

The Kuei Yang Sect (Ikyo Zen)

by Lu K'uan Yü [Charles Luk]

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(The founders of this sect were Master Ling Yu of Kuei Shan mountain and his disciple Hui chi of Yang Shan mountain. In deference to them they were called after their mountains.)

Master Ling Yu of Kuei Shan Mountain in T'an Chou District
(From The Transmission of the Lamp - Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu)

Master Ling Yu of Kuei Shan mountain in T'an Chou district was a native of Ch'ang Ch'j in Fu Chou (Foochow) district. His lay surname was Chao. At the age of fifteen, he bade farewell to his parents and left his home to follow Vinaya master¹ Fa ch'ang of Chien Shan monastery who shaved his head. Later he went to Hang Chou (Hangchow) where he was ordained at Lung Hsing monastery wherein he studied the Sutras and Vinaya of the Hinayana and Mahayana,

At twenty-three, he journeyed to Chiang Hsi (Kiangsi) where he called on Ch'an Master Ta Chih of Pai Chang mountain for instruction. Upon seeing Ling Yu, Pai Chang allowed him to enter his abbot's room.²

Ling Yu therefore stayed at the monastery where he held special meetings (in the abbot's room). One day, he was waiting on Pai Chang when the latter asked him, 'Who are you?' He replied, 'It is Ling Yu.'³ Pai Chang said 'Poke and see if there is still some fire in the stove.' Ling Yu poked and said, 'No fire.' Pai Chang rose from his seat and went to

1. Teacher of rules of discipline.

2. Only advanced disciples are permitted to enter the abbot's room for examination or instruction. Pai Chang had sharp eyes and allowed Ling Yu to enter his room for special guidance.

3. Ling Yu had undergone rigorous training and his potential capacity to absorb the truth, inherent in him but hitherto latent, was being roused to the full for instantaneous awakening. Seeing the time was ripe to enlighten his disciple, Pai Chang made full use of the great function of his wisdom to provoke the former's enlightenment. His question, 'Who are you?' was designed to cause the disciple's perception of 'that which asked it' and 'that which heard it', Ling Yu's mind was suddenly stirred by his thought of a reply to the question, and his inner potentiality was temporarily screened by it. Hence his stupid reply, 'It is Ling Yu.'

the stove; after much poking he succeeded in raising a small glow which he showed to Ling Yu, asking, 'Is this not fire?' Thereupon Ling Yu became enlightened; he bowed down upon his knees to thank the master.¹

As he spoke of his understanding to Pai Chang, the latter said, 'This is only a temporary by-road. The sutra says, "The perception of Buddha-nature depends on the right moment, the direct cause and the intervening cause."² When the time is ripe, one is like a deluded man who is suddenly awakened and one who forgets all about something which he suddenly remembers. Only then can his be the self-possessed (nature) which does not come from without." For this reason, the (Fifth Indian) Patriarch said:

*"(After) enlightenment it is the same as it was (before),
For there is neither mind nor Dharma."³*

It is only this with the absence of any thought of falsehood, the worldly, the saintly, and so on. Your essential Mind-Dharma is complete in itself As you have attained it, you should take good care of it.'

When the ascetic (dhuta) Szu Ma⁴ came from Hu Nan, Pai Chang asked him, 'Can I go to Kuei Shan mountain?' He replied, 'Kuei Shan is a very wonderful mountain and is suitable for a community of fifteen hundred monks, but it is not the place for you.' 'Why?' asked Pai Chang. He replied, 'Because you are a bony man and it is a fleshy mountain. Even if you go and stay there, you will not have more than a thousand followers.' Pai Chang asked, 'Is there someone in my community who can stay there?' He replied, 'Let me see them one by one.'

