



# 悟達國師補傳

(西元811 Story of N—883 C.E.)

## Supplemental Story of National Master Wu Da

方外叟 整理 / 英譯

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二〇〇三年三月十日晚，聽上人講《妙法蓮華經》；主播法師講到〈水鏡回天錄〉及〈前漢史〉中的「七王之亂」中晁錯與袁盎(悟達國師前身)的一段公案；三月十八日晚，同一時段，另一位法師又講到這位知玄悟達國師，感觸良多，因此想加以整理，久久未能動手；直至最近，才得以將法師們所講的，及參照《大藏經》中的《高僧傳》整理出來：現在就來重說一下〈水鏡回天錄〉之外的這一位於中晚唐重興佛教的大師——知玄悟達國師。

悟達國師，諱(法名)知玄，俗姓陳，四川眉州洪雅人(四川還真出不少法門龍象，如馬祖道一、圭峰宗密、德山宣鑒等)。他祖父是梓州射洪縣縣令，常因他們家祖上兩代科舉考試屢

On Monday night, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003, we listened to the tape lecture of the *Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra* explained by the Venerable Master Hua. Some Sangha members gave their speeches on the related topics: one of them told the past-life story of National Master Wu Da in the Tang Dynasty, using *Reflections in the Water Mirror* and the *History of Former Han* as the resources; another continued this topic on the following Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003 with a more detailed biography of National Master Wu Da. I was very touched and inspired to compile these stories. I kept delaying until recently I was able to compile these stories together, using the Tripitaka as my reference. Therefore, let us together take a more complete view of the National Master Wu Da (Zhixuan), who revived Buddhism in the late Tang era.

National Master Wu Da, whose Dharma name was Zhixuan, had the surname of Chen. He was from Hong Ya County in the Meizhou Area of Sichuan. Sichuan was home to many renowned high Sanghans throughout history, such as Mazhu Daoyi, Guifeng Zhongmi, and Deshan Xuanjian, etc. Master Da's grandfather used to be the county magistrate of Shehong County of Zhizhou. He took one thing really to heart: for two generations





試不第，耿耿於懷，格外希望陳家能生一位貴星。法師的母親魏氏，一天夢到一輪圓月入懷，不久就生下一麟兒，闔家興高采烈。在哺乳期間，嬰兒都不講話，但是見到佛像僧像就臉上泛出歡喜的微笑。

祖父既已寄陳家之望於這孩子一身，所以對孫兒的家教很早就開始了，而且相當嚴格。在他五歲那年，爺爺命他以花為題詠一首詩。這小孩竟能幾步之間，詩就朗朗出口了[錄入『五歲詠花』—《全唐詩》卷823\_7 ]：

花開滿樹紅  
花落萬枝空  
唯餘一朵在  
明日定隨風

一聽這樣的詩句，爺爺長嘆一聲，「看來雪洗我們陳家這兩代科舉落第之恥，要靠這孩子是沒有希望了！看這孺子的模樣，怕是要出家的。」

爺爺畢竟眼力不凡，一語道出前程：七歲那年，法泰法師在「寧夷寺」講《涅槃經》，因為寺離家很近，他每天都去聽講經，聽著聽著，他似乎知道自己的前世因緣。一天晚上，他夢到在「寧夷寺」佛現身來給他摩頂；醒來後，就去向爺爺請求出家，被駁回，再一次，又被攆出去，如是一而再、再而三，家人親族看他志向那麼堅執，知道難以挽回，就放他去出家了，那年他十一歲。

他童貞入道，加上聰穎過人。幼年紮實的庭訓，使他能很快地深入經藏，不久就能講經說法，人們都

the Chen family had not been able to do well in the civil examinations, so no one was appointed to be a government official. He sincerely prayed that the Chen family could produce one child who would be a great government official. One day, Master Da's mother had a dream that a full moon descended into her heart. At that time she conceived. Before long, she realized the dream was true, and Master Da was born. The Chen family was elated at the news. During the first year of his life, Master Da didn't talk. However he would smile upon seeing the images of the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas, or the Sangha.

Because his grandfather had such high expectation for this boy, he started his education at a very young age. And it was strict and rigorous training. At age five, he was ordered to compose a poem on the topic of flowers. The child finished his assignment in the time it took to walk a few steps. This poem was later recorded in the *Anthology of Tang Poetry* (Roll 823, #7).

The entire tree turns crimson in full blossom,  
Yet stands completely bare when flowers fall  
Maybe one flower remains there,  
But tomorrow will be gone with the wind, too.

Upon hearing such a poem, his grandfather sighed, "This boy will let us down. It is hardly likely that he will help our clan erase the disgrace of failing at the civil examinations, because seeing the way he is, I am afraid that he will wish to leave the home-life to become a monk."

