

# *The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs*

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



*The Forty-First Generational Patriarch, Dhyana Master  
Yanjau of Feng Sywe ("Wind Cave")*

TEXT:

THE MASTER WAS THE SON OF THE LYOU FAMILY OF YU HANG COUNTY. HE WENT TO STUDY UNDER MASTER NAN YWAN.

NAN YWAN ASKED HIM, "WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ABOUT THE BEATING FROM THE SOUTH?"

THE MASTER REPLIED, "IT WOULD BE A VERY RARE DISCUSSION."

THE MASTER THEN REPLIED BY ASKING, "AND WHAT WOULD THE HIGH MASTER SAY ABOUT THE BEATING HERE?"

NAN YWAN HELD UP HIS STAFF AND SAID, "UNDERNEATH THE STICK--PATIENCE WITH NON-PRODUCTION; FACE TO FACE WITH THE OPPORTUNE MOMENT: I DO NOT SEE THE MASTER."

AT THOSE WORDS, THE MASTER ACHIEVED GREAT, PENETRATING UNDERSTANDING OF THE MYSTERIOUS PURPORT. HE STAYED WITH NAN YWAN FOR SIX YEARS. THEN THE FOURFOLD ASSEMBLY INVITED HIM TO BE ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY AT FENG SYWE.

DURING THE SECOND YEAR OF THE TYAN FU REIGN PERIOD OF THE LATTER JIN DYNASTY, THE STATE MAGISTRATE INVITED THE MASTER TO SUCCEED NAN YWAN IN TEACHING THE DHARMA. DURING THE SIXTH YEAR OF THE KAI BAN REIGN PERIOD OF EMPEROR TAI DZU OF THE SUNG DYNASTY, IN THE GWEI YOU YEAR, ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE EIGHTH MONTH, THE MASTER ASCENDED HIS SEAT, SPOKE A GATHA, SAT IN FULL LOTUS, AND LEFT THE WORLD. HE WAS SEVENTY-EIGHT YEARS OLD, AND HIS PRECEPT AGE WAS FIFTY-NINE SUMMERS.

COMMENTARY:

THE MASTER WAS THE SON OF THE LYOU FAMILY OF YU HANG COUNTY. Dhyana Master Yan Jau of Feng Sywe Monastery was the Forty-first Patriarch. He was the son of the Lyou family of Yu Hang District. HE WENT TO STUDY UNDER MASTER NAN YWAN. He went to visit and study under Dhyana Master Hwei Yung of Nan Ywan.

NAN YWAN ASKED HIM, "WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ABOUT THE BEATING FROM THE SOUTH?" Dhyana Master Hwei Yu of Nan Ywan asked him: "How would you explain the beating in the south? Try to explain what it means."

MASTER REPLIED, "IT WOULD BE A VERY RARE DISCUSSION. I take it that it is quite unusual, very different from the others."

THE MASTER THEN REPLIED BY ASKING, "AND WHAT WOULD THE HIGH MASTER SAY ABOUT THE BEATING HERE?" Dhyana Master Yan Jau asked Dhyana Master Hwei Yu of Nan Ywan, "How do you explain the beating at your place? What is the meaning of it?"

NAN YWAN HELD UP HIS STAFF AND SAID, "UNDERNEATH THE STICK--PATIENCE WITH NON-PRODUCTION; FACE TO FACE WITH THE OPPORTUNE MOMENT: I DO NOT SEE THE MASTER." Nan Ywan picked up a staff and said, "Under my stick there is patience with non-production." What is patience with non-production? It's a state in which one does not see a single dharma come into being. There is nothing at all. And one does not see a single dharma destroyed. And yet you can bear that kind of state in your mind. You don't panic or get frightened. You would not wonder: "Oh, what happened? Why can't I think of anything?" "Face to face with the opportune moment, I do not see the Master" means that coming face to face with you, I don't see you.

AT THOSE WORDS, THE MASTER ACHIEVED GREAT, PENETRATING UNDERSTANDING OF THE MYSTERIOUS PURPORT. Dhyana Master Yan Jau understood the purport upon hearing those words. He understood the profound and wonderful principle. After all, there is nothing that can be said. There is separation from the mark of speech, separation from the work of thought, and separation from the mark of words. All dharmas are swept away, and there is separation from all marks.

HE, Dhyana Master Yan Jau, STAYED WITH NAN YWAN FOR SIX YEARS. THEN THE FOURFOLD ASSEMBLY INVITED HIM TO BE ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY AT FENG SYWE. The fourfold assembly, the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, and Upasikas of that time all invited him to be the Abbot of Feng Sywe Monastery.

DURING THE SECOND YEAR OF THE TYAN FU REIGN PERIOD OF THE LATTER JIN DYNASTY, THE STATE MAGISTRATE INVITED THE MASTER TO SUCCEED NAN YWAN IN TEACHING THE DHARMA. In the second year of the Tyan Fu Reign Period of the Latter Jin Dynasty (c.937 A.D.), the local provincial governor asked him to be the Dharma successor to Dhyana Master Hwei Yung of Nan Ywan. DURING THE SIXTH YEAR OF THE KAI BAN REIGN PERIOD OF EMPEROR TAI DZU OF THE SUNG DYNASTY, IN THE GWEI YOU YEAR, the year Gwei You in the sixty cyclical characters system (c.974 A.D.), ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE EIGHTH MONTH, THE MASTER ASCENDED HIS SEAT, SPOKE A GATHA for the assembly, SAT IN FULL LOTUS, AND LEFT THE WORLD. HE WAS SEVENTY-EIGHT YEARS OLD, AND HIS PRECEPT AGE WAS FIFTY-NINE SUMMERS. His lifespan was seventy-eight years, and he had slept sitting up for fifty-nine years.