Thereupon Pai Chang ordered his attendant to summon the leader (of the Ch'an hall called Hua Lin) and asked the ascetic, 'How about this

1. Pai Chang again used his great function to press Ling Yu hard when ordering him to see if there was still some fire in the stove. The master wanted him to perceive 'that which gave the order' and 'that which obeyed it'. Again, the stupid reply, 'No fire.' Pai Chang continued to perform his great function by again pressing the student hard insisting that the latter should perceive 'that' which arose from the seat, used the poker, raised a little fire, showed it to him and said, 'Is this not fire?' This time, the master's great function was successful and the student could actually adapt his aroused great potentiality to the teaching and thus perceive the reply by means of his self-nature which could now function normally. Hence his enlightenment.

2. Direct cause is the seed of Buddhahood inherent in the pupil and intervening cause is his master's direct pointing at the mind. (See The Forty Transmission Gathas.)

3. The last two lines of the Fifth Patriarch Dhrtaka's Transmission Gatha. (See page 35.)

4. Szu Ma was well-versed not only in Ch'an but also in physiognomy and geomancy, and his advice was taken when monasteries were founded.

man?' The ascetic told the leader to cough and walk a few paces, and then said to Pai Chang, 'This man cannot stay there.' Pai Chang then ordered that the verger (Ling Yu) be brought in, and (upon seeing him), the ascetic said, 'He is the true owner of Kuei Shan mountain.'

That night, Pai Chang called Ling Yu (to the abbot's room) and said to him, 'This is the right place for me to convert people, but you should stay on the beautiful Kuei Shan mountain to succeed me and continue my sect by converting future students.'

When Hua Lin heard of the news, he asked Pai Chang, 'I am the leader (in the Ch'an hall) of this community; how can Ling Yu (be appointed) abbot there (instead of me)?' Pai Chang said, 'If, in the presence of the community, you can say something unusual, I shall appoint you abbot there.' Then pointing his finger at a water jug, he said to Hua Lin, 'Without being permitted to call it a water jug, what do you call it?'¹ Hua Lin replied, 'It cannot be called a wooden pivot.'² Pai Chang did not approve (this reply) and put the same question to Ling Yu who (immediately) kicked over the jug.³ Pai Chang smiled and said, 'The leader of the Ch'an hall has lost the mountain.' He then sent Ling Yu to Kuei Shan mountain.

The mountain was steep, standing alone and uninhabited. After the master's arrival there, he only had monkeys for companions and chestnuts for food. Little by little, the inhabitants at the foot discovered that he was living on it and climbed it to build a monastery there. Later, military commander Li Chang Jang petitioned (the emperor who named the temple) Tung Ch'ing monastery. Chancellor P'ei Hsiu frequently came there to inquire about the deep and abstruse (truth). Since then students from all over the country came and gathered there.

In the Ch'an hall, Master Kuei Shan said to the assembly: 'The mind of one who has entered the Way is straightforward and free from falsehood; it has neither front nor rear and is neither deceitful nor erroneous.'

1. In the absolute reality, there is not a thing; in other words, within the imma-

terial realm, there is no material thing even as small as a particle of dust. To call a water jug by name is to admit its existence in the absolute. Therefore, it should not be called a jug. Then, how to reveal the absolute when one sees a water jug and wants to call it by an appropriate name.

2. Hua Lin presumably glanced at the door and noticed the pivot on which it swung. He was wrong because his reply failed to reveal the absolute.

3. Ling Vu's kick was an appropriate performance of his 'great function' and was a 'wordless reply' wiping out all traces of the jug which did not exist in the absolute reality.

At all times, his seeing and hearing are normal and free from crookedness, also he does not shut his eyes or close his ears (when meditating.)¹ It is enough not to allow one's feelings to play on external objects. In ancient times, the sages only talked about the evils of impurity² but did not say anything about evil feelings, perverted views (produced by passions) and habits of thought. His mind is likened to a still and limpid pond in the autumn; it is pure and clean, in the wu wei (inactive and supramundane) state, and is undisturbed and unobstructed. He is called a seeker of truth and an unconcerned man.'

