastery would call a meeting of all the resident monks, read off the offences, and name a successor to be approved by the meeting. In general, there were two kinds of offences that merited impeachment: flagrant violations of the Vinaya rules; and disposing of the permanent property of the monastery without the consent of its senior officers. I have been told that impeachment was very rare and, in fact, have been able to learn of only one case<sup>55</sup>).

Just as the right to become abbot was inalienable, so the obligation to do so was inescapable. This was the great advantage of the system. It assured the monastery of a head, the abbot of a successor. Under other systems, he might have to go on serving for years after he wished to retire: "he had to serve as long as he had a breath in his body". He had no dharma brothers committed to relieve him and often he could not find monks competent and willing to take his place or, if he did find them, they would slip away at night as soon as they heard they were being considered. They wanted to devote themselves to the religious life, not to

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<sup>54</sup>) *Chien-chü* 檢舉.

<sup>55</sup>) At the Ching-an Ssu 靜安寺 or "Bubbling Well Monastery" in Shanghai.

administration. I know of one famous abbot in Liaoning who fell ill under the strain of looking for a successor. He had dysentery for more than a year until he could not eat, could not even get up from his bed. But the day after another monk came to "rescue him" by taking over the abbotship, he completely recovered. Such a situation could never have arisen in a Kiangsu monastery except in that very rare case where the abbot had to stay on to prevent an incompetent brother from taking office.

In Kiangsu monasteries, as elsewhere, abbots often preferred to retire after serving the usual minimum of three years. The responsibility was heavy and the power that went with it had little appeal to the type of person who qualified for office<sup>56</sup>). If he saw that the monastery was suffering under his administration, he might retire in even less than three years. On the other hand he might continue longer in office to complete some project—especially building project—that he had initiated, or because his successor was for the time being busy elsewhere<sup>57</sup>). Normally his successor would be serving under him as an overseer in charge of some department of the monastery. But there was nothing in the rules that forbade a dharma disciple to leave the monastery after he was enscrolled. He might go, for instance, to his own small temple or to another monastery where he could also be enscrolled; and yet during his absence he remained an overseer of the monastery where he was committed to serve as abbot.

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<sup>56</sup>) On the qualifications of an abbot, see below p. 132. I have been told that in the Kiangsu monasteries the abbot had greater power and responsibility than elsewhere. Everything had to be done in accordance with his wishes or with his consent, and so he was being constantly consulted by the officers under him. In other types of monasteries they had more discretion to act on their own. The centralization of power and the sense of family responsibility that we find in Kiangsu monasteries may be one reason why they kept strong when other institutions were decaying.

<sup>57</sup>) J. Prip-Møller in *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, p. 146, states: "The tenure of office is limited to three years and re-election is not supposed to take place". I have yet to hear of a monastery that had this rule. In most places the abbot served until he chose to retire.

I have just stated that a monk might be enscrolled at another monastery. This brings us to a most important principle. Enscrollment was not exclusive. One could become a dharma disciple in more than one lineage and even in more than one sect. I know of a monk who received the dharma of a Ts'ao-tung monastery and served as its abbot; then received the dharma of a Lin-chi monastery and served as its abbot<sup>58</sup>). Though it is getting a little ahead of our story, we might note that one of his masters at the Ts'ao-tung monastery had received a private dharma scroll from a master of the T'ien-t'ai sect. "In spreading the dharma, he was T'ien-t'ai", as it was explained to me<sup>59</sup>). There was, in fact, nothing to prevent a monk from "belonging" to as many sects as he liked and in several different ways. When he "left lay life" to go into training for the monkhood, he probably had his head shaved by a master of the Lin-chi sect: when he was ordained, it was probably by a master of the Vinaya sect: he could be enscrolled at the monasteries of various Ch'an sects and also (as in the case we have just seen) have a private scroll of the T'ien-t'ai transmission; he could specialize in expounding the texts of the Idealist school; yet the whole time his own practice might be Pure Land<sup>60</sup>). When outsiders ask a Chinese monk what sect he belongs to, they do not perhaps appreciate how haphazard his answer may be.

Each time a monk entered into the relationship of disciple with master, particularly the "tonsure master" who shaved his head and the master (or masters) from whom he might receive the dharma, he became the member of a family. In Kiangsu monasteries the "dharma family" was more important than the "tonsure

<sup>58</sup>) See note 11.

<sup>59</sup>) 他弘法弘天台宗. On private scrolls, see p. 115 ff.

<sup>60</sup>) A monk did not necessarily indulge in such diversification. Theoretically he could have his head shaved, be ordained, and receive the dharma all from a single master. I know of a case where a monk's tonsure master presided at his ordination.

family", while throughout China the "tonsure family" superseded the natural family. His fellow disciples were his "brothers"; his master's fellow disciples were his "uncles"; his master's master was his "grandfather"; and so on. All the kinship terms, prefixed by the word "dharma", "master", or "disciple" were in common use<sup>61</sup>). Disciples supported their masters just as children support their parents. Today many a Chinese monk in Hong Kong and overseas, if his master is in the mainland, sends him regular food parcels. Ancestral graves (that is the graves of ancestral masters) were swept at Ch'ing-ming and ancestral tablets worshipped in the ancestors' hall<sup>62</sup>) of the monastery on Uposatha days (the first and fifteenth of each lunar month). This was not unique to Kiangsu, for most monasteries in all parts of China had ancestors' halls. But the rule in Kiangsu was that only those who had received the monastery's dharma could have their tablets in the hall, whereas the rule elsewhere limited it to those who had served as abbot. Since receiving the dharma of a Kiangsu monastery usually meant later

<sup>61</sup>) Besides those mentioned above, I have heard the following

*t'u-sun* 徒孫 "grandson disciple"

*shih-po* 師伯 and *shih-shu* 師叔 "uncle master"

*tsu-shih* 祖師 "ancestral masters" (of any generation)

These are all ambiguous. They might refer to tonsure relationships or to dharma relationships. There is no ambiguity when the terms "dharma" or "tonsure" are prefixed, as in *fa-t'u* 法徒 "dharma disciple" versus *t'i-t'u ti-tzu* 剃度弟子 "tonsure disciple"; or *fa shih-fu* 法師傅 "dharma master" versus *t'i-tu en-shih* 剃度恩師 "tonsure master". But some terms, e.g., *fa-po* 法伯 and *fa-shu* 法叔 "uncle" seem to have no un-ambiguous tonsure counterparts.

Usually when a monk says that another monk is his master (*shih-fu*) he means his tonsure master, but sometimes he means his dharma master or his "ordination master" (*chieh-shih* 戒師). Any one of the twenty odd monks who officiated at his ordination could be called his "ordination master". Ordinarily this was a purely nominal relationship. The abbot of every monastery was also a master (*shih-fu*) vis-à-vis all the monks living there.

<sup>62</sup>) *Tsu-t'ang* 祖堂.

serving as its abbot, the two rules seem to amount to the same thing. But the tablet of Tsung-yang, for example, was not to be found in Chin Shan. Although he had been an overseer there, he had never served as abbot. His tablet was only at Ch'i-hsia Shan. On the other hand, the fact that an overseer had not served as abbot did not in itself exclude his tablet from the ancestors' hall. It might be placed there if he had done some special service for the monastery. Otherwise it was placed in the hall of merit <sup>63</sup>).

Tsung-yang had restored Ch'i-hsia Shan and brought over the Chin Shan lineage. Thereby all prior lineage at Ch'i-hsia Shan was superseded. The only tablets in its ancestors' hall were those of Bodhidharma, Tsung-yang, and Tsung-yang's dharma descendants (of whom, by 1943, there were three who had died). Not even Fa-yi, the abbot who invited Tsung-yang, had a tablet there. The tablets of most earlier abbots had been burned by the T'ai-p'ing and no effort was made to replace them. At Chin Shan, on the other hand, there were tablets for every generation on its scroll from Bodhidharma to the present day. It was last restored (after a period of decay) by T'ieh-chou, a monk of the 32nd generation. If T'ieh-chou, unlike Tsung-yang, was the dharma disciple of the abbot who held office before the restoration and did not bring over a new lineage from some other monastery <sup>64</sup>), then it would have made sense for him to preserve the tablets of earlier generations or replace them if they had been lost. The tablets evidently were replaced after the whole of the monastery burned in 1853.

<sup>63</sup>) *Kung-te t'ang* 功德堂.

<sup>64</sup>) The Ting-hui Ssu 定慧寺 at Chiao Shan 焦山 has been repeatedly restored without bringing over new lineage; once in the T'ang Dynasty, once in the Sung, once in the Ch'ing, and once under the Republic. Its dharma is Ts'ao-tung. A former abbot of Chin Shan, with whom I discussed the matter, did not remember the circumstances of the restoration of Chin Shan by T'ieh-chou 鐵舟, whose name the reader may look up on the dharma scroll (p. 149). T'ieh-chou, like Tsung-yang, was an accomplished painter.

It was stated above that in Kiangsu dharma relationships were closer than tonsure relationships. Thus not only was the dharma family consulted before new members were admitted, but ancestor worship had wider ramifications. For example in the first five days of every New Year the dharma disciples of Ch'i-hsia Shan, after worshipping in their own ancestors' hall, would pay a visit to Chin Shan and worship in the ancestors' hall there. I have not heard of an analogous practice among tonsure disciples. The fact that monks belonged to one family did not mean, of course, that all was sweetness and light. There were family jealousies and family quarrels (particularly over the use of property) just as there are in natural families. Sometimes there were "black sheep". I have heard of the dharma brother of one monastery who absconded with \$ 10,000 in its funds, took a mistress and had children by her. He used the money to set up a retail shop. Later he began to use opium and heroin. In three years he lost everything, whereupon he deserted his wife and children, was re-ordained, and went to live in another temple. All this caused harsh family quarrels and a drop in lay contributions. His family no longer acknowledged him as a brother although he was never, so far as I know, formally expelled. There was no question of his becoming abbot, since the family was already in exile outside China.

