

The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs

by the Venerable Master Yun and the Venerable Master Hua



***The Thirty-Seventh Patriarch
Dhyana Master Tzung Shen of Jau Jou***

The Master was from the Hau family of Dzau Jou. At an early age he bowed to a teacher in his native province and had his head shaved. Then he went to Chr Yang to study with Master Nan Chywan ("Southern Springs"). Master Nan Chywan asked him, "Who is the head of the Shramaneras?"

The Master stepped forward and bowed from the waist, saying, "It is mid-winter and severely cold. I humbly request the Venerable Master to take good care of his myriad blessings."

Master Nan Chywan allowed him to be a room-entering disciple.

One day, the Master asked Master Nan Chywan, "What is the Way?"

Master Nan Chywan replied, "The Way does not belong to either knowing or non-knowing. Knowing is false; non-knowing falls into the indeterminate. If one truly arrives at the Way that is beyond all doubts, it is like the void--empty, vast, and profuse. How could you forcibly give it a name?" The Master gained an instant enlightenment upon hearing those words.

Then he went to Crystal Platform in the Sung Ywe Mountain range. After taking the Precepts, he went to stay at Gwan Yin Monastery. His profound words spread far and wide throughout the country. People were awe-struck and faithfully followed his teachings. In the fourth year of the Chyan Ning reign period of the Tang Dynasty (897 A.D.), on the second day of the eleventh month, he lay on his right side and entered the stillness. His lifespan was one hundred twenty years. He was granted the posthumus title "Great Master of the True Limit." A verse in praise of him says,

The turnip of Jen Jou;
The gourd from Dung Bi;
The cedar in the front yard--
And the whole world is confounded.
The "gate" of Jau Jou:
Are you able to make it through?
Pointing at the south but speaking of the north:
Smash the tea pot!

Another verse in praise of him says:

Dzau Jou, Jau Jou, and then Jen Jou;
Turnip, gourd, and oil from the cedar—
All are brought to a boil in a massive smelting furnace.
The void is open and empty; it neither exists nor doesn't exist
Awaken to the origin, separate from all marks.
Instantaneously end birth and death--the myriad affairs come to a rest.
Only because of not understanding the meaning of "two and eight,"*
He travelled long distances roaming from south to north.

* This refers to a time when Master Jau Jou was already eighty years old. Somebody asked him whether he knew what "inside two and outside eight" meant. He didn't know, and as a result brought forth a sense of remorse. He spurred himself on, and despite his elderly years, started a walking tour from the south to the north of the country, investigating from good teachers. One day, in the northern region, he came upon people making steamed dumplings. As they kneaded the dough, they used two fingers to knead the inside of the dumpling, while eight fingers remained outside to shape the exterior of the dumpling. Master Jau Jou asked them, "What is the name of this kind of food?"

They said, "You don't know? This is called 'inside two and outside eight.'!"

Suddenly Master Jau Jou understood. There was nothing else to do, and so he went home. From this record comes the celebrated saying in the Chan school: "Master Jau Jou was already eighty when he set out on his walking tour."

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