At the time, a monk asked Kuei Shan, 'Should one who has attained instantaneous enlightenment continue the practices?' The master replied, 'If one has truly realized the fundamental, one will know everything about it; practice and no practice are the two sides of a dualism. If, due to an intervening cause, one is instantly awakened to the truth in the time of a thought, there still exists since the time without beginning the force of habit which cannot be eliminated at a stroke. (In this case), one should be taught (by one's teacher) completely to cut the flow of discrimination caused by outstanding karmas; this is practice but it does not mean that there really is a definite method which one should be urged to follow and practise. When one succeeds in entering the truth after hearing the expounding of the real and its wonderful abstruseness, one's mind will automatically be pure and all-embracing; (thus) one will be free from illusion, but in spite of hundreds and thousands of wonderful meanings being revealed to one simultaneously, this (only) means that one is qualified to take a seat," wear the robe,"³ and understand one's own self, in a life now free from delusion. To sum up, the intrinsicity of reality does not admit a single mote of dust but all modes of salvation do not discard a single Dharma.⁴ However, in case of straight entry (into the real) by means of a single chopper,⁵ all feelings about the saintly and the profane are wiped out to expose the essence of true eternity in which the

1. Usually masters of other schools urge their students to shut their eyes when sitting in meditation in order not to be attracted by external objects.

2. Evils and errors of an impure and discriminating mind.

3. Quotations from the Lotus Sutra; the Tathagata seat symbolizes the voidness of all things and the Tathagata robe symbolizes ksanti, or boundless patience and endurance.

4. The fundamental essence and its external activities, or function.

5. The short-cut Ch'an which casts away all methods of training and only relies on outright cognizance of the mind for the realization of self-nature and attainment of Buddhahood. Ch'an is referred to as tan tao chih ju, literally 'single chopper's direct entry', that is straight entry into reality equipped only with a sharp chopper that cuts through all obstructions.

absolute and relative¹ are not a dualism and which is just the Bhutatathara Buddha.²

Yang Shan asked the master, 'What did the coming from the West mean?'³ The master replied, 'A good big lantern.'⁴ Yang Shan asked, 'Is it just that one?' The master asked back, 'What is that one?' Yang Shan replied, 'A good big lantern.' The master said, 'Really you do not know.'⁵

One day, the master said to the assembly, 'So many people only realize great potentiality but fail to acquire great function.' (After hearing

this), Yang Shan (went to) the monk owning a small temple at the foot of the mountain, and after repeating the master's saying to him, asked, 'The master said so; (do you know) what he meant?' The monk said, 'Repeat again what the master said.' Yang Shan was about to do so when the monk gave him a kick that knocked him down. After Yang Shan's return to the monastery, he related the incident to the master who laughed loudly."

(One day) while the master was sitting in the Dharma hall, the treasury

1. The absolute and relative perfectly merging into each other without hindrance- this is true enlightenment.
2. When all feelings, i.e. dualisms, have been wiped out by their integration into the one mind, the real body of true eternity will reveal itself and will be but the suchness of the Buddha.
3. Bodhidharma's object when he came to China was to point directly at the mind for the realization of self-nature and attainment of Buddhahood.
4. The function of Wisdom-light dispersing the darkness of ignorance. The Sixth Patriarch said: 'Samadhi is the body of wisdom and wisdom is the function of samadhi.' (See The Altar Sutra.)
5. 'That one' is a Ch'an term meaning the enlightened self-nature which is inexpressible and cannot be named. Yang Shan was still unenlightened and wrongly confounded wisdom, the function, with self-nature, the body or substance. Hence Kuei Shan's remark, 'Really you do not know.'
6. There is inherent in every man a latent potentiality which no amount of teaching and knowledge of Scriptures can reach and which should be aroused by an expert teacher or by means of rigorous Ch'an training so that it can intuitively realize the immaterial which is inexpressible and cannot be taught by means of words and phrases. At the time of enlightenment its great function will manifest itself simultaneously, commensurate with enlightenment, to train seekers of the truth for their benefit. Therefore those possessing great potentiality but lacking in great function are not completely enlightened.
7. The kick was the monk's best reply for it was nothing but the great function about which Yang Shan asked for elucidation. The monk also was an enlightened master whose kick revealed both his enlightened potentiality and its benefiting great function.
8. Yang Shan was still unenlightened and did not understand the monk's performance of his great function. Hence, the master's laughter which also revealed the great function of that which laughed.