These are the main principles of the system of succession of abbots according to the dharma scroll. The system was in use in Kiangsu not only at the monasteries already mentioned<sup>65)</sup>, but also at the Lung-ch'ang Ssu on Pao-hua Shan<sup>66)</sup>, the P'i-lu Ssu<sup>67)</sup> and

<sup>65)</sup> See notes 6-8, 14, 64.

<sup>66)</sup> 寶華山隆昌寺. This is one of the monasteries where we know that transmission of the dharma has now come to an end. Its last chapter has some interesting points. Miao-jou 妙柔 retired as abbot during the Sino-Japanese war. He was succeeded by his dharma disciple, Mi-ch'eng 密成, whose photograph appears in Prip-Møller's

Ku-lin Ssu <sup>68</sup>) in Nanking, and, I have been told, at all other big public monasteries in the province. Hence in respect to this system they are said to be “Kiangsu school” <sup>69</sup>). I have been unable to determine how many monasteries *outside* Kiangsu were “Kiangsu school”, but the use of the system in this one province is more significant than might appear, since it was probably the most Buddhist province in China, both as to the number of monks and as to the number, size, and the quality of monasteries.

### *Private Scrolls*

Having considered the monastery scroll and its use, we shall now turn to the opposite variety: the private dharma scroll. Only when we have dealt with both varieties can we move on to the rather bewildering gradations that lay between them.

Private transmission of the dharma had nothing to do with a monastery. It conferred no monastic office, no right to succeed as abbot and no obligation to do so. It was a private matter between individual master and individual disciple. The master wrote out a scroll, copying his own with the addition of the disciple's name and *gāthā*, and gave it to the disciple. The disciple kept it as his personal

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*Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, p. 365. Mi-ch'eng died before he had a chance to transmit the dharma. Miao-jou therefore transmitted to a Shantung monk, Wu-tao 悟道, who thus became Mi-ch'eng's posthumous dharma brother (and, incidentally, the only abbot I have heard of in a big Kiangsu monastery who was not from Kiangsu). After “liberation” Wu-tao was succeeded by a disciple of the famous Mi-tsung 密宗 master Neng-hai 能海. Neng-hai has played a leading role in the Communist-sponsored Chinese Buddhist Association. Neither he nor his disciple had ever received the dharma of Pao-hua Shan. Thus an ancient tradition was ended. This information comes from a former ordination professor (*chiao-shou* 教授) of the monastery and is probably accurate. In fact, I have heard of no instance of dharma transmission in China since 1950.

<sup>67</sup>) 毘盧寺.

<sup>68</sup>) 谷林寺.

<sup>69</sup>) *Chiang-su p'ai* 江蘇派.

property. All this was in diametrical contrast to the monastery scroll, which was permanent monastery property, to be handed on from abbot to abbot for safekeeping. An overseer might make a copy of it, but he could never have the original, and in practice there was seldom need for a copy.

The purpose of private transmission was to spread the dharma <sup>70)</sup> through future generations of dharma disciples, who would preach it publicly to the whole world. The private scroll was an evangelical rather than administrative device, particularly "in the teaching sects" like T'ien-t'ai <sup>71)</sup>. But it could also serve practical purposes. Chinese monks, no less than Chinese laymen, felt the need for descendants, not only to worship their tablets after death, but also to supply useful connections while they were alive. The more promising a young monk seemed, the more desirable he was to adopt as one's disciple. But how could he be adopted? Not as a tonsure disciple, since he had had his head shaved when he left lay life; not as an ordination disciple, since he was already ordained; and not, of course, as a Refugees disciple <sup>72)</sup>, since taking the Refugees was restricted to laymen. The answer was to adopt him as one's dharma disciple, provided one had received the dharma oneself. While some disciples studied under their master for years before he gave them a dharma scroll <sup>73)</sup>, others might get it in a few months.

<sup>70)</sup> *Hung-fa* 弘法.

<sup>71)</sup> "In the teaching sects" is "*chiao-hsia* 教下". Sects are often classified as "lineal" (*tsung-men* 宗門), disciplinary or Vinaya (*lü-men* 律門), and teaching (*chiao-men* 教門). Some monks include in the first category all the sects that emphasize practice, including the Pure Land and Tantric sects. A more common view, I believe, is that only Ch'an is *tsung-men* and that the others, except for the Vinaya sect, are *chiao-men*. All the different sects, *fa-men* 法門, are thought of by most monks as different gates to enlightenment, not as mutually exclusive.

<sup>72)</sup> *Kuei-i ti-tzu* 皈依弟子.

<sup>73)</sup> One old monk I know studied for more than ten years under his master and learned to take his place in expounding the sūtras. Only then did he receive a scroll.



This could be due purely to an affinity<sup>74)</sup> between the two of them. Or it might happen because the disciple was stopping only for a short time and the master wanted to “catch” him before somebody else did. Even if the disciple should later take another dharma master, it did not cancel the first master-disciple relationship and, in any case, he was not supposed to do this. Whereas he could be repeatedly enscrolled in connection with becoming the abbot of successive monasteries, he was only supposed to accept one private transmission for “spreading the dharma”.

Sometimes the desire for practical advantages has led monks very far indeed from the original spirit of dharma transmission. I know of a prominent Taiwan abbot who transmitted the dharma to a Chinese monk in Rangoon although the two of them had never met. Possibly out of political motives he volunteered to send him a dharma scroll by mail. The monk in Rangoon accepted the honour, but it does not seem to have made a very deep impression on him, since when I asked him what sect it was, he said he did not know.

For a more edifying illustration of private transmission, let us take the case of the Reverend Chüeh-kuang<sup>75)</sup>, one of the leaders of the Sangha today in Hong Kong. After being ordained at the

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<sup>74)</sup> *Yu-yüan* 有緣, a term that implies some connection in previous lives which brought them together in this one.

<sup>75)</sup> 覺光法師. I have adopted “Reverend” as the translation for *fa-shih* when the latter is used as a title. This is the standard practice in Chinese Buddhist circles today. It smacks of dog-collars, but I believe that here as elsewhere intelligibility and convenience should outweigh considerations of taste. Thus I would usually translate *ch'u-chia jen* 出家人 as “clergy” simply because the Sanscrit *pravrajita* is unintelligible to most people, while it is too unwieldy to say “persons who have left lay life” or “monks, nuns, and unordained male and female novices”. I hope to present an English glossary of Chinese Buddhist terms at an early date, including particularly those not to be found in the dictionaries.

T'ien-t'ung Ssu<sup>76</sup>), a very famous monastery near Ningpo, he enrolled as a student in the seminary of the Kuan-tsung Ssu<sup>77</sup>), which is in the city of Ningpo proper. Both these monasteries specialized in T'ien-t'ai, though neither of them had monastery scrolls of this or any other sect. Chüeh-kuang studied nine years at the seminary. Then in 1939, because of the Japanese advance, he moved to a branch institution that had been set up in Hong Kong the year before. With him came the homiletics teacher<sup>78</sup>), a monk named Hsien-ming<sup>79</sup>). After three years of further study, on the 8th day of the fourth month in 1942 (Buddha's birthday), Hsien-ming gave Chüeh-kuang a dharma scroll.

The history of the dharma transmitted that day was as follows. Many years before, the abbot of the Kuan-tsung Ssu had been the illustrious Ti-hsien<sup>80</sup>). When he was about to retire, he transmitted the dharma to ten disciples, so that they might spread it in ten directions throughout China. One of these disciples was T'an-hsü<sup>81</sup>), who founded several new monasteries in Shantung and Manchuria. Another was Pao-ching<sup>82</sup>) who soon afterwards succeeded Ti-hsien as abbot. Note, however, that other dharma disciples did not become abbots of the Kuan-tsung Ssu, and herein lies the difference from the system of the "Kiangsu school". The dharma they had received was not the monastery's, but Ti-hsien's. There was no monastery scroll: each disciple had his own.

Pao-ching served as abbot two terms of five years each (five

<sup>76</sup>) 天童寺.

<sup>77</sup>) 觀宗寺.

<sup>78</sup>) *Chu-chiang* 主講. What students learned at the Kuan-tsung's seminary was principally how to expound the sūtras (*chiang-ching* 講經). There were usually one *chu-chiang* and three assistants (*fu chu-chiang*).

<sup>79</sup>) 顯明.

<sup>80</sup>) 諦閑.

<sup>81</sup>) 倓虛.

<sup>82</sup>) 寶靜.

rather than three was the usual term at Kuan-tsung Ssu). Shortly before he retired, he too transmitted the dharma to ten disciples. One of these was Ming-hsien, the homiletics teacher. It was he who transmitted to the Reverend Chüeh-kuang after they moved to Hong Kong. Before doing so, he consulted his master, Pao-ching. He did not, however, consult any of his dharma brothers, and I suspect that he may have consulted Pao-ching partly because he had left his own scroll behind in Ningpo and had to write for a copy of the text.

This illustrates again the difference between monastery and private transmission. In the former, as we have seen, all the brothers are consulted. Furthermore five brothers, let us say, transmit collectively to five brothers, and these five collectively to the next five. The dharma remains closely held. In private transmission one transmits to ten, and each of the ten may transmit to another ten — or another twenty. The dharma lineage can fan out with great rapidity. What prevents it from doing so in practice is the difficulty that conscientious masters encounter in finding monks qualified to become their disciples. Hsien-ming felt that only the Reverend Chüeh-kuang was qualified, and the Reverend Chüeh-kuang has so far found no one who is qualified. As he explains it, a qualified disciple must know the T'ien-t'ai doctrine, be competent to spread the dharma, and be a person with real promise. Reverend Chüeh-kuang, incidentally, though his dharma is T'ien-t'ai, is Pure Land in practice.

