

The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs

by the Venerable Master Yun and the Venerable Master Hua



*Forty-first Generational Patriarch Dhyana Master Gwan Jr
("Contemplating One's Resolve") of Tung An ("United Peace')*

ESSAY:

THE MASTER WAS FROM TUNG AN, IN HUNG JOU PROVINCE. HIS FAMILY NAME IS NOT KNOWN. WHEN THE PREVIOUS ABBOT OF TUNG AN MONASTERY WAS ABOUT TO MANIFEST THE STILLNESS, HE ASCENDED THE HALL AND SAID, "IN FRONT OF MANY-DISCIPLES STUPA, THE SONS OF THE SCHOOL ARE EXCELLENT. BEFORE THE PEAK OF THE FIVE OLD MEN, WHAT IS THE SITUATION?"

HE SAID THAT THREE TIMES, AND NO ONE WAS ABLE TO REPLY.

THEN THE MASTER STEPPED FORWARD AND SAID, "ON A CLEAR NIGHT, OUTSIDE THE CURTAINS, ALL STAND IN LINE. FOR TEN THOUSAND MILES THEY SING IN PRAISE OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY."

TUNG AN SAID, "ONLY THIS CRASS FELLOW GOT IT."

COMMENTARY:

THE MASTER WAS FROM TUNG AN, IN HUNG JIU PROVINCE. The Master lived in Tung An Monastery in Nan Chang County, Shan Syi Province. HIS FAMILY NAME IS NOT KNOWN. No one knows what his surname was. WHEN THE PREVIOUS ABBOT OF TUNG AN MONASTERY WAS ABOUT TO MANIFEST THE STILLNESS, HE ASCENDED THE HALL. When the previous Abbot of Tung An Monastery, Dhyana Master Dau Pei(道丕禪師), was about to enter the stillness, he came into the Dharma Hall AND SAID, "IN FRONT OF MANY-DISCIPLES STUPA, THE SONS OF THE SCHOOL ARE EX-CELLENT." He said there were many talented people in front of the Many-Disciples Stupa, and inquired, "BEFORE THE PEAK OF THE FIVE OLD MEN, WHAT IS THE SITUATION?" He asked how things were going in front of the Peak of the Five Old Men. HE SAID THAT THREE TIMES, AND NO ONE WAS ABLE TO REPLY. Dhyana Master Dau Pei repeated the question three times, but no one answered.

THEN THE MASTER STEPPED FORWARD AND SAID, "ON A CLEAR NIGHT, OUTSIDE THE CURTAINS, ALL STAND IN LINE. FOR TEN THOUSAND MILES THEY SING IN PRAISE OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY." Dhyana Mas-ter Gwan Jr came forth and said that, on a moonlit night, all stood in line outside the curtains, and that for ten thousand miles the sound of child-ren's folksongs could be heard, singing that peace and prosperity were about to come.

TUNG AN SAID, "ONLY THIS CRASS FEL-LOW GOT IT." Among so many people, no one else understood. Who would have expected that such a coarse person would be the one to get it!

THE VERSE IN PRAISE OF HIM SAYS:

THE SILKEN STRAND TRAILED DOWN
FOR A THOUSAND FEET.
A FEROCIOUS DRAGON ALONE
APPEARED.
THE HALL WAS TOTALLY STILL:
THEN CAME AN IRON HORSE AND
GOLDEN BELLS.
THE FAMILY STYLE WAS REVIVED:
WONDERFUL UNION AND EXTENSIVE
PENETRATION.
IT HAD TO BE THIS CRASS FELLOW,
WHO, POINTING WEST, SPOKE OF
THE EAST.

COMMENTARY:

THE SILKEN STRAND TRAILED DOWN FOR A THOUSAND FEET./ A FEROCIOUS DRAGON ALONE APPEARED./ The silk was hanging down for a thousand feet. In the assembly, only Dhyana Master Gwan Jr came forth to answer the question. THE HALL WAS TOTALLY STILL:/ THEN CAME AN IRON HORSE AND GOLDEN BELLS./ No one left the hall. That means no one understood. Dhyana Master Gwan Jr was like an iron horse and a golden bell. THE FAMILY STYLE WAS REVIVED:/ WONDERFUL UNION AND EXTENSIVE PENE-TRATION./ The family manner was re-stored. There was wonderful meshing and widespread propagation of this Dharma. IT HAD TO BE THIS CRASS FEL-LOW WHO, POINTING WEST, SPOKE OF THE EAST./ It was this crude fellow who talked about the east when he was pointing to the west. This is all Chan talk--verbal dualing in the Chan School manner. There isn't any mean-ing to it.

