

# *The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs*

*by the Venerable Master Yun and the Venerable Master Hua*



*Thirty-ninth Dhyana Master Ben Ji ("Original Stillness")  
of Tsau Shan (Tsau Mountain)*

The Master was a son of the Wang family of Fu Tyan. In his youth he studied the Confucian teachings. At nineteen he went to Ling Shr ("Magic Stone") Monastery in Fu Jou Province and left the home-life there. After he received the full precepts, he went to study under Master Dung Shan ("Cave Mountain"). (note: The school of Tsau Dung is a combination of the teachings of Patriarch Tsau Shan and Patriarch Dung Shan).

Master Shan asked him his name. "It's Ben Ji," he answered.

Master Shan said, "It's a ghost!"

The Master replied, "Well, then, it's not Ben Ji."

Master Shan recognized him as a deep vessel for the Dharma. Master Ji became his teacher's room-entering disciple. Several years passed; he bade farewell and was about to take his leave. Master Shan asked him, "Where do you plan to go?"

He replied, "I will go to the place which is unchanging."

Master Shan said, "How can there be any 'going' to the place that is unchanging?"

The Master replied, "That 'going' is also 'unchanging.'" Then he left.

Afterwards he taught the Dharma at Yi-hwang on Tsau Mountain. Students congregated like clouds. He further established the "three fallings," the "four prohibitions," and the verses on the positions of "King and Minister, (referring to the Five Positions of the Tsau Dung School), further enhancing Master Dung Shan's original purport.

In the Syin-you year (901) he asked the monastery manager, "What day is it?"

The answer was, "The fifteenth of the sixth month."

The Master said, "Tomorrow I'm going to resume my journey." The next day he burned incense, sat upright, and entered the stillness. He was buried at the Western Hill. His posthumus title is "Source of Certification," and his stupa is called "Blessings Perfected."

A verse in praise of him says:

The water of the Cave (that is, Dung Shan,  
"Cave Mountain") reversed its flow.  
The Master was heir to his teacher's wisdom.  
He came from a distant place  
And set up those Five Positions.  
A jeweled mirror was raised up high above the platform.  
It perfectly illumined the myriad kinds of beings.  
Being profound, mysterious, and itself unattached,  
How could it be discerned by willful intent?

Another verse in praise of him says:

Ben Ji is not a ghost, and so he must not have a name.  
"Where did you come from?" He left very few tracks.  
His wisdom was of use; he was entrusted with the Great Way.  
His practice was lofty; he perpetuated the mind's lamp.  
The unchanging place is hard to conceive of.  
Upon arriving at the Treasure Trove one can easily become fulfilled.

With true and proper freedom, he sat upright and entered the stillness.  
He is at rest in liberation and enlightens sentient beings.

*translated, reviewed, and edited  
by members of the Buddhist Text Translation Society*