### *Variants*

Before we move on to examine the variants that lie between the two main categories of dharma scrolls, I should explain that the division into categories is my own, not as furnished by the monks. In the first place most Chinese monks have never received the

dharma (in the formal sense we have been discussing) and know next to nothing about dharma scrolls. Of the few who have received the dharma (and they are, to some extent, an elite in the Chinese Sangha), most have received it by private transmission and they know next to nothing about monastery scrolls. My sources, on the other hand, include monks who have received and transmitted the dharma under all the principal systems of transmission, and they are perfectly clear as to how these systems work. Yet when asked for terms to classify the systems, they grope helplessly for an answer<sup>83</sup>). They have apparently never had an occasion to analyze what they have been doing, and so they have developed no standard terms. That is why I have had to choose or invent my own.

I have invented the term "public-private transmission" as a catchall for the variants that had features of both. For example, perhaps the commonest system in Chinese monasteries was for the new abbot, either just before or after his investiture, to receive

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<sup>83</sup>) Here are some examples of such groping.

A monastery scroll is

1. "a real dharma scroll" (*chen-cheng ti fa-chüan* 真正的法卷);
2. "a formal dharma scroll" (*cheng-shih ti fa-chüan* 正式的法卷);
3. "a true lineage dharma scroll" (*cheng-t'ung ti fa-chüan* 正統的法卷);
4. "a base-monastery dharma scroll" (*pen-shan ti fa-chüan* 本山的法卷).

A private scroll is

1. "a branch transmission dharma scroll" (*chih-liu ti fa-chüan* 支流的法卷);
2. "a dharma scroll for spreading the dharma" (*hung-fa ti fa-chüan* 弘法的法卷).

The expression *fa-chüan* refers to the document as such, not to its contents. For example, when Ming-ch'ang 明常, the former abbot of Ch'i-hsia Shan compiled a new edition of the monastery history (*Ch'i-hsia shan-chih* 棲霞山志, privately published in Hong Kong, 1962), he reproduced the text of the dharma scroll given below on Plate I. He did not head it "Dharma Scroll", but "Table of Succession" (*ch'uan-ch'eng piao* 傳承表).

the dharma from the abbot who was retiring. As one abbot put it: "It was like an official getting his seal. If someone takes office, he has to have a seal". The scroll made an appropriate form of "seal" since it purported to mean that a spiritual succession underlay the administrative succession.

The dharma transmitted thereby was not the dharma of the monastery, but the private dharma of the retiring abbot. The scroll issued was not the property of the monastery, but the private property of the abbot taking office. On the other hand, since the office gave control over public monastery property and the scroll was like a seal of office, it could be considered public in character. It could also be considered public on the grounds that the method of choosing abbots was the more-or-less public "selection of the worthy"—how much more-or-less we shall see below. Perhaps the most important difference lay in the fact that while monastery transmission determined the identity of a series of abbots for years ahead, this first variety of public-private transmission determined nothing. It only took place after a single abbot had already been chosen by selection of the worthy. It was ancillary. Under both systems, however, the dharma transmitted was connected with the sect of the monastery.

The sect of a monastery in China was normally the sect of its founder. It could be seen from the form of the bell and board in the meditation hall and heard from the way they were struck. This bell and board were hung to the right of the door as one entered the hall, over a table between the second and third seats. They were not large, the board being two or three feet long and suspended from inside the bell. They were struck to signal the beginning and end of meditation, intermissions, meals, and so on. Thus speech was avoided.

If the founder of the monastery had belonged to the Vinaya

sect, then the board was oblong, hung flat, its surface parallel to the surface of the floor. If its founder was Lin-chi, there was an oblong board, hung horizontally, with its lower edge parallel to the floor; if Ts'ao-tung, vertically. The other three Ch'an sects had different shapes of boards. The few Pure Land monasteries had no board at all.

The board was a monastery's most precious possession, both as the emblem of its origin and because the signals struck on it ordered the work of the meditation hall and, so to speak, beat time for the march towards enlightenment. Some boards were kept until they became covered with perforations from centuries of striking.

A monastery could only change its sect—change its board—when an abbot took office who did not have and did not acquire the dharma lineage of his predecessor. My sources agree that this only happened when monasteries in decay were restored. Hence the sect of an abbot (or, at least, one of his sects) coincided with the sect of the monastery over which he presided.

The exception comes in the case of those monasteries where no dharma lineage was necessarily associated with the office of abbot. There the new abbot, who might have acquired the dharma of another sect or perhaps never received the dharma at all, was under no obligation to become the dharma disciple of the abbot who preceded him. In fact, I have been told that in some monasteries, particularly in the Northeast, the new abbot might see little value in his predecessor's dharma lineage and avoid accepting it. Furthermore, some monks who received and transmitted the dharma themselves were opposed on principle to associating it with the post of abbot. They felt that it introduced a private relationship into what should be entirely public. The great Ch'an master, Hsü-yün, for example, accepted dharma disciples, but put a stop to abbot-to-abbot transmission in at least three of the monasteries that

came under his control. Tz'u-chou, a famous exponent of the Avatamsaka Sūtra, was opposed to the use of dharma scrolls because he felt that true transmission of the dharma was an internal matter that could be only debased by external devices. On the other hand, reformers like T'ai-hsü were opposed to dharma transmission as such, on the grounds that it continued the division of Chinese Buddhism into sects<sup>84</sup>).

These grounds seem rather flimsy since sects in Chinese Buddhism were largely nominal. The sect of a monastery did not necessarily reflect its history or practice. For example, the Kuo-ch'ing Ssu<sup>85</sup>) on Mount T'ien-t'ai, although it was the seat of the T'ien-t'ai school, belonged to the Lin-chi sub-sect of Ch'an. Similarly most of the monasteries at the great Pure Land center of P'u-t'o Shan were Lin-chi, and it should not be forgotten that many Chinese monasteries practised both Ch'an meditation and Pure Land reciting of Buddha's name. The former abbot of the T'ien-ning Ssu told me that, although its bell and board were Lin-chi, the monastery "did not belong to a single sect". It advocated and practised Ch'an, Pure Land, recitation of the Diamond Sūtra (in a special hall for the purpose), and the study in its seminary of T'ien-t'ai, Wei-shih 唯識 (Idealist) and Hsien-shou 賢首 (Hua-yen) doctrines.

Let us return to our description of the various forms of "public-private" transmission of the dharma. There is another form that may strike us as closer to public than private. In some monasteries without a monastery scroll the abbot, as he grew older, would

<sup>84</sup>) While T'ai-hsü 太虛 was certainly a reformer, Hsü-yün 虛雲 and Tz'u-chou 慈舟 could better be called conservatives. On Hsü-yün, see p. 145. My impression is that after 1911, except in Kiangsu, there was growing dissociation of dharma and abbotship, reversing a trend of the previous two centuries.

<sup>85</sup>) 天台國清寺. When it was visited by a Japanese Buddhist delegation in October 1957, they found the tablets of the 33rd to 44th generation of Lin-chi ancestors still in the ancestors' hall.

begin to worry about the difficulty of finding a successor. Eventually, after undertaking (more or less) the consultations involved in "selecting the worthy", he would decide who his successor should be. He would then transmit the dharma to this younger monk, adopting him as his dharma disciple. The disciple knew that he would one day become abbot: he was in training for the post. He had the same right and the same obligation as if his name had been entered on a monastery scroll. The future management of the monastery (through the period of his eventual tenure, at least) was assured. But the scroll he had received from the abbot was still his own property, and, of course, there was not the collective element that we usually find in monastery transmission—usually but not always. At the Lung-ch'ang Ssu, for example, the great ordination center on Pao-hua Shan, each abbot took only one disciple who served as overseer until his master died and then succeeded him<sup>86</sup>). But the scroll was the property of the monastery<sup>87</sup>), and that is the criterion we must fall back on to distinguish the system at Pao-hua Shan from the variant I have just described. Unfortunately this criterion too ultimately fails us. The systems we encounter become more and more hybrid. For example, in 1946 at the Ling-yin Ssu, the most

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<sup>86</sup>) See note 66. In recent decades the abbots of Pao-hua Shan have retired in advance of death because (I was told) of the increasing difficulty of discharging their duties in changing times.

<sup>87</sup>) The scroll of Pao-hua Shan was in the Lü-tsung or Vinaya line of transmission. Single transmission like this, from one master to one disciple, is termed *tan-ch'uan* 單傳, as opposed to double transmission, *shuang-ch'uan* 雙傳, from a pair of masters to a pair of disciples. The latter has been practised at Chiao Shan in recent generations (after about the 40th) although in the preceding generations (30th to 40th) it was sometimes single and sometimes double, depending on the burden of work. This is as the ex-abbot remembers it. All the records were left behind at the monastery.

Chin Shan practised single transmission up through the fortieth generation, double in the 41st, and multiple thereafter as the reader may see below. Multiple transmission appears to be a recent phenomenon.



famous monastery across the West Lake in Hangchow, the dharma was transmitted by a single abbot-master to five disciples, who became thereby committed to serve in turn as abbot, just as in the big monasteries of Kiangsu. But each received his own scroll. There was no monastery scroll<sup>88</sup>). This anomaly has a parallel in Kiangsu itself. At the T'ien-ning Ssu in Ch'ang-chou (perhaps the largest monastery in China), collective transmission was practised in the orthodox fashion, but the scroll had been lost during the 1930's and thereafter the transmission was oral.

