

The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs

by the Venerable Master Yun and the Venerable Master Hua



The Thirty-Seventh Patriarch Dhyana Master Syi Yun (Hwang Bai)

THE MASTER WAS A NATIVE OF FU JOU. GOING FOR INSTRUCTION TO DHYANA MASTER BAI JANG, HE REQUESTED A PHRASE FOR APPLYING EFFORT FOR DAILY USE. DHYANA MASTER BAI JANG, BRINGING UP THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS OWN GOING FOR INSTRUCTION, SAID, "IN THE PAST, WHEN SHOUTED AT ONCE BY GREAT MASTER MA, THIS OLD SANGHAN'S EARS IMMEDIATELY WENT DEAF FOR THREE DAYS AND I couldn't hear anything." WHEN THE MASTER, Dhyana Master Syi Yun, HEARD HIM BRING THAT UP, WITHOUT REALIZING IT, HE STUCK OUT HIS TONGUE. Dhyana Master BAI JANG SAID, "AFTER THIS, YOU WON'T NEED TO CONTINUE PATRIARCH MA'S DHARMA PULSE, WILL YOU?"

THE MASTER SAID, "NO, I can't carry on Patriarch Ma's Dharma. Why not? IT IS ONLY TODAY BECAUSE THE MASTER HAS BROUGHT IT UP THAT I HAVE SEEN PATRIARCH MA'S method of GREAT FUNCTIONING OF GREAT MOTIVE FORCE. MOREOVER, I HAVE NEVER KNOWN PATRIARCH MA. IF I WERE TO CARRY ON PATRIARCH MA'S DHARMA, IT WOULD DESTROY MY DESCENDENTS AFTERWARDS. They would all die and be gone."

Dhyana Master BAI JANG SAID, "THAT'S THE WAY IT IS. IT'S THAT WAY. YOUR scope of VISION MATCHES THAT OF YOUR TEACHER, which is as it should be. YOU SHOULD REDUCE YOUR TEACHER'S VIRTUE BY HALF AND YOUR VISION SHOULD SURPASS THAT OF YOUR TEACHER'S TO BE FIT FOR THE TRANSMISSION. You have that ability and that stature, and so I am passing on the transmission to you. THE DISCIPLE HAS a range of VISION THAT SURPASSES HIS TEACHER'S. Yours does, by far. PRIME MINISTER PEI Syo HAS BUILT A GREAT CHAN MONASTERY AT WANG LING, in the Wang Ling area. PLEASE GO THERE AND PROPAGATE THE BuddhaDHARMA." IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE TANG DYNASTY, EMPEROR SYWAN DZUNG'S DA JUNG REIGN PERIOD (849 A.D.), HE MANIFESTED STILLNESS, passing away. THE EMPEROR CONFERRED THE POSTHUMOUS TITLE UPON HIM OF "DHYANA MASTER SEVERED LIMITS," AND UPON HIS STUPA, THE EPITAPH "GREAT DEEDS."

A VERSE IN PRAISE OF HIM SAYS:

UPON HEARING ABOUT MA PATRIARCH'S TEACHING,
HE STUCK OUT HIS TONGUE.
AWESOME AND IMPOSING,
HE DIVERGED TO LING BEI.
FROM THE END OF A STICK EMERGED THE PROPER EYE,
LIKE A FLASH OF FIRE WHEN STONE IS STRUCK.
THE DESCENDENTS ISSUING FROM BENEATH HIS FEET,
WOULD HAVE BEEN REBELS SELECTED IN VAIN.

When Dhyana Master Hwang Bai heard his teacher, Patriarch Bai Jang, talk about his own experiences while studying with the Horse Patriarch, Ma Dzu, Dhyana Master Hwang Bai stuck out his tongue. He went to Ling Bei, north of the Five Ridges, that is, Jyang Syi Province. The ancient patriarchs used the method of punching, kicking, and striking at the most appropriate instances to bring about a sudden awakening in their students. Their movements were so agile and well-timed that they are likened to a flash of fire emerging when stone is struck--that fast. Dhyana Master Hwang Bai said, "If I were to carry on Patriarch Ma's Dharma, my descendents would be destroyed. They would be useless rebels picked in vain and would not become worthy vessels."

ANOTHER VERSE SAYS:

PATRIARCH MA SHOUTED ONCE AND HIS EARS WERE DEAF FOR THREE
DAYS.
AFTER JUST ABOUT DYING, HE CAME BACK TO LIFE.
WHO IS THE TEACHER OR DISCIPLE DEPENDS UPON WISDOM.
WHETHER SAGE OR WORTHY, THERE IS MESHING WITH THE GREAT
PURPORT.
PRIME MINISTER PEI, PROTECTING DHARMA, BUILT A GARDEN.
"YOU SHOULD CROSS OVER SANGHANS AND PRAISE OUTSTANDING
HEROES."
THE DOOR OF ESSENTIALS FOR ENTERING THE WAY ROUSES BEINGS FROM
CONFUSED DREAMS.
DESCENDENTS TAKE EACH OTHERS' PLACE AND EACH GENERATION IS
EMPTY.

As soon as he heard Dhyana Master Bai Jang say how when Patriarch Ma had shouted his ears were deafened for three days, he stuck out his tongue, feeling it was very fierce. Patriarch Ma had been propagating the Chan

School in Jyang Syi, and Dharma Master Bai Jang's ears having been deaf for three days means that Patriarch Ma's shout brought him to the brink of death, but then he came back to life. This is as it is said:

Reaching the ground of death, and afterwards surviving.

He had pushed him to the point that there was no road to take. However:

When the mountains are exhausted, waters end, and there is no road,
In the shimmering shadows of the willows and blossoms, there is another
village.

He came back to life. Being teacher or disciple depends on Way virtue and wisdom. Whoever has wisdom and Way virtue is the teacher, and whoever doesn't is the disciple. To be a Sage or Worthy requires tallying with the true and actual principle and substance of True Thusness. One must clarify the mind and see the nature and have the great functioning of the great purport, great wisdom, and great motive force. Prime Minister Pei Syiu at that time, when he was holding office, established a great many Way Places, and built a Way Place for the Old Man of Mount Wei, which could house two or three thousand people. Patriarch Bai Jang told Master Hwang Bai, "Go there and cross over the members of the Sangha. Bring forth dragons and elephants within the door of the Dharma." Dhyana Master Hwang Bai's book, *Treatise on the Door of Essentials for Entering the Way*, has awakened very many left-home people from their confused dreams. His heirs for generation after generation have all understood the principle and Dharma-door of true emptiness.

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