

# *The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs*

## **The Twenty-Fourth Patriarch**

### **The Venerable Lion, Aryasimha**

by Tripitaka Master Hua

translated by Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih



This Venerable One certified to Unsurpassed Bodhi. He had self-mastery regarding all states and for him, all things were Suchness. THE VENERABLE ONE WAS FROM CENTRAL INDIA. HE ASKED THE TWENTY-THIRD PATRIARCH Haklena a question. "WHAT MIND SHOULD I USE TO SEEK THE WAY?" You should all think about this. He was a Patriarch and he asked that question. How much the more should we at all times seriously ask ourselves, "what mind should I use in cultivating the Way to seek an end to birth and death, to transcend the wheel of rebirth, to cut off afflictions, and to certify to Bodhi?"

THE PATRIARCH SAID, "WHEN SEEKING THE WAY DO NOT USE THE MIND. You want to seek the Way? Really? Truly? If so, then don't use any mind. Have no mind. Understanding 'no mind' is in itself the Way."

THE VENERABLE ONE ASKED, "IF I DO NOT USE THE MIND, WHO DOES THE BUDDHA'S WORK?" He heard the principle but he didn't yet understand what it meant, so he began to debate. He thought his question displayed unobstructed eloquence.

THE PATRIARCH ANSWERED, "IF THERE IS USING, THERE IS NO MERIT AND VIRTUE. If there is something done, if there is something created, then you have not yet reached effortlessness in the Way. You are still attached to appearances. That is not the genuine merit and virtue within your self-nature. IF YOU PRACTICE NON-DOING, THEN YOU ARE DOING THE BUDDHA'S WORK. If you don't use your mind and are not attached to appearances, then you sweep away all dharmas and separate from all marks. Then you are doing the Buddha's work in a great way. It's not reciting sutras, bowing to the Buddhas, bowing in repentance, or any other public activity or ceremony which is the Buddha's work. If you truly and actually cultivate the Way, there isn't anything at all.

When one is empty, all are empty.  
When one is established, all are established.  
When one is ended, all are ended.  
When one is certified to, all are certified to.

ACCORDINGLY HE WAS ENTRUSTED WITH THE GREAT DHARMA. The Twenty-third Patriarch then transmitted the Mind Seal Dharma to Venerable Lion. These records of the Patriarchs continually refer to the "Great Dharma," the transmission of the Buddha's Mind Seal Dharma, because it is the most important matter in Buddhism. Mind is used to seal mind. When Shakyamuni Buddha first made this transmission he spoke these words of certification:

"I have the Proper Dharma Eye Treasury,  
the Wonderful Mind of Nirvana, the  
Real Mark Without Marks, transmitted  
above and beyond the Teaching, which  
I now bequeath to Mahakashyapa."

That's the Great Dharma being referred to here.

THEN HE TRAVELED TO KUBHA AND PASSED THE DHARMA TO BASIASITA. Some say Kubha was located in Yunnan and some say that it bordered Siberia, but it doesn't matter and we won't look into it. In general, it was a country that existed during that period of time. After Patriarch Lion transmitted the Dharma to the Twenty-Fifth Patriarch, THE KING OF THAT COUNTRY BROUGHT HIS SWORD TO WHERE THE MASTER WAS AND ASKED, "HAS THE MASTER SEEN THAT THE SKANDHAS ARE EMPTY? Are form, feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness empty for you?"



*A JAPANESE MONK SWEEPING THE WALKS OF GREAT COMPASSION HOUSE, CTTB*  
*"The heart calm, all worries go away. The mind still, heaven has no clouds."*

HE ANSWERED, "I HAVE SEEN THAT THE SKANDHAS ARE EMPTY." Because Lion Bhikshu did not tell lies or resort to polite phrases, he simply told the truth when the King asked him that question. He knew that form is just emptiness and emptiness is just form, and that the same is true for feeling, thinking, activity, and consciousness.

THE KING AGAIN ASKED, "HAVE YOU ESCAPED BIRTH AND DEATH?"

HE REPLIED, "I HAVE ESCAPED BIRTH AND DEATH."

THE KING SAID, "SINCE YOU HAVE ESCAPED BIRTH AND DEATH, CAN YOU GIVE ME YOUR HEAD?"

THE MASTER REPLIED, "MY BODY DOES NOT EXIST. WHY SHOULD I BE STINGY WITH MY HEAD? Go ahead and cut it off."

THEN THE KING DREW HIS SWORD AND CUT OFF THE VENERABLE ONE'S HEAD. A WHITE MILKY FLUID SPIRTED SEVERAL FEET IN THE AIR. The head was severed, but no blood flowed forth. From the maimed neck there issued forth a white fluid that spewed up into the air several tens of feet. Think it over. What did this mean?