Thus there were many variants in the transmission of the dharma. But in addition to this, one form of transmission could turn into another. The dharma of a monastery could become a private dharma. An example of this is furnished by the scroll that accompanies this article.

The reader may recall that Tsung-yang and his disciple Jo-shun were the monks who restored Ch'i-hsia Shan. We have also mentioned that Jo-shun, when he succeeded as abbot, founded a sub-temple<sup>89</sup>) in Hong Kong. It was intended partly as a base to win local support for Ch'i-hsia Shan and partly as a place to take vacations and eventually to retire to. Nearby there was a nunnery<sup>90</sup>), the head of which asked him for the dharma. He acquiesced and took her as his disciple. The dharma he gave her might have become associated with the control of her nunnery but, as it turned out, she died before transmitting it. Years passed. Jo-shun also died.

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<sup>88</sup>) I got this information from a former bursar (*fu-ssu*) of the Ling-yin Ssu 靈隱寺 who was a resident of the monastery 1937-1950. He himself had been invited to become one of the five dharma brothers, but had refused on the ground that he was "not qualified". He said that the same system was in force at the Liu-yün Ssu 留雲寺, a large monastery in Shanghai.

<sup>89</sup>) The Lu-yeh Yüan 鹿野苑 in Tsuen Wan (Ch'üan-wan 荃灣).

<sup>90</sup>) The Tz'u-hang Ching-yüan 慈航淨苑 in Shatin (Sha-t'ien 沙田).

One of his disciples, Ming-ch'ang<sup>91</sup>), after serving his term as abbot of Ch'i-hsia Shan moved down to Hong Kong to take over the sub-temple. Thereupon another nun from the same nunnery approached him with a request for the dharma. Because of the former connection and because he liked her, Ming-ch'ang wanted to grant the request. He felt, however, that he first ought to consult his uncles<sup>92</sup>) at Chin Shan. With their approval he transmitted the dharma to the nun, Yüeh-kuan 月觀, on the 11th of the 6th month in 1949. The dharma scroll translated below, p. 147-149, was written out for this occasion.

The dharma he transmitted was the dharma of Ch'i-hsia Shan and ultimately of Chin Shan, but it gave Yüeh-kuan no rights to succession at either monastery<sup>93</sup>). Even if she had been a monk instead of a nun, it would still have given her no rights. This was a private transmission. Ming-ch'ang, it is true, had consulted the previous generation, but he had not consulted his brothers and, of course, if this had been a monastery transmission, he would not only have had to consult them, but as many of them as possible would have been on the dais beside him to transmit the dharma collectively.

The only right that Yüeh-kuan acquired with her dharma scroll was the right to transmit the dharma to another nun. According to the rules, a nun could not transmit to a monk. She also acquired,

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<sup>91</sup>) He compiled the history mentioned in note 83, and with his talented grand-disciple Fa-tsung 法宗, gave invaluable help for the preparation of this article. He has not only proved reliable as a source of information, but is a kind and amiable human being.

<sup>92</sup>) He called them "uncles" (*shih-po*) because they were his master Jo-shun's brothers (on the Chin Shan scroll) but not his own masters (on the scroll of Ch'i-hsia Shan). See p. 149, note 146.

<sup>93</sup>) In a similar case, a monk told me. "My dharma scroll was that of the T'ien-ning Ssu". Actually, his master was the private dharma disciple of an abbot of T'ien-ning, with which neither of them ever had any connection themselves.

of course, an illustrious lineage, from which, if she were so inclined, she could derive a certain amount of "face".

This is an example of how a monastery dharma could become a private dharma. A private dharma could also, I imagine, become a monastery dharma. I have found no clear instance of this, but unless there have been instances, we would have no monastery scrolls today. At some point in the history of every institution of the "Kiangsu school", an abbot's private lineage must have become the lineage of his monastery.

One point to be noted about dharma transmission was its tolerance of proxy. Several years ago an eminent dharma master died before he was able to transmit to his intended disciple. In accordance with his will the ceremony was carried out posthumously by another monk of the same sect. Again, there is the case of the Tz'u-en Ssu in Shenyang (Mukden)<sup>94</sup>. When the second of two dharma brothers there wished to retire as abbot, he selected as his successor a monk who was his senior in ordination age<sup>95</sup>. This made a master-disciple relationship inappropriate. The abbot's own master had long since died. Nonetheless, acting as proxy for the deceased (though without any authorization by a will or otherwise), the abbot transmitted the dharma to his successor in such a way that the latter became his dharma brother rather than his dharma disciple.

Perhaps the farthest stretch of proxy that I have found was at the Ling-yin Ssu in Hangchow. In the early days of the Republic it was restored by Hui-ming<sup>96</sup>, a Fukienese monk from the Asoka Monastery<sup>97</sup> outside Ningpo. His restoration was on an impressive

<sup>94</sup>) 瀋陽慈恩寺.

<sup>95</sup>) *Chieh-sui* 戒歲. The number of years since a monk was ordained is often regarded as more important than the number of years since he was born.

<sup>96</sup>) 慧明.

<sup>97</sup>) 阿育王寺.

scale, as photographs taken in 1917 confirm<sup>98</sup>). He himself had never received a dharma of any kind. But from reading the monastery's history, he found that before it fell on evil days, its dharma had been Lin-chi. He also found the name of the last abbot of the Lin-chi line. Acting as his proxy, he transmitted this dharma to the next abbot. He enscrolled him as the immediate disciple of the master who had died decades—or perhaps centuries—before. The next abbot, Ch'üeh-fci<sup>99</sup>), took five disciples<sup>100</sup>) and the lineage was re-established<sup>101</sup>).

There is no point, I think, in describing further variants in the transmission of the dharma. The variety is probably inexhaustible. This is something to be kept in mind, I think, when studying the practice of Chinese Buddhism. The monks do not think in terms of neat categories as they work out the application of the rules. They deal with each situation on its merits. They are fond of saying that the monastery system is characterised by “major similarities and minor differences”. To call the differences “minor” is giddy optimism, as the reader may by now agree. We see another example of this as we turn at last to that key institution, “selecting the worthy”.

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<sup>98</sup>) See Bernd Melchers, *China, Der Tempelbau*, Hagen, 1922, plates 37-40.

<sup>99</sup>) 却非.

<sup>100</sup>) On the principle of “five petals (or leaves) on one flower”, *i-hua wu-yeh* — 花五葉.

<sup>101</sup>) The same tolerance of proxy was found in tonsure relations. I know of cases where heads were shaved on behalf of masters that were either far away or dead. I know of two cases where heads were shaved in a big public monastery (see note 52), which is absolutely forbidden by the rules, and so it was considered that the ceremony had taken place at a small temple hundreds of miles distant which, in fact, the disciple never visited in his whole life. Such anomalies were not considered violations, but tolerable evasions of the rules. In China, I think, there has always been a greater readiness to be satisfied by the nominal, by the make-believe.

*Selecting the Worthy*

If a Chinese monk is asked how abbots were chosen in Buddhist monasteries, the chances are that he will reply: "by a selection of the worthy" (*hsüan-hsien*<sup>102</sup>). There will probably be a certain satisfaction in his voice, as if his answer were bound to impress the listener. We might think at first that this was a uniform parliamentary device for determining the succession of abbots. Actually the term covers a whole gamut of devices the only common element of which was that the abbot was never supposed to hand over his office to one of his tonsure disciples. The underlying principles of "selecting the worthy" were first to choose as abbot the man best qualified for the job; and second, to have some form of consultation as to who the best man was.

Let us begin with what might be called a "pure" example. In most of the big public monasteries of Hunan province, the abbot, when he decided to retire, called a meeting of the Four Great Instructors and the Eight Great Officers<sup>103</sup>). They talked over the choice of his successor until they agreed on a candidate. Then, at a meeting of all the monks of the monastery, this nomination was presented for approval. If an opposing candidate was nominated from the floor by any officer of the monastery, there was a written, secret ballot, in which all resident monks could vote. Ballots were counted by two examiners, two callers, and two recorders, chosen *ad hoc* by the

<sup>102</sup> 選賢.

<sup>103</sup> Besides the *shou-tso* 首座 (see note 16), the Four Great [ranks of] Instructors are *hsi-t'ang* 西堂, *hou-t'ang* 後堂, and *t'ang-chu* 堂主. Normally there are one or two *hsi-t'ang* and *hou-t'ang* and two or three *t'ang-chu* on active teaching assignment to the meditation hall, but all monks who hold this rank (*hsü-chih*, see note 16), whether on active assignment or not, participate in the "primary" meeting. The Eight Great Offices, according to one version, are those of the provost (*tu-chien*), overseer (*chien-yuan*), guest prefects (*chih-k'o*), licitor (*seng-chih* 僧值), preceptor (*wei-no* 維那), bursars (*fu-ssu*), secretaries (*shu-chi* 書記) and chef (*tien-tso* 典座).

meeting. If the ballot ended in a tie, it was resolved by drawing lots<sup>104</sup>). The names of the tied candidates were written on slips of paper, which were placed in a bamboo cylinder before an image of Wei-t'o the guardian bodhisattva of monasteries. Slips were drawn out one by one with a pair of chopsticks. The first name to be drawn first three times in a row was the new abbot's. In some monasteries the new abbot received the dharma from the old; in others there was no dharma transmission. Much of this sounds Western in origin, though the practice of balloting is very ancient in Buddhism, witness the Indian Vinayas. My source, who had served as abbot of Hunan monasteries that used this system, had no idea of its antiquity. He knew only that it had been in use since he was ordained thirty years ago.

