

The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs



*Thirty-sixth Generational Ch'an Master
Ta Chu Hui Hai (Great Pearl Wisdom Sea)*

The Master was from Chien Province. His family name was Chu. He went to Ta Yun (Great Cloud) Temple in Yueh Province and received ordination from High Master Chih (Wisdom).

When he first visited Patriarch Ma, the Patriarch said to him, "What have you come for?"

He answered, "I have come to seek the Buddhadharm."

The Patriarch said, "I don't have a single thing here you can seek that's the Buddhadharm. If one is negligent with the treasure trove of one's own household, what's the use in running around frenzied in other's houses?"

The Master asked, "What is Hui Hai's treasure trove?"

The Patriarch answered, "That which you're asking me about is your own treasure trove. It is replete with everything. Why seek outside?"

At those words, the Master understood his original mind, jumped for joy, and bowed in gratitude. He served the Patriarch for six years and later, since his own teacher was approaching old age, the Master took his leave and returned to attend upon his first teacher. He composed "*The Essentials of Awakening and Entering the Way*" in one roll. When Patriarch Ma read it, he told his assembly, "In Yueh Province there is a Great Pearl that shines perfectly and with mastery in the midst of the assembly there." Knowing the Master's surname was Chu (which rhymes with "Pearl"), those who sought refuge in him called him High Master Ta Chu (Great Pearl). A verse in his praise says:

The treasure trove had long been buried
But he forsook his home and went outside to seek for it.
Meeting a man who pointed it out,
He realized it was something he had always had.
Illumining its function without bounds,
Dragons murmur and lions roar.
Entering the Way without a door,
The Master smashed in through the window.