THE KING'S RIGHT ARM SUDDENLY FELL TO THE GROUND, AND HE PRODUCED GENUINE RESPECT. Because he had used his right hand to hold the sword that assassinated the Patriarch Lion, thereby committing one of the Rebellious Acts--unpardonable offenses--of killing a Sage, his right arm was instantly severed from his body and fell to the ground at his feet.

A VERSE IN PRAISE SAYS:  
WHEN THERE IS NO MIND TO FUNCTION, GREAT FUNCTION  
MANIFESTS.  
WITH TOTAL PENETRATION OF THE BUDDHAS' PRINCIPLE  
COMES COMPLETE RENUNCIATION OF TACKLE AND  
TRAPPINGS.  
THE SWORD WAS POISED; HE STUCK OUT HIS HEAD.  
WHAT MOUTH IS BIG ENOUGH TO EXPRESS THIS?  
THE BLOSSOMING REEDS ARE THE SAME WHITE AS SNOW.  
THE COLOR OF AUTUMN SEA MATCHES THE AUTUMN SKY.

"When there is no mind to function" refers to an ultimate state of effortlessness in the Way. There is no function and yet no lack of function. That is the manifestation of "great function." That is great creation, great transformation.

The white fluid verified that Lion Bhikshu was a Sage who had certified to the fruition and cut off outflows. He had no thoughts of desire and he had gotten rid of emotional love. He had reached the state of no greed, no seeking, no fighting, no selfishness, and no interest in self-benefit. You shouldn't take these Five Guidelines lightly. One who has not yet certified to the fruition cannot fulfill these requirements. Even after initial certification to the fruit it's not for certain that all five of these afflictions can be completely cut off. So what is explained at the City of 10,000 Buddhas is the Wonderful Dharma for certifying to Sagehood. So don't take it as very ordinary and jump to conclusions about your understanding, saying things like, "No fighting? Well, I don't fight." Really? Do you fight in your mind or not? "I'm not greedy for anything." Is there greed in your heart? If you don't manifest greed externally, is it the case that there is no greed inside of you either? If you don't perceive any greed inside your mind, can you say that there is no greed in the field of your eighth consciousness? The same inquiry should be raised about seeking, selfishness, and interest in self-benefit. Inside and outside must be a single Suchness. Inside and outside must be clear and clean. That's what counts.

That white fluid is blood which is totally yang. Human blood is ordinarily red but in the Patriarch's case it had turned white because he was a certified Sage. Sagehood is not something you can fake. If someone professes to have certified to Sagehood I say, "Well, let's cut off your head and see. Will white fluid flow forth?" That always puts an end to such reckless claims. What's the good of being a certified Sage if I have to lose my head in the process? Then I won't be able to eat!" So it's better not to make exaggerated claims to Sagehood. In fact, it's quite dangerous to do so. When one has given rise to the Way to the point that one is totally yang, then one's blood spontaneously turns white. That's proof of Sagehood.

The Second Patriarch of Chung Kuo, Venerable Shen Kuang was also put to death by the government; in his case it was on the grounds of being insane. His neck also flowed forth white fluid when his head was cut off. That's genuine liberation. No attachments whatsoever. It is also the state of no outflows. There is no outflow of desire, no outflow of sex, no outflow of wealth, no outflow of fame, no outflow of food, and no outflow of sleep. That is the Penetration of the Extinction of Outflows--the most difficult Penetration to obtain. The other Five Penetrations of the Heavenly Eye, the Heavenly Ear, the Knowledge of Others' Thoughts, the Knowledge of Past Lives, and the

Complete Spirit are terribly difficult to obtain, but the Penetration of the Extinction of Outflows is not at all easy to attain to.

There is ANOTHER VERSE IN HIS PRAISE.