monk beat the wooden fish¹ (for the midday meal). (Upon hearing the call), the cooking monk threw away the fire tongs, clapped his hands and laughed loudly. The Master (who heard the laugh) said, 'Is there such a man in the community? Call him in.' (When he saw the cook), the master asked, 'What are you doing?' The cook replied, 'I did not take my gruel² (this morning); now I feel hungry and that is why I am so joyful.' The master nodded (approvingly).³

When the monks were out picking tea leaves, the master said to Yang Shan, 'You have been picking tea leaves all day; only your voice is heard but your form is not seen, show yourself so that I can see it.' Yang Shan shook the tea plant and the master said, 'You only realize the function but you do not realize its body.' Yang Shan said, 'I do not know what is the Venerable Monk's (realization).' After the master had remained silent for a long while.⁴ Yang Shan said, 'The Venerable Monk only realizes the body but does not realize the function.' The master said, 'I (should) give you twenty strokes of the staff.'⁵

(One day) as the master (was taking his seat) in the hall, a monk came forward, saying, 'Venerable Sir, I reverently request you to expound the Dharma to the community.' The master said, 'I have removed (all)

1. There are two kinds of wooden fish, one round used to keep time in chanting, the other for calling to meals.
2. Usually only two meals are served a day; gruel in the morning and rice at noon-time. Ascetics do not eat anything in the afternoon and evening.
3. The cook's activated great potentiality caused his self-nature to hear the sound of the wooden fish. When he was awakened, he was seized with an irresistible desire to manifest his joy, hence his throwing down the fire tongs, clapping of hands and loud laugh. The master who knew all this, asked, 'Is there such a man here?'

'Such a man' means one who has realized the truth. The cook's reply means, 'I have succeeded in arousing my dormant potentiality and this morning I reached the top of the highest peak and was prepared to release the last hold linking me with the illusory world to make a leap forward; that is why I forgot all about my gruel. Upon hearing the wooden fish, my great potentiality now ripe caused my self-nature to manifest itself and feel hungry by means of its great function.'

4. The spiritual body is immaterial and speechless, and the Sixth Patriarch's words, 'When I came, I had no mouth' describe it well. The Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra says, 'Manjusri asked Vimalakirti about the non-dual Dharma and the latter remained silent and speechless.' Speechlessness is the characteristic of Dharmakaya.

5. The act of saying, 'I should give you twenty strokes of the staff' came from the great function of the master's spiritual body which was imperceptible. He did not actually beat his disciple, but the latter who would receive the beating, should also realize his own body which would feel the beating. Kuei Shan's aim was to teach Yang Shan that both body and function should be realized simultaneously, for a body without function is useless and a function without body is simply non-existent.

your restraints.'¹ (Thereupon), the monk prostrated himself before the master (to thank him for relieving him of them).²

The master said to Yang Shan, 'Hui Chi, speak quickly, but do not enter the dark realms.'³ Yang Shan replied, 'I do not even set up faith.' The master asked, '(Do you mean that) after you have had faith you do not set up faith, or that having none you do not set it up?' Yang Shan replied, 'In whom should I have further faith?' The master said, 'If so, this is a Sravaka of settled mind.'⁴ Yang Shan said, 'I do not even perceive the Buddha.'⁵ The master asked him, 'How many Buddha's words and how many demon's words are there in the forty rolls of the (Mahapari)ṇirvāṇa Sūtra?'⁶ Yang Shan replied, 'They are all demon's words.' The master said, 'In future, no one will be able to contradict you.'⁷

Yang Shan asked Kuei Shan, 'In my present transmigration, what should be my common acts of daily life?' The master replied, 'I only

1. Attention should not be paid to the literal meaning of this phrase, for it is just 'a dead sentence' as the masters call it. One should activate one's great potentiality so that one can perceive 'that which spoke', i.e. the immaterial whose function consisted in uttering these words; this is what the masters call 'a living sentence'.

