

The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs



THIRTY-SEVENTH GENERATIONAL DHYANA MASTER HSUAN SU OF CRANE FOREST TEMPLE ON NYU TOU (OX HEAD) MOUNTAIN

-translated by Bhikshunis Heng Ch'ih & Tao

The Master was from Yen Ling. His layname was Ma. He paid reverence to Dhyana Master Wei. After awakening to his instructions, he went to live at Hao Lin (Crane Forest) Monastery in Chin Kiang (Ching Ko).

One day a butcher invited him, to accept an offering at his home. The Master was delighted to accept the invitation. The assembly expressed surprise. The Master said, "The Buddha nature is level and equal. The worthy and the stupid are the same. When people are ready to be taken across, I quickly take them across. How can I make distinctions?"

A Sangha members asked, "What is the Mind Come from the West?"

The Master said, "To understand is to not understand. To doubt is to not doubt." He continued, "There wouldn't be any understanding without doubts; but if you are not free of doubt, then you haven't yet understood."

Another Sanghan knocked on the Master's door. "Who's there?" the Master asked.

"A Sanghan," came the reply.

"Not to speak of a Sanghan, even if the Buddha came, I wouldn't be attached."

"Why not?" he asked.

"There's no place to put your anchor," was the Master's reply.

In the eleventh year of the T'ien Pau period, the Master manifested stillness. His stupa is at Huang Hao Shan (Yellow Crane Mountain). His posthumous title is Great Deportment Dhyana Master. His stupa was named Great Harmonious Jeweled Boat.

A verse in his praise says:

The Buddha nature is level and equal,
Just as the sea's water is a single flavor.
When the butcher puts down his knife,
The three evil paths are put to rest.
What is the intent in coming to the West?
Once you understand, then there's no more doubt.
But if there hadn't been any doubt, you would never have understood.
The Buddhas were that way too.

Another verse in his praise says:

The Ma family had a son, the Master Hsuan Su.
A butcher prepared a vegetarian meal to make offerings to him.
The multitudes were astounded, "Strange, strange!" they cried.
But the Buddha nature is equal, why make a fuss?
Sages and common people are temporarily different; you should
cultivate goodness.
Worthy and deluded alike, should no longer be muddled.
True principle of past and present, originally is not two.
Do not mistake a cockroach for a flea!

BUDDHIST TEXT TRANSLATION SOCIETY

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