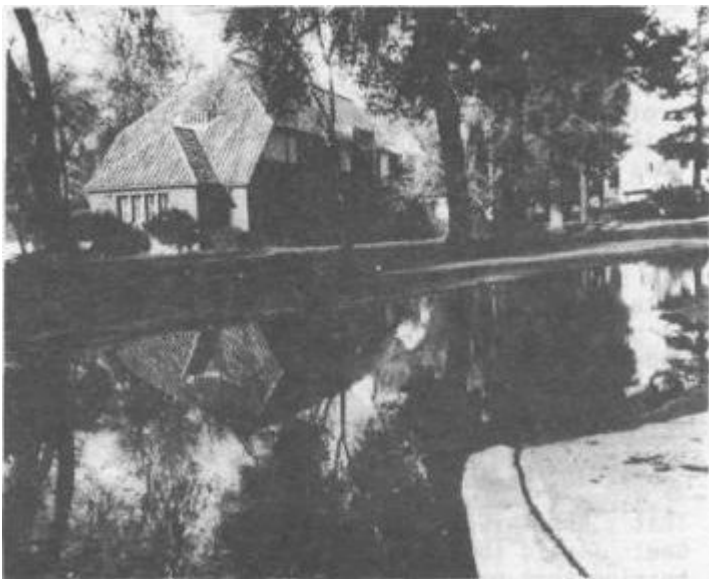
VENERABLE LION'S DETERMINATION WAS  
EXTRAORDINARY.  
IN SEEKING THE DHARMA AND INQUIRING ABOUT THE WAY,  
HIS VOWS WERE SOLID.  
ONE SHOULD NOT DWELL ANYWHERE AND LEAVE ALL  
MARKS.  
IF ONE HOLDS TO THE EXISTENCE OF MERIT, ONE FALLS  
INTO AN EXTREME.  
THE FIVE SKANDHAS ARE ALL EMPTY; CONFUSION AND  
ATTACHMENTS ARE SMASHED.  
THE MYRIAD CONDITIONS ARE SET ASIDE; THE FINAL  
TRUTH MASTERED.  
WHEN AN IMPERIAL SWORD SEVERED HIS HEAD, WHITE  
FLUID FLOWED OUT.  
THE KING'S RIGHT ARM FELL TO THE GROUND AND  
GENUINE RESPECT WAS BORN IN HIS HEART.

Venerable Lion had exceptional determination. He was no ordinary person. He was special. He went about seeking Dharma and looking for Truth. Wherever he went, he would inquire about the Dharma from those he met. It made no difference if the person was of lesser status, he never hesitated to seek council from those beneath him. Not to speak of seeking Dharma from the Twenty-Fifth Patriarch, someone so much higher than he, he would inquire about the Dharma and the Way from those who did not come up to his level just the same. His attitude was that of forgetting himself for the sake of the Dharma and of being utterly sincere in asking of others. The power of his vows was especially firm. When he asked the Twenty-Third Patriarch what mind he should use in seeking the Way, the Patriarch told him, "ONE SHOULD NOT DWELL ANYWHERE AND LEAVE ALL MARKS. Don't use the mind at all. Don't be attached to appearances. Using the mind is not the effortless Way. IF ONE HOLDS TO THE EXISTENCE OF MERIT, ONE FALLS INTO AN EXTREME." The Patriarch Lion smashed through the Five Skandhas which ordinary people cling to. He no longer had that confusion and attachment. Of all the myriad things in the world, he was not hung up on any of them. Since he had no impediments, he also had no fear. He left far behind upside-down dream thinking and obtained ultimate Nirvana. That's what's meant by the final truth being mastered. WHEN AN IMPERIAL SWORD SEVERED HIS HEAD, WHITE FLUID FLOWED OUT. That's possessing real skill! Someone wonders, "Well, if he was a Sage couldn't he have simply willed his head to grow back together with his body?" Yes, he could have, but he didn't chose to do that. Why not? To do

that would have been to give rise to another attachment. When the time came, he allowed the manifestation of the white fluid to be the revelation. The King was someone who helped him accomplish his deeds in the Way. The entire event gives living beings a source of proof of Sagehood. Besides, it made absolutely no difference to Bhikshu Lion whether his head was cut off or not.

THE KING'S RIGHT ARM FELL TO THE GROUND AND GENUINE RESPECT WAS BORN IN HIS HEART. As the head fell to the ground so did the King's right arm, and then he knew that here indeed was a Sage who had certified to the fruition. He lost his right arm but he gained genuine respect for the Sage. He knew beyond doubt that the transmission of the Buddha's Mind Seal was a genuine Dharma.

So how did the king's arm come to fall off, someone wonders. Was it that the Bhikshu Lion had mastered the martial arts and used the white fluid like a sword to sever the king's arm in revenge? No. The gods, dragons and others in the eightfold division of protecting spirits were outraged at the king for using a Sage as the object of his experimentation, so they cut off the king's arm. It was by virtue of the power of the Dharma Protectors that this happened.



*SPRING RAINS AT THE CITY OF 10,000 BUDDHAS*

*"Compassionate substance, the thunder of precepts roars.  
Kind intent, the wondrous great cloud billows,  
Showering down sweet dew and Dharma rain  
That dispel the flames of affliction."*