The grandfather's perception and prediction were quite accurate. At the age of seven, Master Da happened to listen to a lecture on the *Nirvana Sutra* by Dharma Master Fatai in Ningyi Monastery, which is quite close to Chen residence. He went there everyday. In the course of the lecture series, he seemed to have sensed his own conditions from past lives. One night he had a dream: in Ningyi Monastery the Buddha came to rub the crown of his head. After he woke up, he went to ask his grandfather for permission to leave the home-life. He was turned down. The next time he tried again but was again turned down. Yet he persisted over and over again. Seeing such sincerity in him, the Chen family was moved. They realized that it was impossible to dissuade this boy. Hence they decided to grant his wish. Thus he left the home-life to become a monk at the age of 11.

He entered the Way during the innocence of childhood. With his keenly intelligent mind, plus his solid childhood education and training, he penetrated deeply into the Tripitaka (the Buddhist Canon) and was able to explain the Sutras for other people. At the age of thirteen he already looked like an adult when he was lecturing the Sutras. When he was fourteen, a great Tang poet Li Shang-yin composed a poem to praise him.

At fourteen, the Shramanera (novice monk) speaks the Sutras.

At this age it is fitting that he be an attendant.

When the Shramanera lectures, the Shramanas (ordained monks) listen.

This shows us that what counts is wisdom, not seniority.

Once the prime minister Du Yuanying came to Sichuan (Xishu) and heard





說十三歲的他像個小大人。十四歲那年，他講《涅槃經》。以後李商隱曾爲此作一首詩紀念（李商隱，是唐文宗時一代文豪、詩人，久仰慕知玄法師之道學，後來執弟子禮師事知玄法師）：

十四沙彌解講經  
似師年幾只攜餅  
沙彌說法沙門聽  
不在年高在性靈

一次，丞相杜元穎坐鎮西蜀，聽聞這位小法師的名氣，就請他升座，在「大慈寺」普賢閣給大眾講經，講經堂內聽眾黑壓壓一片，慕其名、仰其德、或欽其風而來聽經聞法者數以萬計。自此聲名遠播，蜀人就不再稱他法師，或呼他沙彌，都改稱「陳菩薩」。幾年之後，這位陳菩薩在「淨眾寺」的辯貞律師那裡圓受具足戒。

後來法師出四川、下長江、歷荊州、入長安，掛錫於資聖寺，在那兒講經說法。唐文宗皇帝聽聞玄法師的聲名，邀入宮中請法，談對之間龍心大悅。法師日後又跟隨安國信法師學習唯識論，兼學一些外典。他常常感嘆自己四川口音太重，給人講經時有障礙；爲此，他到象耳山持頌大悲咒，一天晚上，他夢到一位神僧來入夢中將他舌頭割去，換上另外一個，第二天一開口，呵！竟說一口標準「京片子」。

一朝崇佛就有一朝毀佛，到唐武宗時就來一場「會昌法難」，這是「三武一宗」厄運的最後「一武」之劫。危難出忠臣，越是這種時候，越是可以看出一個沙門的氣節。好仙道的皇帝在德麟殿上擺上擂臺，釋道分

about this young Shramanera, and invited him to ascend the Dharma seat to lecture on a Sutra in the Universal Worthy Hall at Great Compassion Monastery. The lecture hall was packed with more than 10,000 people who admired his virtue and came to listen to his lectures. Since then his reputation spread afar. The people of Sichuan no longer called him Dharma Master or Shramanera, but called him Bodhisattva Chen. Several years later, he received full ordination from Vinaya Master Zhenbian at Jingzhong Monastery.

Dharma Master Zhixuan later came out of Sichuan and traveled down the Yangzi River, passing Jingzhou and entering Chang'an. He stayed at Zhishen Monastery for a while and also gave Dharma talks and lectured on the Sutras there. Emperor Wenzong of Tang heard about his reputation, and hence invited him to come to the palace to speak Dharma. The emperor was very pleased with the talks he had with Dharma Master Zhixuan. Thereafter Dharma Master Zhixuan also studied some Consciousness-Only Shastras and also some non-Buddhist classics under Dharma Master Anguoxin. He often lamented that his Sichuan accent was too strong so that it became an obstacle when he lectured on the Sutras. Therefore, he went up to the Xiang'er Mountain and recited the Great Compassion Mantra. One night, he dreamt that a "spiritual monk" came to him and severed his tongue and replaced it with another one. When he woke up the next day, he was surprised to see that he could speak with a standard Beijing accent.