2. After the master's revelation of his great function, the monk whose great potentiality made a quick response to it, prostrated himself before Kuei Shan to thank him for the performance and also to show his own immaterial body making these prostrations by means of its great function.

3. The realms of the five aggregates and eighteen realms of sense, i.e. the illusory realms.

4. A disciple of the Buddha, hearer of Dharma, whose mind is fixed on Arhatship and not on Buddhahood.

5. After Yang Shan's enlightenment, Kuei Shan verified his disciple's achievements and set traps to see if he was completely awakened. Yang Shan cleared away all traces of faith, Sravaka and Buddha to assert his comfortable independence, saying, 'I have realized my independent nature and do not rely on anybody else; in whom should I believe further?'

6. Conditioned human language can never express the transcendental but the Buddha was reluctantly compelled to use it to convert and guide living beings. However, words and speeches cannot reach the latent potentiality which is inherent in men and can be aroused only by Ch'an training to realize intuitive union with absolute reality. If the Scriptures are grasped and clung to, the aim of the teaching will be missed and the fine butter, or Buddha-truth will turn as rank and harmful as the demon's words. For this reason, some eminent masters forbade their disciples to read sutras before their awakening to the truth. Naturally, after one's enlightenment, one will thoroughly understand all sutras. Usually, after enlightenment, the ancient masters read the whole Tripitaka.

7. Lit. 'In future, people will not be able to do anything against you.' The meaning is, 'You have attained enlightenment and now possess dialectic power which cannot be surpassed.' Thus Kuei Shan confirmed Yang Shan's achievement.

appreciate your right eye, I do not (care to) talk about your common acts of daily life.¹

As Yang Shan (was walking), he kicked the hem of his robe which he held up, asking the master, 'At this very moment, Venerable Sir, what would you do?'² The master replied, 'At such a moment, I would refrain from doing anything.'³ Yang Shan said, 'Venerable Sir, you have (only) the body but are lacking in function.' After a long silence,⁴ the master asked (Yang Shan), 'At this very instant, what would you do? (i.e. what would be your function?)' Yang Shan asked back, 'At this very moment, do you, Venerable Sir, even perceive it?'⁵ The master said, 'You have the function but are bodyless.' (The dialogue took place in the second moon of the year.)

(One day) the master suddenly asked Yang Shan, 'What you said in the spring was incomplete; try to say something (now for me) to see.' Yang Shan replied, 'At this very instant, one should avoid making a model of it.' The master said, 'This is imprisonment of the eternal wisdom.'⁶

One day, the master summoned the superintendent of the monastery, and when the latter came, said, 'I called the superintendent, why do you come?' The superintendent could not reply. The master then ordered his attendant to call the leader of the assembly, and when the latter came, he said, 'I sent for the leader why do you come?' The leader could not reply.⁷

1. Right eye is correct vie. After his enlightenment, the disciple asked for his master's advice and guidance in respect of his common acts of daily life - sitting, eating, thinking, etc., but Kuei Shan said that so long as your views are correct, your wisdom will function in accordance with the truth. In his Song of Enlightenment, Yung Chia said, 'Get at the root! Do not worry about twigs!' Twigs here are the common acts of daily life. (See Series One, Master Hsu Yun's 'Daily Lectures at Two Ch'an Weeks'.)