ANOTHER VERSE IN PRAISE OF HIM SAYS:

THE MASTER HAD NO SURNAME OR
PERSONAL NAME.
"GWAN JR OF TUNG AN" WAS EVEN
LESS TRUE.
"MANY-DISCIPLES STUPA" AND "PEAK
OF THE FIVE OLD MEN" WERE
ALL SUPERFLUOUS.
TO REMAIN YOUNG ALL ONE'S LIFE,
ONE SHOULD RARELY TALK.
HE WAS AN EXCEPTIONAL PERSON,
AND UNDERSTOOD WONDERFUL
PRINCIPLE.
BY POINTING WEST BUT SPEAKING
OF THE EAST, THERE WAS HIDDEN
EXPOSITION OF THE WAY.
WHEN DHYANA MASTERS OF ANCIENT
TIMES AND THE PRESENT TRANSMIT
THEIR MIND-SEAL,
THEY SPEAK DHARMA ACCORDING TO
THE POTENTIALS, AND PROCLAIM
THE MYSTERIOUS AND INTANGIBLE.

COMMENTARY:

THE MASTER HAD NO SURNAME OR PERSONAL NAME./ In the Buddhadharma, there isn't any dharma that can be spoken. Whatever can be spoken is not it.

Anything that can be expressed
in words,
Is not the actual meaning.

That is why the Patriarchs in ancient times were not willing to take a sur-name, much less a first name. "GWAN JR OF TUNG AN" WAS EVEN LESS TRUE./ Although in Tung An Monastery he was called Gwan Jr, that was not true either. It was nothing but a false name—simply made up. A name cannot express the great functioning of the entire substance of a person. We human beings are limited in our thoughts. Since our minds are not broad enough to go beyond the realm of cognitive thinking, we give things names. "MANY-DISCIPLES STUPA" AND "PEAK OF THE FIVE OLD MEN" WERE ALL SUPERFLUOUS./ Dhyana Master Dau Pei had said, "In front of Many-Disciples Stupa, the sons of the school are excellent. Before the Peak of the Five Old Men, what is the situation?" All of that was quite meaningless. What is Many-Disciples Stupa? And what is the Peak of the Five Old Men, anyway? All of that was a case of looking for something to say when there was nothing to say—merely busy work. TO REMAIN YOUNG ALL ONE'S LIFE, ONE SHOULD RARELY TALK./ If people want to stay young, they should not talk so much. You will have fewer afflictions if you talk less, and so you will always be young.

HE WAS AN EXCEPTIONAL PERSON, AND UNDERSTOOD WONDERFUL PRINCIPLE./ Dhyana Master Gwan Jr could be considered a dragon among the people of that time. He understood what most people did not understand, and so he was outstanding among his peers. He understood the esoteric principle, and knew what Dhyana Master Dau Pei was talking about. BY POINTING WEST BUT SPEAKING OF THE EAST, THERE WAS HIDDEN EXPOSITION OF THE WAY./ Unexpressed and hidden within all of this was the heavenly secret. WHEN DHYANA MASTERS OF

AN-CIENT TIMES AND THE PRESENT TRANSMIT THEIR MIND-SEAL,/ THEY SPEAK DHARMA ACCORDING TO THE POTENTIALS, AND PRO-CLAIM THE MYSTERIOUS AND INTANGIBLE./ Dhyana Masters of ancient and modern times transmit their mind-seal Dharma. What is meant by "transmitting the mind-seal"? It means using the mind to seal and certify another mind, without the use of spoken words. It is inexpressible. In this mind-seal Dharma door, the path of language is cut off, and the place of the mind's workings is extinguished. One's mind cannot grasp this with thought. Even the place of the mind's activity is gone. Therefore, one observes the potentials and entices with teachings, speaking Dharma according to the per-son. One proclaims these elusive, esoteric-sounding Dharma doors, and the uninitiate don't have the faintest idea what one means.