Few of the monks I have talked to about it from other provinces have heard of this variety of "selecting the worthy". Since some of them have visited monasteries in Hunan, it must be that they never inquired or later forgot how abbots were selected there. Visitors, of course, since they lived in the wandering monks' hall, would not participate in elections. It is worth noting that at the Nan P'u-t'o Ssu in Amoy a system of balloting similar to Hunan's came into use after 1924. Whether it was copied from Hunan or was originated independently by T'ai-hsü (abbot 1927-1932) as part of his program of reforms for the Sangha, I have been unable to discover.

Monks from other provinces usually say that only one monastery in China practised "true" election of the worthy: the T'ien-t'ung Ssu near Ningpo<sup>105</sup>). Unfortunately even those who have lived there

<sup>104</sup>) *Nien-chiu* 拈鬮.

<sup>105</sup>) See note 76. Some monks also mention the Ying-chiang Ssu 迎江寺 in Anking, Anhwei, and the Kuei-yüan Ssu 歸元寺 in Wuhan. At the latter the slate of candidates was usually composed of permanent residents rather than outsiders.

do not agree on how it was done. According to the consensus of their recollection, each abbot was limited to three terms of three years each. When he decided that at the end of his current term he would retire, he would consult with the former abbots and higher officers on the choice of a slate of several candidates qualified to succeed him. Normally the latter would be eminent monks not then living at T'ien-t'ung, but known to have no other commitments and therefore to be free to serve if selected. Next a plenary meeting was held in which all the resident monks of the monastery accepted this slate. There was no balloting, however. Rather, in the presence of all the monks (as an assurance against malpractice) lots were drawn before Wei-t'o's image as described above. The first name drawn three times in a row was that of the new abbot, who, when he heard the news, could not refuse to serve, since he had been selected by Wei-t'o.

These methods of "selecting the worthy" are much more concrete and easier to describe than what usually took place. In the great majority of Chinese monasteries, the abbot named his successor on the basis of a series of consultations, first with the senior officers of the monastery and later with the elders of the monasteries of the district<sup>106</sup>). There was supposed to be general agreement before a decision was reached. If we are looking for rules of procedure, we shall be disappointed. No one had clear-cut veto power, except perhaps the abbot himself, but if anyone could present cogent objections to a given candidate, he would probably be dropped. When several names, all more or less qualified, were put forward by the different persons consulted, the choice was arrived at by persuasion, compromise, appeal to considerations of face, honouring connections, and winning general acceptance. If a deadlock developed, it could be settled either by an informal poll, by secret

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<sup>106</sup>) See note 39.

ballot vote, or by drawing lots in front of Wei-t'o's image. Often, however, the difficulty lay not in choosing the best of several qualified candidates, but in finding a qualified candidate at all.

This is because the qualifications were to some extent mutually exclusive. First, an abbot must have had experience in monastery administration. Preferably he had served in each of the four main departments<sup>107</sup>). Second, he must be expert in religious exercises<sup>108</sup>) and faultless in his practice of the Vinaya. Third, he must be able to teach. This included instruction in the meditation hall, preaching the dharma on certain formal occasions, and expounding the sūtras to monks and laymen. Fourth, he must have the charisma that would attract not only lay listeners, but lay donations. Without these, old buildings could not be repaired and new ones added.

Most important of all, he must be willing to serve. As we have already noted, the sort of monk who had the necessary abilities and experience was usually an older man who wanted to devote his remaining years to the religious exercises that would prepare him for death. To him the abbotship was not a privilege, but an unwelcome duty, to be accepted only because the welfare of the monastery required it. This has been particularly true in the last fifty years when so many monasteries have been threatened with confiscation of their property by an unfriendly government, or with destruction in the course of civil wars and the Japanese invasion<sup>109</sup>).

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<sup>107</sup>) I.e., the meditation hall, guest department, treasury, and sacristy (or office of the abbot).

<sup>108</sup>) *Hsiu-hsing* 修行. This includes meditation, reciting Buddha's name, study of the sūtras, participation in morning and evening devotions, and all other periodic observances. *Hsiu-ch'ih* 修持 is often used instead of *hsiu-hsing* since it has the additional idea of keeping up with, "sticking to", these exercises. The two terms are often translated "self-cultivation", but this has more the flavour of the hermit's cell than of the collective observances at the big public monastery.

<sup>109</sup>) Chiao Shan, for instance, stood on an island in the middle of the Yangtze. When Nationalist troops used it as a strong-point in 1937, the Japanese bombarded and partly destroyed



“Selection of the worthy” has the connotation of looking for a new abbot outside of the monastery. Hence it is sometimes termed “public selection of the worthy”<sup>110</sup>). In practice, however, the new abbot might first be looked for “at home”. Though under the rules he could never be the tonsure disciple of the abbot who was retiring, he could be a rector, provost, overseer, or even a guest prefect<sup>111</sup>). However, no one of these positions was considered particularly to be a stepping-stone to the post of abbot.

If a suitable and willing candidate could not be found at home, he would be looked for outside, sometimes in other parts of the country. In this regard the elders of neighbouring monasteries often had useful suggestions to offer. As it worked out, a small number of eminent monks served at place after place. Ch'an-ting<sup>112</sup>), for instance, was abbot of the Liu-yün Ssu<sup>113</sup>) in Shanghai, the Kuan-tsung Ssu in Ningpo, the T'ien-t'ung Ssu nearby, the Leng-yen Ssu<sup>114</sup>) in Ying-k'ou (Liaoning), and of other monasteries as well. We might note in passing that the Kuan-tsung Ssu was regularly supplied with rice by the T'ien-t'ung Ssu, which had a surplus, while the Leng-yen Ssu was founded by a monk who had studied at Kuan-tsung. Connections like this meant not only that a candidate's name was known, but also that he might feel an obligation to serve because of favours received, friendship, or discipleship. This applied to offices other than abbot. For example, the monk

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it. Not long afterwards the Chekiang Provincial Government moved from Hangchow to the Ch'an-yüan Ssu 禪源寺, the largest monastery on West T'ien-mu Shan, which they commandeered. Thereupon the Japanese bombed and razed it to the ground.

<sup>110</sup>) *Shih-fang hsüan-hsien* 十方選賢, literally “selecting the worthy from the ten directions”. It is also termed *kung-ch'ing* 公請, “asking [someone from the] public”.

<sup>111</sup>) See note 103.

<sup>112</sup>) 禪定.

<sup>113</sup>) See note 88.

<sup>114</sup>) 楞嚴寺.

who succeeded Ch'an-ting as abbot of Leng-yen later became rector at Kuan-tsung.

We have now dealt with the two main sources of authority in Chinese Buddhist monasteries: transmission of the dharma and selection of the worthy. How did these two institutions fit in with one another? That depends on how they are defined. Some monks consider that they amounted to the same thing: that is, in the Kiangsu monasteries each generation of abbots, after consulting everyone concerned, selected the worthiest candidates to be their dharma disciples, and all of these disciples eventually served as abbot. One monk told me that he arrived at Ch'i-hsia Shan "just when they were selecting the worthy" and so he received its dharma. Other monks see an opposition between the two institutions. They restrict the term "selection of the worthy" to the open, public choice of the abbot immediately succeeding, in which dharma ties should play no more of a role than tonsure ties.

Actually, however, as we have seen, in the majority of Chinese monasteries, the abbot was usually chosen by some form of selecting the worthy through consultation, but he received the dharma as a seal of office at the time of his investiture<sup>115</sup>), unless he had it already.

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<sup>115</sup>) The investiture of a new abbot might be marked by a simple ceremony or there might be no ceremony at all. In the latter case, one to three weeks ahead of time the retiring abbot (*t'ui-chü ho-shang* 退居和尚) would simply announce at breakfast: "I have asked the Reverend So-and-so to come and I am handling this monastery over to him. Let everyone obey him". A notice to the same effect would be hung outside the guest department.

If there was to be a ceremony, it would be announced a week or more in advance of the appointed day (usually the fifteenth day of the first or seventh lunar month). If the abbot came from another monastery, he might be welcomed at the gate by the elders of neighbouring monasteries, the senior officers, and the body of monks. He would preach a few words of the dharma there. The actual investiture would be held in the dharma hall or the abbot's quarters (*fang-chang shih* 方丈室); the elders of the neighbouring monasteries would be present to bear witness to the change of office. The new abbot would recite certain liturgy, make nine full obeisances to the old abbot, and then take over the latter's seat. Afterwards a vegetarian feast would be held in an atmosphere of celebration.

In those cases where he received the dharma years in advance of investiture, there was supposed to be some degree of consultation, at least, on his worthiness eventually to serve as abbot, and even where there was not, his master was supposed to select him as the worthiest candidate. Only in a minority of monasteries, I believe (though it may have been a growing minority), was there indifference or actual opposition to connecting the dharma with the office of abbot.

In both transmissions (of the dharma and of the office), the wishes of the abbot in office played a critical role. I have often asked what would have happened if he chose someone who was unacceptable to the senior officers and the body of monks. The answer has always been that in a public monastery this could not and did not happen. If it ever did happen, the senior officers would urge the abbot to change his mind. If he refused, he would be impeached. I have the impression, however, that a good deal of dictatorial behavior on the part of the abbot in this and other respects would be tolerated before impeachment became a possibility. After all, he had appointed most of the senior officers himself <sup>116</sup>).

This would be particularly true when he chose his successor and transmitted the dharma to him years before investiture. Since it was a private transmission, he could largely ignore dharma kinsmen and since his successor's investiture lay in the future, it was not of immediate concern to the senior officers and to the elders of neighboring monasteries.