2. A Ch'an term meaning, 'Under the same circumstances, what should one do to be in accord with one's enlightenment?'

3. I will refrain from mentally creating a thing; in other words, I will remain in a state of wu wei or unchanging.

4. A long silence means: return to the nirvanic state, i.e. the stillness of Dharmakaya.

5. 'It' here denotes the Dharmakaya which cannot be expressed in words. (A wrong answer.)

6. The master referred to the incomplete dialogue which Yang Shan discontinued in the second moon of the spring. As Yang Shan said that one should scrupulously avoid describing the immaterial nature, the master retorted that this was wisdom held in check, i.e. not allowed to enjoy full freedom. The dialogue proved that Yang Shan was not as completely enlightened as Kuei Shan.

7. The master's idea was to arouse the dormant potentialities inherent in the superintendent and leader so that they could perceive their real nature. Unfortunately, neither of them understood his questions. Here, superintendent and leader were two empty names of two illusory men. The question, 'Why do you come?' means: 'Why does your nature come?' because the act of coming is its great function.

The master asked a monk who had just arrived (at the monastery). 'What is your name?' The monk replied, 'Yueh Lun' (Lunar Disk). The master drew a circle¹ in the air and asked the monk 'Are you like that?' The monk said, 'How can you say so? There are (enlightened) people in other places who will not agree with you.' The master said, 'This poor monk² can only say so; what would you say?' The monk asked, 'Do you still see the lunar disk?' The master replied, 'If you say so, there are many people in this assembly who will not agree with those in the other places (just mentioned by you).'³

(One day) the master asked Yun Yen,⁴ 'I heard that you stayed for a long time on Yo Shan mountain, is it true?' Yun Yen replied, 'Yes.' The master asked, 'How was the great personality of Yo Shan?'⁵ Yun Yen replied, 'It existed after Nirvana.' The master asked, 'How was it after Nirvana?' Yun Yen replied, 'Water sprinkled on it cannot wet it.' After saying this, Yun Yen asked the master, 'How was the great personality of Pai Chang?'⁶ The master replied, 'It was imposingly dignified and radiantly bright. It was neither sound before the

sound nor form after the form.⁷ (To attempt to describe it) is likened to a mosquito climbing the body of an iron ox to find a spot to pierce.⁸

Master Kuei Shan was passing the water jug to Yang Shan who was about to receive it when the master pulled back his hand, asking, 'What is it?' Yang Shan asked back, 'What do you see?' The master said, 'If so, why come to me to search for it?' Yan Shan said, 'In spite of this, accord-

1. The perfect Dharmakaya, i.e. that which is beyond beginning and end.
2. Chinese idiom meaning 'I'.
3. The master was correct when he probed the visitor asking, 'Are you like that?' i.e. 'Is your nature as perfect as the circle, symbol of the eternal Dharmakaya.' The monk blundered when he gave a name (lunar disk) to that which was nameless. Here, the master's function consisted in arousing the visitor's latent potentiality so that he could perceive that which drew the circle in the air. The monk was stupid and criticized the enlightened master who was full of compassion for the ignorant and arrogant visitor.
4. Yun Yen was a disciple of Yo Shan and was a contemporary of Kuei Shan. (See Genealogical Chart, page 56.)
5. Great personality is Dharmakaya.
6. Pai Chang was Kuei Shan's teacher. (See Chart, page 56.)
7. Thus space (sound and form) and time (before and after) are completely wiped out.
8. Pai Chang's great personality, or Dharmakaya, is indescribable and he who tries to talk about it is likened to a mosquito which cannot pierce the skin of an iron ox. This phrase was and is still widely quoted and discussed in Ch'an circles.

ing to the rules of conduct, it is my duty to carry the water jug for you.' Then the master passed the jug to Yang Shan.¹

The master went out with Yang Shan and pointed to a cypress, asking, 'What is it in front of us?' Yang Shan replied, 'Just a cypress.' The master then pointed to an old peasant behind them, saying, 'This old peasant will later have a community of five hundred people.'²

