

The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs



The Thirty-third Generational Dhyana Master Chin Yen (Adorned with Wisdom) of Nyo Tou (Ox Head) Mountain

-translated by Bhikshunis Heng Tao & Heng Ch'ih

The Master was a son of the Hua family of Ch'u Yang. At twenty, he was a wise youth, surpassing others in physical height as well, being seven foot six inches tall! During the war of the Ta Yeh period of the Sui Dynasty, he was a military officer and established an impressive military career. In the middle of the reign period Wu Te of the T'ang Dynasty, during his fortieth year, the Master left the home-life under Ch'an Master Pau Yueh (Jeweled Moon) at Hua Kung Mountain in Shu Chou. One day as he was sitting in meditation he saw an unusual Sanghan over ten feet tall who said to the Master, "You have already been a monk for eighty lives, it is fitting that you increase your vigor." After saying that he disappeared. Once the Master entered samadhi while sitting in the valley and the mountain water flowed in torrents.

Later he went to study with Dhyana Master Yung and discovered the great matter. Master Yung said to him, "When I received Great Master Hsin's true instructions, I realized that everything I had obtained was false. If there is a single dharma which surpasses Nirvana, I say that it is also like a dream, an illusion, like a dust mote flying in space that can obliterate the whole sky, or a mustard seed which falls down to cover the entire earth. Now you surpass even that. What more can I say?" In the second year of the Yi Feng reign period on the tenth day of the first month, the Master entered the stillness. A verse in his praise says:

For eighty lives he had been a monk,
As he sat sequestered in deep valleys.
For aeons as many as dust motes and sand grains,
It's not this.
Master Yung cleared up his doubts,
So he was like a boat with an open sail.
For thousands of tens of thousands of years,
His lofty air is unflagging.

Another verse in his praise says:

Endowed with wisdom and courage, he amassed merit on the
battlefield,
This mighty seven-foot-six hero.
In stillness, he saw an unusual monk come to tell him of his past lives.
In movement, he contemplated the myriad things, and awakened to True
Emptiness.
Out of faith in the Tao, the Mind Seal Dharma was officially transmitted
to him.
Virtuous ones personally instructed him with wondrous spiritual
penetrations.
The True Mark, without mark, is apart from all marks.
Now it's time to return, to gaze up at his lofty conduct.