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<sup>116</sup>) All office holders above the rank of *shu-chi* 書記 were appointed to their offices (*lieh-chih* 列職) by the abbot before the beginning of every semester (the 16th of the first lunar month and the 16th of the seventh). Ranks (*hsü-chih* 序職) were permanent and although they were usually acquired at the beginning of a term in conjunction with an office, they continued after the term ended. Thus a rector might have been promoted to this rank by the abbot's predecessor. See note 16.

*The Names of Monks*

Before we move on to general conclusions, I want to take up a final topic that may seem to be of limited interest, but actually gives an important clue to the working of the monastic family system and, indeed, to the very nature of sects in Chinese Buddhism.

When a monk's head was shaved in the ceremony for leaving lay life (*ch'u-chia*), his master gave him a tonsure name (*t'i-tu ming*) and a style (*hao*)<sup>117</sup>. The former was a "tabooed name" (*hui-ming*), and could be used only by his seniors in the tonsure genealogy. Others addressed him by his style. He was identified by both names on his ordination certificate. If and when he received the dharma, he was given a dharma name (*fa-ming*), which was also "tabooed"<sup>118</sup> and could only be used by his seniors in the dharma genealogy. He could have pen-names and studio-names as well.

All his names were composed of two characters each. If he had to have a surname (as in signing legal documents), it was Shih for Śākyamuni<sup>119</sup>), symbolizing the fact that he had renounced his original clan and family and joined the clan of the Buddha.

Both the tonsure and dharma names (but usually not the others) had the same feature as names given to laymen in many clans:

<sup>117</sup> 出家 (*pravrajyā*), 剃度名 (also termed *t'i-t'ou ming* 剃頭名 or *nei-ming* 內名 and 号 (also termed *wai-ming* 外名).

<sup>118</sup> 法名. Thus a monk's tonsure name and his dharma name may both be termed his *hui-ming* 諱名; the expression is ambiguous. To worsen the confusion the expression *fa-ming* may be used to refer to any name given to a man as a Buddhist: it can mean the name he receives when he takes the Three Refuges (*kuei-i san-pao* 皈依三寶); or his tonsure name; or his style. Hence his dharma name proper is sometimes called his "dharma-receiving name" (*chieh-fa ti ming* 接法的名). *Fa-hao* 法号 is as vague as *fa-ming*. Finally, there is the term *tzu* 字: it is applied both to the tonsure name and to the style. For what it may be worth, ordination certificates of Pao-hua Shan use *fa-ming* for tonsure name and *tzu* for "style".

<sup>119</sup> 釋 as the first character of 釋迦牟尼.

one character told the generation to which the monk belonged. It was taken from a *gāthā*<sup>120)</sup>, or religious verse, which had been composed by an ancestral master and which was used, character by character, for the names of his descendants, generation by generation. But whereas this generation character, in the case of a layman, was called his *pei-fen*<sup>121)</sup>, in the case of a monk it was called his *tsung-p'ai*<sup>122)</sup>.

There was no connection between a monk's tonsure name and his dharma name. They were based on different *gāthās* and therefore had different *tsung-p'ai*. In either case, however, the *gāthās* were similar in nature. They were written in lines of four to seven characters with a minimum of four lines and a maximum of eight. This meant that the number of generations that could be named from a single *gāthā* varied between sixteen and fifty-six.

The example given in the footnote<sup>123)</sup> is the *gāthā* that was the basis of the dharma names at the end of the scroll that is translated at the conclusion of this article p. 147-149. Its first four characters were the last four characters of the *gāthā* that preceded it. In other words,

<sup>120)</sup> *Chieh-chü* 偈句.

<sup>121)</sup> 輩分.

<sup>122)</sup> 宗派.

<sup>123)</sup> 真志現妙觀圓鏡清  
 常學瑞明音頓智顯  
 體勤曇覺普大恆密  
 露修華性濟乘如印  
 振紹徹悟解詮理惟  
 元法慧無閒指自心  
 宗。脉。通。得。空。授。融。月。

If the reader will compare this with the reproduction of the scroll (Plate I), he will see that *ch'ing* 清 is the generation character of the forty-first generation; *hsien* 顯 is the generation character of the forty-second generation; and so on. These four characters *ch'ing*, *hsien*, *mi*, *yin* were also the last four characters of the *gāthā* used to supply generation characters for earlier generations.

there was an overlap between the two successive gāthās. This provided a means of identifying them as connected with one another.

Except for its first four characters, this gāthā was composed by Yin-k'ai, the second disciple of the 44th generation on the scroll (p. 149). All members of the 44th generation used *yin* as their generation character. *Yin* is the last of the four characters of the overlap, and, therefore, the last of all the characters of the preceding gāthā. Because this gāthā had run out, a new one had to be composed to furnish generation characters for the names of future generations. Such a new one was termed a *hsü-p'ai* <sup>124</sup>).

I have said that in the case of a monk, the generation character was called his *tsung-p'ai*. For example, the Venerable Ming-ch'ang said to me: "My *tsung-p'ai* is the character 'heart'" <sup>125</sup>). The reader may confirm this by looking at the gāthā. Ming-ch'ang was in the 46th generation, two generations after Yin-k'ai.

The whole gāthā could also be called his *tsung-p'ai*, a fact that makes for confusion when this rather complicated subject is being discussed. What makes for even more confusion is the fact that *fa-p'ai* <sup>126</sup>) or *p'ai-pieh* <sup>127</sup>) or simply *p'ai* alone may be used as synonyms for *tsung-p'ai*, so that any of these expressions may refer both to the single character or to the whole gāthā from which it is taken. It is interesting that the same monk who uses these expressions interchangeably in speaking may, when he writes formally, designate the gāthā as a "Genealogical Table" <sup>128</sup>).

To a layman *tsung-p'ai* means "sect". To a monk it means either

<sup>124</sup>) 續派.

<sup>125</sup>) 我的宗派是一個心字.

<sup>126</sup>) 法派. This term can only be used for dharma lineage, not for tonsure lineage.

As an adjective it is applied to monasteries where there is association of a dharma lineage with the post of abbot.

<sup>127</sup>) 派別.

<sup>128</sup>) This is the way the gāthā given in note 123 is entitled in the *Ch'i-hsia Shan-chih* (see note 83).

his generation character; or the *gāthā* from which it is taken; or the lineage that it represents. Sect for him is essentially a question of lineage, and lineage is revealed by his names. The name that he receives when his head is shaved establishes the fact that he belongs (most probably) to the Lin-chi sect of Ch'an. That is, the first character of his tonsure name usually comes from a *gāthā* which was composed by an earlier Lin-chi master. This *gāthā* may be used over and over again. For example, if it has sixteen characters and the tonsure master's name incorporates the sixteenth, then he goes back to the beginning and uses the first character in naming each of his disciples. With this cyclical utilization a lineage maintains its identity indefinitely. It covers an ever wider number of monks if, on the average, each master takes more than one disciple.

On the other hand, any master of any generation is free to compose a new *gāthā* for the use of his descendants. This represents a branching of the lineage and tends to occur when too many people are using the original *gāthā*: the family has gotten too large. Usually the branch is considered still to be part of the parent lineage. Lin-chi has many branches. But sometimes, if a branch becomes famous for its teachings or its monasteries, it comes to be regarded as separate. An example, perhaps, is the Shih-tzu sect of Ch'an<sup>129</sup>). In one sense, Chinese Buddhism has as many sects as it has name *gāthās*.

Let it be emphasized once more that "sect" in this sense is not a question of doctrine or practice. The most eminent of the Chinese T'ien-t'ai monks alive today belongs to the Lin-chi sect<sup>130</sup>). That is,

<sup>129</sup>) 獅子正宗. This sect was established during the Yüan Dynasty at West T'ien-mu Shan 西天目山. It apparently originated as a branch of Ts'ao-tung. This information comes from a monk who lived in the principal monastery of the Shih-tzu sect, the Ch'an-yüan Ssu (see note 109). I have not had an opportunity to verify it from documentary sources.

<sup>130</sup>) T'an-hsü; see note 81. The story of his tonsure is given in his delightful autobiography *Ying-ch'en hui-i lu* 影塵回憶錄, Hong Kong, 1955, I. p. 54.

when his head was shaved, the first character of the name he was given came from a Lin-chi gāthā. Later he became famous for his teaching of T'ien-t'ai doctrines and received the dharma from a T'ien-t'ai master. His tonsure sect, however, remained Lin-chi. There is nothing unusual or unorthodox about this.

In present usage the network of tonsure lineages is separate from the network of dharma lineages. But the separate networks have a common origin, like a tree with two trunks. All Ch'an lineages go back to Bodhidharma. When did the functional bifurcation take place? Rich material can be found in Chinese Buddhist literature for the investigation of this interesting problem.

In any case there is something rather grand about the system, not only because of its antiquity, but also because every gāthā expresses a master's understanding of the dharma, so that even by pronouncing the name of a monk, one is preaching the Buddhist law.

Besides the gāthās used as a source for generation characters, there is another variety. A dharma disciple, as we have seen, was identified on the scroll by his dharma name and his style, i.e., by a total of four characters. After his name came a single short gāthā which his dharma master (or masters) composed in four lines, each of which began with one of these four characters. The purpose of this verse was to celebrate the transmission of the dharma by preaching it (*shuo-fa*)<sup>131</sup> to edify and admonish the disciples. An example will be found at the end of the scroll that accompanies this article (p. 149 and note 147).

This scroll is a copy of the scroll at Ch'i-hsia Shan, but not in its full text. The full text, I was told, has a name gāthā after every name, and is therefore many times as long<sup>132</sup>).

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<sup>131</sup>) 說法.

<sup>132</sup>) The original scroll was left at Ch'i-hsia Shan and is therefore not available for examination; nor are any of the other monastery scrolls that I have asked about.