The master asked Yang Shan, 'Where have you been?' Yang Shan replied, 'In the fields.' The master asked, 'Is the grain ripe for reaping?' Yang Shan replied, 'Yes.' The master asked, 'Did you see it green or yellow, or neither green nor yellow?' Yang Shan asked back, 'What is behind you?' The master continued, 'Do you even see it?' Yang Shan held up an ear of grain and asked back, 'Have you ever asked about this?' The master said, 'This is the king goose distinguishing milk (from water).'³

On a winter's day, the master asked Yang Shan, 'Is the weather cold or the man?' Yang Shan replied, 'All is within it.' The master said, 'Why do not you speak in a straightforward manner?' Yang Shan

1. The master was eager to see that his disciple was completely enlightened. The acts of passing the jug and of withholding it were to reveal that, which was functioning. When Yang Shan was about to receive the jug, the master's question, 'What is it!' means, 'Who is that which asks this question and who is that which wants to receive the jug?' Yang Shan, now enlightened, asked back, 'What do you see?' i.e. 'Is the immaterial perceptible?' The master retorted, 'If you are really enlightened, why do you come here to learn my Dharma?' Yang Shan replied, 'In spite of my enlightenment, I am really indebted to you for it and it is quite appropriate that I serve you now to repay my debt of gratitude.' The master accepted the plea and passed the jug to him.

2. That which pointed at the cypress and the old peasant and that which replied, 'Just a cypress', are the imperceptible spiritual bodies which revealed themselves by means of their functions. Front and rear show that an immaterial body is everywhere and all-embracing and reveals itself through the things seen. The old cultivator will have an imaginary community created by his inner five aggregates, for all living beings are non-existent according to the Buddha's teaching in the Diamond Sutra. (See Series One - 'The Diamond Cutter Of Doubts'.)

3. The king goose, or r'0a-haI Isa in Sanskrit, is the leader of the flight, i.e. Buddha. It is said to be able to absorb the milk from a mixture of milk and water, leaving the water behind, so with the Bodhisattva and truth. The master availed himself of Yang Shan's return from the fields to teach him. He talked about the immaterial and asked whether it was green or yellow, or neither green nor yellow. Yang Shan talked

about the material, and asked, 'Don't you see the ears of grain behind you?' The master continued his teaching and asked if the disciple even saw that which was imperceptible. Yang Shan held up an ear of grain and said, 'If you ask about this, I can see it and say whether it is green or yellow, or neither green nor yellow, but you have not asked about it. You have asked me about the Dharmakaya which IS imperceptible and inexpressible.' The last phrase of the dialogue means, 'In the midst of the illusory world, one should distinguish milk (truth) from water (untruth), like a king goose.'

replied, 'What I just said was not crooked, but what will the Venerable Sir say?' The master replied, 'It is necessary to follow the current.'¹

A monk came and prostrated himself before the master who feigned to rise from his seat. The visitor implored him, 'Venerable Sir, please do not rise.' The master said, 'This old monk has never been seated.' The monk said 'I too have not prostrated myself.' The master asked, 'Why are you so impolite? The visitor could not reply.'²

Two Ch'an monks came from the Shih Shuang³ community and said, 'There is not a man here who can understand Ch'an.' Later, when all the monks went out to gather firewood, Yang Shan saw the two who were resting; he took a piece of firewood and asked them, 'Can you talk (about it)?' As both remained silent, Yang Shan said to them, 'Do not say that there is no one here who can understand Ch'an.'⁴

When he returned to the monastery, Yang Shan reported to the master, 'Today, two Ch'an monks were exposed by me.' The master asked, 'How did you expose them?' Yang Shan related the incident and the master said, 'I have now exposed you as well.'⁵

(One day) as the master was lying on his bed, Yang Shan (approached him brought his two palms together and asked after him. The master turned his face to the wall and Yang Shan said, 'How can you act like that?' The master got up and said, 'I have just had a dream, please interpret it for me. Thereupon, Yang Shan brought him a basin of water so that he could wash his face. A little later, Hsiang Yen also came, brought his

1. This dialogue reveals the two aspects of the absolute: the absolute in its immutability according to the disciple, and the absolute in its phenomenal relativity, according to the master, both aspects being likened to water and waves. Yang Shan was not incorrect but a Bodhisattva should avail himself of prevailing circumstances and follow the phenomenal to reveal the fundamental to living beings, the current is the unceasing phenomenal.