The Buddhadharma has its ups and downs. Some emperors had faith in the Dharma and protected it while other emperors did not believe in it and tried to destroy it. In the time of Emperor Wu of Tang, a disaster befell Buddhism. It was the Disaster for the Dharma at Hui Chang during the reign of the last Wu of the Three Wu's and One Zong. [There were three emperors named "Wu" and one named "Zong" who tried to destroy Buddhism.] The more difficult the situation is, the more we can see a Shramana's true character. Since Emperor Wu liked Taoism, he set up a debate forum at the Delin Palace. On one side were Buddhist monks and the other were the Taoists. As the debate went on and the Taoists gradually lost ground, Emperor Wu tried to help them from the side. He quoted some passages from the *Daodejing* (*The Classic of Virtue*) to question Dharma Master Zhixuan. With his unobstructed eloquence, Dharma Master Zhixuan responded to the emperor. His words flowed out like a rushing river. Some of the words were not very pleasant for the emperor to hear. The officials of the court trembled when they heard these words. They thought this time the monk was in big trouble. Two of them really cherished his talent and eloquence. They suddenly had an idea of how to get him out of this situation. They proposed, "Today we have this auspicious and rare occasion of religious debate, and all the four seas are enjoying the peace. His Majesty brought this about effortlessly. He governs this great country as if frying a small fish in a pan. This is no doubt that this is like the Emperor Yao's Age of Peace and Prosperity. Dharma Master, you have such talent. Why don't you compose a poem for this occasion?"





庭而對，各逞辭辯，道士們漸處下風。唐武宗欲幫一把，於是引道德經上所說的來質難知玄法師；法師以他無礙辯才，出口千言以回皇帝，一些話已經大忤龍顏，聽得殿上文武百官們兩腿都為之發抖，心想這回壞了，要出人命了。左護軍仇士良、內樞密楊欽義，很愛惜玄法師的辯才，他們一人急中生智，說「今天逢此勝舉，四海昇平，陛下垂拱而治，怎說不是治大國如烹小鮮，這無疑是唐堯盛世；以法師之才，請賦頌一首。」

知玄法師一會兒的功夫不到，筆下就已寫成五首，這不禁讓唐武宗詫異萬分；這五首的最後一首『祝堯詩』見錄《全唐詩》[卷823\_8]：

生天本自生天業  
未必求仙便得仙  
鶴背傾危龍背滑  
君王且住一千年

題是歌賦唐堯，其實是在諷諫皇帝，眾文武官員都替他捏一把冷汗。武宗雖心中不悅，但愛其詩才，但看這個面子上，就不做追究了。知玄法師得以放歸山林，重回四川家鄉。

等到唐宣宗即位時，又信起佛教了，遣人尋訪知玄法師。法師上書奏請說，天下梵刹毀破已久，請陛下下詔重興佛寺。宣宗同意，這是「大中」三年的事情。宣宗還命人將法師的畫像畫好，掛在大內好瞻仰。這段時間內，法師也與裴休丞相往來密切，兩人共商如何中興佛法。

唐懿宗即位後，延續前朝好佛之風，自己信佛也相當誠心，每逢十齋日，都在皇宮中齋僧，人數都是數以

Dharma Master Zhixuan wrote down five poems within a very short period of time, taking Emperor Wu by surprise. The last of these five was recorded in the *Anthology of Tang Poetry*. It was entitled “Pray for A Ruler Like Yao” and it goes like this:

To be reborn in the heavens, one must have the karma of gods.  
One might not become an immortal even if he wishes to be one.  
A crane's back is dangerous and a dragon's back is slippery.  
May His Majesty live for a 1,000 years!

This poem sounded like a praise to the emperor, but actually it was a subtle admonition. All the officials broke out in a cold sweat. Although the Emperor was uncomfortable and unhappy of this poem, he still put up with it and did not lose his temper because he admired this Dharma Master's talent. The Emperor did not give any more trouble to Dharma Master Zhixuan and allowed him to return to his native Sichuan.

When Emperor Xuanzong of Tang ascended the throne, he revived the Buddhadharma and sent envoys to search for Dharma Master Zhixuan. Dharma Master Zhixuan then submitted a proposal to the Emperor that since most of the monasteries had been ruined or abandoned by Emperor Wu, it was now time to rebuild those monasteries. Emperor Xuanzong agreed and decreed that such reconstruction begin right away. This took place in the third year of the Dazhong Reign. Emperor Xuanzong also had Dharma Master Zhixuan's portrait drawn and hung up in the court. During this period, Dharma Master Zhixuan had close contact with Prime Minister Peixiu. The two of them often discussed how to revive the Buddhadharma.

After Yizong ascended the throne, he continued the tradition of Emperor Xuanzong and continued to support the Buddhadharma. He himself was also very sincere and would offer a meal to the monastic community at the imperial court during the ten vegetarian days of the month. Those monks who came to partake of the offering of food often numbered over ten thousand. Sometimes the emperor himself would chant when they conducted ceremonies. Dharma Master Zhixuan received special treatment in the court. One time, after he finished a lecture, the emperor bestowed a gift upon him. It was a chair made of special sandalwood. As Dharma Master Zhixuan received the seat, he gave rise to pride and arrogance. That really caused him much trouble. A sore with a human face grew on his leg. It caused excruciating pain and kept oozing pus. In despair, Dharma Master Zhixuan went to seek help from the Venerable Kanaka and was cured by him. That is how the Water Repentance of Compassion and Samadhi came about. Because Venerable Master Hua gave a detailed account in his lecture of *Reflections in the Water-Mirror: Turning the Tide of Destiny*, we won't go into detail here.