*Conclusions*

For orthodox Ch'an Buddhists, authenticity of transmission is essential. They believe that Śākyamuni, through his understanding of a wordless doctrine, did attain enlightenment. They believe that his understanding was wordlessly passed down from generation to generation of disciples. Thus, provided there has been no fault in the chain of transmission, anyone can learn the same doctrine today from a master at the end of the chain. Under such a master's instruction it is possible to attain enlightenment as surely as Śākyamuni did. It does not matter that the genealogy between Mahākāśyapa and Bodhidharma was probably invented in China. There can still have been authentic transmission during this early period from master to master whose names were later forgotten. The literature may be taken to show that at least through the Sung Dynasty every Ch'an master knew with certainty when his disciple had gotten the dharma and had himself become a master. It was like holding two mirrors up face to face.

From this point of view the transmittal of the dharma in China today is a perversion. Some Buddhists would call it a betrayal of an infinitely precious tradition, and indeed the Chinese monks I have talked to make no pretense that dharma transmittal as they practise it really means that the disciple has fully understood the wordless doctrine or attained any enlightenment. "As to whether or not you are enlightened, only you yourself can know. It is," they say, "like drinking water. Only the person who drinks it can tell whether it feels hot or cold". Most of them give dharma scrolls to their disciples because they "have confidence in them"—to spread the teachings of their sect, to provide for the future of their monastery, to provide for their own future—but not because there has, in fact, been a full imprint of mind on mind. Although few of them

would give a dharma scroll to a monk who was grossly ignorant of Buddhist doctrine, the chain of transmission has long since been broken: one can no longer go to a Ch'an master with any assurance that he is a Ch'an master. The question is, of course, whether one ever could.

It would be interesting to know when the chain, if it did exist, was broken. It may have happened about the time the scrolls began to be used. The use of scrolls, at least, seems to reflect a shift towards externalization.

It would also be interesting to know when scrolls became associated with the office of abbot and when the system of monastery transmission began. Probably these and the other questions of historical development that are raised by dharma scrolls could all be answered through a study of monastery histories<sup>133</sup>), monks' biographies, and texts like the *Ch'an-men Jih-sung*<sup>134</sup>). Unfortunately I am not in a position to undertake such a study, since my time is otherwise committed. In any case, it could best be undertaken by specialists in Buddhist history. I hope that some of them will become interested.

The monks themselves say that they do not know when scrolls began to be used as they are. They guess that it was at the end of the Ming or the beginning of the Ch'ing Dynasty<sup>135</sup>). This sounds reasonable. If scrolls were in earlier use, they might be better known to foreign specialists on Buddhism and the systems associated

<sup>133</sup>) *Shan-chih* 山志 or *ssu-chih* 寺志.

<sup>134</sup>) 禪門日誦. It has long genealogical lists, in which it is possible, for example, to trace the generation characters of the scroll reproduced here. In the appendix labelled *Tsung-p'ai* 宗派, page 3a, one finds the characters for generations up through the 29th. On page 3b one finds those for the 29th to the 40th generations. Cheng-ch'uan of the 29th generation seems to have acquired two lineages. There are many vexing questions here.

<sup>135</sup>) One monk said: "Three hundred years ago there had to be an imprint of mind on mind before there was transmission of the dharma. Now the disciple gets it on the basis of ordinary friendship or service in a monastery."

with them might have been copied in Japan<sup>136</sup>). Also, the systems might have become better standardized in China itself. There would be a vocabulary of terms to discuss them. We have already seen<sup>137</sup>) that T'ieh-chou was both abbot of Chin Shan and Ch'an master of the 32nd generation on its scroll. He may have flourished about 1720. The 41st generation, with which collective transmission commenced, may have flourished about 1800<sup>138</sup>). On the whole it seems likely that the scroll translated below reflects a gradual development from private transmission in the early Ch'ing to monastery transmission in the nineteenth century. I do not myself, incidentally, regard it all as unrelieved degeneration. The new systems of transmission had many practical advantages and I question whether the old system, centered on the wordless doctrine, was dependable. If it had been, would it have changed?

The second point to be made in concluding our discussion of dharma scrolls is that they came in the broadest range of varieties, geographical distribution, function, and importance, so that it is difficult to make any generalizations about them. The monastery scroll was of central importance in Kiangsu, but more or less unknown elsewhere. The public-private scroll given by abbot to abbot ranges from nearly the same importance as the monastery scroll to the status of a mere seal in token of decisions arrived quite independently of dharma transmission. The private scroll may be a serious attestation of a disciple's spiritual accomplishments, or

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<sup>136</sup>) The Mampukuji monastery 萬福寺 near Kyōto was founded by a Chinese monk about the beginning of the Ch'ing Dynasty and its first fifteen abbots were Chinese. Neither the monastery nor the present abbot has a dharma scroll. This, at least, is what I have been told by its *rōshi* 老師. He had, in fact, never heard the term *fa-chüan*. This proves little since the original Chinese monastic system has been largely abandoned at Mampukuji.

<sup>137</sup>) See p. 113.

<sup>138</sup>) Reckoning an average of 25 years to a generation since double transmission began and 10 years to a generation before that. This could be checked in the Chin Shan history.

it may be a mere "gimmick", like a Flash Gordon Pin. This type of degeneration is one reason that some monks are opposed to the use of scrolls <sup>139</sup>).

Despite the great range in their varieties and importance, dharma scrolls were alike in contributing to a network of connections that covered most of the Chinese Sangha. This is the third and probably the most important point to be noted as we conclude. Individuals became connected with one another as dharma master with dharma disciple, as disciple with fellow disciples, as "uncle" with "nephew", and so on, in all the analogies of natural family relationships. It is important to remember that lay disciples, who took the Three Refuges with a master, were formally the "brothers" of his tonsure disciples, since they shared a common generation name. They could even use the term "brother" of one of his dharma disciples, though the lineage was entirely different.

Monasteries became connected with one another by the borrowing of lineage or when two monasteries had abbots or officers who belonged to the same dharma family. Individuals became connected with monasteries, and monasteries with individuals, by enscrollment as overseers, by private dharma relationships between monastery officers and their disciples, or when the monastery's dharma was privately transmitted, as in the case of Yüeh-kuan.

Some of the connections were weak. But even where they were purely nominal, we should not completely disregard them. They were links that might grow stronger if circumstances were favourable. In accordance with the Chinese kinship tradition, if a monk discovered that another monk was, for instance, his private dharma nephew, there was something between them. It may not have been very much, perhaps no more than an introduction, but it was an introduction on which they could build a relationship and which

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<sup>139</sup>) See p. 122-123.

to some extent would determine the form the relationship would take.

In saying above that a dharma network covered most of the Chinese Sangha, I do not mean that most monks had received the dharma. As we saw earlier, most had not. But usually they were in some form of contact with those who had. Perhaps they lived in a monastery where dharma transmission was associated with the office of abbot. Perhaps they lived in some small temple as members of a tonsure family one member of which belonged to a dharma family. Perhaps they had studied the sūtras under a teacher who had a dharma scroll. Any one of these contacts, however tenuous, brought them to some degree into the dharma network. I do not mean that this was important, but only that it is worth remembering in the context of other networks of affiliation.

These other networks were of many kinds. Eminent monks like Hsü-yün <sup>140</sup>) became the foci of devotional loyalty for Sangha and laity alike. Hsü-yün administered the Three Refuges to many thousands of laymen in different provinces of China. Most of these laymen, it seems, were deeply impressed by his sanctity and gained status from being his disciples. By the time he died in 1959 at the accepted age of 120, he had restored a number of famous monasteries that had fallen into decay. The monks who lived or were ordained in these monasteries also regarded him as their great master. To a few monks he transmitted the dharma, and it is worth noting that he had gone to the trouble of seeking out the dharma of all the five sub-sects of Ch'an (three of which were practically extinct) <sup>141</sup>) so that he might pass the lines of succession on to the

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<sup>140</sup>) See note 84. Hsü-yün's collected works and chronological biography have just been republished in a new, more complete edition: *Hsü-yün ho-shang fa-hui* 虛雲和尚法彙, Hong Kong, 1962.

<sup>141</sup>) The Kuei-yang, Yün-men, and Fa-yen sects. Hsü-yün managed to find a remnant of T'oung Pao, L

disciples he thought would best continue them. Hsü-yün was such a focus of loyalty, in fact, that he incurred the jealousy of less charismatic monks and there came to be a number of small rival cliques that were more or less anti-Hsü-yün.

Besides eminent monks, there were eminent monasteries with which some families had continuing affiliations, visiting them, giving them financial support, and keeping ancestral tablets there. There were famous mountains to which pilgrimages by certain groups from certain places were more or less traditional. There were seminaries whose graduates retained the ties of "schoolmates" even after they had scattered to different parts of the country. There were strongly Buddhist areas where it was regarded as beneficial to ancestral spirits for a family to have sons in the Sangha. Probably three-quarters of the monks that I have met from the big Kiangsu monasteries were raised in the districts of T'ai 泰 and Ju-kao 如皋. One gets the impression that they tended to stick together and to favour one another in promotion to office and transmitting the dharma. Finally there were the conservatives, who felt a common desire to keep Buddhism unchanged, and their opponents, the reformers like T'ai-hsü who won a large following in his efforts to modernize and "purify" the Sangha.

All these networks of affiliation were superimposed one upon the other, loosely and haphazardly binding together, in different combinations, the hundreds of big monasteries and tens of thousands of small temples in China. Despite their haphazardness they were a more genuine cement, I think, than the various Buddhist associations that sprang up after the revolution of 1911. Even when these associations were national in scope, their main function was to serve as intermediaries in dealing with the government.