2. The master took advantage of the moment to enlighten the monk who, however, was Ignorant and did not understand the teaching. When the master said, 'I have never been seated', he meant what the Buddha said in the Diamond Sutra: 'Subhuti, if someone says that the Tathagata comes or goes, sits or lies, he does not understand the meaning expounded by me. Why? Because the Tathagata has neither whence (to come) nor whither (to, go); therefore, He is called the Tathagata.' The monk could not reply to the master's last question, because he was deluded and did not understand the absolute.

3. Shih Shuang was the Dharmas successor of the Lin Chi Sect.

4. If the two monks had, really understood Ch'an, they would have perceived that which took the piece of firewood and asked them the question, 'Can you talk about it? Here it is the immaterial which is inexpressible So Yang Shan succeeded in exposing their incompetence.

5. i.e. I have exposed your Dharmakaya which I perceive through your talking and I have exposed your error because you still discriminate between yourself and the two monks.

two palms together and asked after the master who said, 'A moment ago, I had a dream and Hui Chi interpreted it for me; will you also explain it?' Thereupon, Hsiang Yen brought him a bowl of tea. The master said, 'You two can interpret better than Sariputra.'¹

A monk asked the master, 'He who does not carry a Kuei Shan bamboo rain-hat on his head will never reach the village exempt from conscription; what is a Kuei Shan hat?' The master gave him a kick.'²

In the hall, the master said to the assembly, 'After my death, I will take the form of a water buffalo on whose left flank will be written five characters Kuei Shan monk - So and So. It cannot be called a "Kuei

Shan monk" because it is a buffalo; neither can it be called a "buffalo" because it is a Kuei Shan monk. What is its right name?'³

The master spread the Ch'an teaching widely for over forty years (during which period) his disciples who succeeded in realizing the truth were so numerous that they could not be counted. Those disciples who were qualified to enter the abbot's room numbered forty-one.

On the ninth day of the first moon of the seventh year of the Ta Chung reign in the T'ang dynasty (20 February 853), after the master had washed and rinsed his mouth, he sat cross-legged and passed away happily at the age of eighty-three and at his Dharma age of sixty-four.⁴

His stupa was erected on the mountain (Kuei Shan) and the emperor bestowed upon him the posthumous title 'Ch'an Master Ta Yuan' (Great Perfection) and on the stupa the epigraph 'Ch'ing Chin' (Purity-Cleanliness).

1. Hsiang Yen was a disciple of master Kuei Shan. (See Story of Master Chi Hsien of Hsiang Yen - Series One) - Sariputra was one of the principal disciples of the Buddha and was noted for his wisdom (See Series One - The Heart Sutra) - The act of turning the face to the wall is the return of function to the still Dharmakaya.

An enlightened master never dreams for the dream denotes a disturbed mind. The two disciples correctly interpreted the so-called dream by bringing him a round face-basin and a round bowl of tea, both symbolizing his Dharmakaya which was present at all times and in all places.

2. Monks staying on mountains wore bamboo rain-hats. The village exempt from conscription symbolizes freedom from delusion. The monk meant, 'If one does not undergo training under Master Kuei Shan (who was known all over the country), one will never be delivered. How is your teaching given?' The master's kick revealed that which acted, i.e. that which performed the great function mentioned earlier.

3. The master's idea was that the self-nature was the same either in a monk or in a buffalo, and could not be named for names have no nature of their own. This sentence is widely quoted and discussed in Ch'an circles throughout the country.

4. The number of years that he had been ordained.