In the first year of Zhonghe, there was a peasant rebellion led by Huang Chao. The rebel army advanced towards the capital of Chang'an. When they took over the city, they set up a dynasty called “Daqi (great order)”. In the





萬計，有時皇帝自己也隨梵唄唱誦。知玄法師頗受殊遇，一次聽完經後，皇帝賜以栴檀木寶座，此時法師心生一種我慢心，這才引出了一段腿上長人面瘡，他去西蜀求迦諾迦尊者，以及寫出《慈悲三昧水懺》的公案。因為宣公上人已在《水鏡回天錄》中講得很詳細，這裡就敷敘而過了。

中和元年，黃巢農民起義，兵犯長安，自號「大齊」。「廣明」二年春，唐僖宗西幸成都避難，詔知玄國師同行，一路上連朝廷文武重臣都時常來請教。僖宗為表揚法師，請大臣們幫法師取一法號。諸翰林學士都各呈所撰的名號，皇帝一一過目，居然沒有讓他滿意的。「算了！朕自己取，免得傷神。」僖宗提起禦筆，沈吟道，「開、示、悟、入(佛知見)，這是法華經的宗旨。悟者，是覺的意思，是光明的意思。悟可達大道，悟同佛知見。另外，悟者一剎那，不悟河沙劫，所以悟者，是真得佛乘之了然成佛的意思。好，就叫他悟達，悟達國師也。」皇帝一番好意，知玄法師幾番推辭，怎麼推也推不掉。OK，受了吧，但趕緊走吧，高處不勝寒。他上了一摺奏章，乞請告老還鄉。

從此中言談，可以看出知玄法師於中興佛法上是功不可沒的，而且像唐僖宗這樣能如此通曉《法華經》的皇帝真有幾分令人敬佩之處。

法師享年七十三，僧臘五十四。臨終前，召弟子慈燈交代遺囑：我死後，將屍體棄於原野，以餵鳥獸。我久與西方淨土有期約，今天要走了。說完，右脅臥，面西而逝。法師堅守禁戒，少欲知足，過中不食蔬果，穿的只是粗布衣，臥鋪則是稻稈做的席子；而他六時行道，夜臥一更(兩小時)，其餘時間則禪坐，堪為一代人天師表！

second year of Spring of the Guangming Reign, Emperor Xizong fled to Chengdu in Sichuan to save his life. He also invited Dharma Master Zhixuan to go with him. On the way to Sichuan, various government officials came to seek the Dharma Master's advice. In order to honor his help, Emperor ordered that a Dharma title befitting Dharma Master Zhixuan be sought. All the imperial scholars busied themselves in search of a good title. They submitted their suggestions and the emperor read them one by one, but none were to his satisfaction. Finally he said, "OK, I will do it myself. Don't bother with it now." He took up a pen, and pondered over it. After a while, he said, "To open up, instruct, awaken to, and enter into the Buddha's knowledge and views is the major theme of the *Lotus Sutra*. Awakening means enlightenment and also brightness. When one awakens, one can step onto the great Way. To awaken means to have the Buddhas' knowledge and vision. Further, although awakening happens in a second, one may stay unawakened for eons as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River. Those who awaken have attained the true Buddha Vehicle. Alright, then, let's call him National Master Wuda ('Awaken and Penetrate')." Master Zhixuan tried to decline the emperor's good intentions, but no matter how he tried, the emperor insisted. The Master had no choice but to accept it, but then he quickly sought to leave, for he could not endure being in such a high position. He submitted his resignation, saying that he wished to return home in his old age.

From these commentaries, we can see that Dharma Master Zhixuan created much merit in restoring and reviving the Buddhadharma. Also, few emperors were as knowledgeable as Emperor Xizong about the *Lotus Sutra*; in this respect, he was quite admirable.

Dharma Master Zhixuan passed away at the age of 73, having been ordained for 54 years. Before his passing, he told his disciples that after he was gone, his remains should be left in an open field for animals and birds to eat. He also said that he had made an appointment with Amitabha Buddha long ago, and now it was time to go there. After saying these words, he lay down facing the west and passed away. Dharma Master Zhixuan held the precepts strictly and was always content. He did not eat after noontime and always wore simple clothes and slept on a straw mat. He practiced the Way day and night continuously sleeping only about two hours everyday; the rest of the time he sat in meditation. He could truly be called a great model for humans and gods alike.