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each: "五家宗派他都有份". The Yün-men Monastery was one of those that he restored.

Of all the different kinds of affiliations, the strongest was probably the dharma family in the "Kiangsu school" of monastery. Here an individual's filial obligations determined his career and permeated his daily life. His dharma family superseded all others. I remember how the old abbot of Chin Shan, whom I met in Taiwan, spoke about "home". Chin Shan was "home" not only because he had lived there for thirty-six years, but because it belonged to his "family". He had the same feelings toward it that the eldest son in England has toward the ancestral house. He identified himself with it completely. It was not a little touching when I wished him happiness till we next met and his disciple remarked in an aside: "He will only be happy when he is back at Chin Shan". His disciple, incidentally, was actually his uncle's great grandson<sup>142)</sup>, but he treated the old abbot with the same solicitude as if he had received the dharma from his own hands. The Confucians have always attacked Buddhism for its denial of family ties and, because of celibacy, its threat to the very survival of the family. Yet, in a sense, there could hardly be a better exemplification of the Confucian family ideal than the filial Buddhist disciple.

#### APPENDIX

##### THE REPOSITORY OF THE RIGHT DHARMA EYE<sup>143)</sup>

###### *The line of descent of Buddha and the patriarchs*

When he whom the world reveres, Śākyamuni, was in the world, he preached the dharma for forty-nine years. Finally, at an assembly on Vulture Peak, he picked a flower and showed it to the multitude. The revered Kāśyapa silently understood the doctrine of the mind. He broke into a smile. Thus the Buddha gave him for safekeeping [*or on deposit*] the eye [that] correctly [perceives the original nature of the ten thousand] dharmas<sup>144)</sup>. He was the first patriarch in India. Thereafter there was transmission by imprint of mind on mind from patriarch to patriarch down to the twenty-

<sup>142)</sup> They were 46th and 48th generation, respectively. This did not prevent them from being loosely referred to as "master" and "disciple".

<sup>143)</sup> Plate I. On this scroll see p. 95, 125-126, 137, 140 and note 132.

<sup>144)</sup> Literally "gave him the correct dharma eye repository". The words in brackets represent the interpretation that was given to me by several monks who hold the Chin Shan dharma.

eighth, the revered Bodhidharma, who was the first to come to China and was China's first patriarch.

Meditation Master <sup>145)</sup> Shen-kuang Hui-k'o was the second patriarch.

Meditation Master Chien-chih Seng-ts'an was the third patriarch.

Meditation Master Ta-yi Tao-hsin was the fourth patriarch.

Meditation Master Ta-men Hung-jen was the fifth patriarch.

Meditation Master Ta-chien Hui-neng was the sixth patriarch.

After the sixth patriarch the lamp was divided and shone in parallel so that the winds of the doctrine spread far and wide. One transmission went through Meditation Master Ch'ing-yuan Hsing-ssu from Ch'ing-chou. One transmission went through Meditation Master Ta-hui Huai-jiang of Nan-yüeh. There was such luxuriant leafing out from so many branches that it cannot be completely recorded. It is only possible to list in detail below the names of those who orthodoxly transmitted and directly received. Our line of transmission was from Meditation Master Ta-hui Huai-jiang of Nan-yüeh, to Meditation Master Ma-tsu Tao-yi of Kiangsi. Ma-tsu transmitted to Meditation Master Ta-chih Huai-hai of Pai-chang. Pai-chang transmitted to Meditation Master Tuan-chi Hsi-yün of Huang-po. Huang-po transmitted to Meditation Master Hui-chao Yi-yuan of Lin-chi. Among their successors many were eminent and their way spread and prospered throughout the empire, coming to be honoured as the orthodox sect of Lin-chi.

The first generation was the Meditation Master Lin-chi Yi-yuan.

The second generation was Meditation Master Kuang-chi Ts'un-chiang.

The third generation was Meditation Master Nan-yüan Hui-nan.

The fourth generation was Meditation Master Feng-ch'üeh Yen-chao.

The fifth generation was Meditation Master Shou-shan Sheng-nien.

The sixth generation was Meditation Master Wu-te Shan-chao.

The seventh generation was Meditation Master Tz'u-ming Ch'u-yüan.

The eighth generation was Meditation Master Yang-ch'i Fang-hui.

The ninth generation was Meditation Master Pai-yün Shou-tuan.

The tenth generation was Meditation Master Tung-shan Fa-yen.

The eleventh generation was Meditation Master Yüan-wu K'e-ch'in.

The twelfth generation was Meditation Master Hu-ch'iu Shao-lung.

The thirteenth generation was Meditation Master Ying-an T'an-hua.

The fourteenth generation was Meditation Master Mi-an Hsien-chieh.

The fifteenth generation was Meditation Master Tsu-hsien Mi-yin.

The sixteenth generation was Meditation Master Wu-chun Shih-fan.

The seventeenth generation was Meditation Master Tsu-ch'in Hui-lang.

The eighteenth generation was Meditation Master Kao-feng Yüan-miao.

The nineteenth generation was Meditation Master Chung-feng Ming-pen.

The twentieth generation was Meditation Master Ch'ien-yen Yüan-chang.

The twenty-first generation was Meditation Master Wan-feng Shih-wei.

The twenty-second generation was Meditation Master Pao-tsang P'u-ch'ih.

The twenty-third generation was Meditation Master Hsü-pai Hui-ch'ien.

The twenty-fourth generation was Meditation Master Hai-chou Yung-tz'u.

The twenty-fifth generation was Meditation Master Pao-feng Ming-hsüan.

The twenty-sixth generation was Meditation Master T'ien-ch'i Pen-jui.

The twenty-seventh generation was Meditation Master Wu-wen Ming-ts'ung.

The twenty-eighth generation was Meditation Master Hsiao-yen Te-pao.

The twenty-ninth generation was Meditation Master Huan-yu Cheng-ch'uan.

The thirtieth generation was Meditation Master T'ien-yin Yüan-hsiu.

The thirty-first generation was Meditation Master Jo-an T'ung-wen.

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<sup>145)</sup> "Meditation master" could of course, also be translated "Dhyāna Master", "Ch'an Master" or "Zen Master".



The thirty-second generation was Meditation Master T'ieh-chou Hsing-hai, the restorer of Chin Shan.

The thirty-third generation was Meditation Master Fa-ju Ch'ao-lo.

The thirty-fourth generation was Meditation Master Yüeh-t'an Ming-ta.

The thirty-fifth generation was Meditation Master Ta-hsiao Shih-ch'e.

The thirty-sixth generation was Meditation Master T'ien-t'ao Chi-yün.

The thirty-seventh generation was Meditation Master Liu-yi Liao-chien.

The thirty-eighth generation was Meditation Master Ts'ang-hai Ta-hui.

The thirty-ninth generation was Meditation Master Cheng-yi Wu-ming.

The fortieth generation was Meditation Master Kuang-tz'u Chen-chi.

In the forty-first generation there were

Meditation Master Lo-t'ing Ch'ing-yüeh,

Meditation Master Tao-hua Ch'ing-teng.

In the forty-second generation there were

Meditation Master Kuan-hsin Hsien-hui,

Meditation Master Wei-chang Hsien-jan,

Meditation Master Hun-jung Hsien-ching,

Meditation Master Yüeh-hsi Hsien-ti.

In the forty-third generation there were

Meditation Master Ta-ting Mi-yüan,

Meditation Master Ch'ang-ching Mi-ch'uan,

Meditation Master Hsing-lien Mi-fa,

Meditation Master Yin-ju Mi-tsang.

In the forty-fourth generation there were

Meditation Master Tz'u-pen Yin-kuan,

Meditation Master Ch'ing-ch'üan Yin-k'ai,

Meditation Master Mei-ts'un Yin-hsiu,

Venerable Restorer of Ch'i-hsia, Tsung-yang Yin-leng,

Meditation Master Jung-t'ung Yin-ch'e.

Our Venerable Meditation Master Jo-shun Wei-ta transmitted it to me<sup>146</sup>). I am transmitting it to you, Master Yüeh-kuan K'uan-yi, as the forty-seventh generation in the orthodox Lin-chi line, and as eighty-sixth generation tracing back to the Buddha Śākyamuni. This is the genealogy of our dharma line. Today with a careful sense of the Buddha mind I hand it on to you. You must do well yourself in preserving and long continuing it without impairment. Herewith, in token of the mind's imprint, I pronounce the following gāthā:

The moon (*yüeh*)<sup>147</sup>) is imprinted on a thousand rivers and the infinite heaven;

If you examine (*kuan*) the sea of the [Buddha] nature, [you will find] there is essentially nothing asleep there [i.e., it is all wakeful and aware].

Enlarge the dharma realm [within yourself] and the external causes will begin to manifest themselves;

Let your manners (*yi*) and actions, within and without, be full of calm.

On the eleventh day of the sixth month of the thirty-eighth year of the Chinese Republic [July 6, 1949],

The Śramaṇa in the line of the ancestral masters of the Ch'i-hsia Ch'an-ssu on She-shan, and devout ascetic, Ming-ch'ang Hsin-chien,

Personally conferred this testament on Master Yüeh-kuan K'uan-yi.

<sup>146</sup>) The scroll does not make it clear that Jo-shun was in the 45th generation. Also, since he was the sole disciple of Tsung-yang in the Ch'i-hsia Shan lineage, the names of his brothers in the Chin Shan lineage are not given. Since Ming-ch'ang is transmitting privately, the names of *his* brothers are not given either.

<sup>147</sup>) This is the name gāthā mentioned on p. 140. Each of the characters of the disciple's name, Yüeh-kuan K'uan-yi, is the first character of each of the four lines respectively.