A VERSE IN PRAISE OF HIM SAYS:

A RARE DISCUSSION, CHERISH IT LIKE A PRIZED TREASURE.  
UNDERNEATH THE STICK, HE ACHIEVED NON-PRODUCTION.  
AND HE WAS STRAIGHT IN CARRYING OUT THE COMMAND.  
OPENING UP THE ARSENAL, HE ESTABLISHED AN UNUSUAL OCCUPATION.  
HIS WONDERFUL FUNCTIONINGS WERE PROFUSE.  
LIKE A RADIANT SUN IN THE CLEAR SKY.

COMMENTARY:

A VERSE IN PRAISE OF HIM SAYS: A RARE DISCUSSION, CHERISH IT LIKE A PRIZED TREASURE./ A rare discussion, a conference over an unusual event, this beating should be cherished as one would a precious treasure. UNDERNEATH THE STICK, HE ACHIEVED NON-PRODUCTION./ Beneath the beating, the state of non-production and non-extinction can be achieved.

AND HE WAS STRAIGHT IN CARRYING OUT THE COMMAND./ He received the mandate, the command, of the door of Dharma. That he was straight in carrying it out means he was public-spirited, without selfishness, and he acted in accordance with what was proper.

OPENING UP THE ARSENAL, HE ESTABLISHED AN UNUSUAL OCCUPATION./ He broke open the storehouse of weapons. Throughout his life, the way he practiced the Path was very special. HIS WONDERFUL FUNCTIONINGS WERE PROFUSE./ His wonderful functionings were abundant, LIKE A RADIANT SUN IN THE CLEAR SKY./ His state was like that of a bright midday sun, without a single cloud in the sky for ten thousand miles. Like the bright sun in empty space.

ANOTHER VERSE IN PRAISE OF HIM SAYS:

THE STICK FROM THE SOUTH WAS NOT THE LEAST BIT POLITE.  
FROM ITS BEATINGS EMERGED DRAGONS AND ELEPHANTS WHO  
UNDERSTOOD NON-PRODUCTION.  
WITH INTELLECTUALIZATIONS AND RECKONINGS, ONE FALLS INTO THE  
SECONDARY MEANING.  
WITH CRAZY THOUGHTS AND FALSE ATTACHMENTS, ONE ENTERS THE THREE  
PATHS.  
DURING HIS SEVENTY-EIGHT YEARS, HE MADE THE GREAT TEACHING  
FLOURISH.  
THROUGHOUT FIFTY-NINE SUMMERS, HE ENLIGHTENED TO THE WONDROUS  
INTENT. WITH NON-RETREATING VIGOR AND VAST VOWS,

HE WAS INDOMITABLE WITHIN THE DHARMA'S DOOR AND SHOOK THE HALLS OF HEAVEN.

COMMENTARY:

THE STICK FROM THE SOUTH WAS NOT THE LEAST BIT POLITE./ This refers to the beatings by Master Nan Ywan. He clubbed whoever came into his sight. There was not the least bit of courtesy shown, nor did he understand courtesy. He didn't show favoritism to anyone, and was not polite to anyone. You might expect him to say a few polite phrases, but he never talked that way. When he saw someone, he hit him. So you see, he wasn't the least bit polite. "The straight mind is the Way Place." If he saw you, the first thing he would do was give you a blow.

FROM ITS BEATINGS EMERGED DRAGONS AND ELEPHANTS WHO UNDERSTOOD NON-PRODUCTION./ What emerged from his beatings were dragons and elephants, experts who had ended birth and death. WITH INTELLECTUALIZATION AND RECKONINGS, ONE FALLS INTO THE SECONDARY MEANING./ What should one do in this situation? One should be such that the path of language is cut off, and the place of the mind's workings is extinguished. The path of language disappears. Even the thoughts in your mind are terminated. And language, thought, and speculation are left behind. One should leave all conceptualization behind and be totally devoid of all of those. If you stop to think, you have already fallen into the secondary meaning. You have lost the first meaning. The first meaning is: basically there is not one thing; where can the dust settle? That's why it is said, "When not a single thought is produced, the whole substance manifests." The sutras discuss this frequently, but we people still do not understand it. The Sixth Patriarch discussed this in great detail in *The Jewel Platform Sutra*. He said: "Not thinking about the good, not thinking about the bad, just at that moment, what is the Superior Seated Ming's original face?" As soon as you have the thought of good, you have fallen into the secondary meaning. By thinking about bad, you have also fallen into the secondary meaning. When there is not a single thought produced, the entire substance manifests. Just at the moment when you are not thinking about good or bad, you can find your original face. Your original face has no consciousness and no knowing, no reflection and no consideration. If you can achieve this state, then you can be said to be someone who has seen through it all. If you have not, then you are still on the road. The most important thing for cultivators of the Way is to have no consciousness, no knowing, no reflection, and no consideration--not to worry about food, clothing, or a place to live, not to worry about anything; and not to have any afflictions. Originally there is not a single thing, so what afflictions could you have? If you conceptualize and calculate and say, "Let me think about it, investigate it for a while," you will not come up with the primary meaning through investigation. You have already fallen into the secondary meaning, or the third meaning.

WITH CRAZY THOUGHTS AND FALSE ATTACHMENTS, ONE ENTERS THE THREE PATHS./ Why have you fallen into the three paths? It is because you have a crazy mind. Your thoughts stray to never-never land; you always think that you yourself are right, and you have attachments to what is false—not to what is true, but to what is unreal. Because you mistake a thief for your son, mistake suffering for bliss, having that kind of false knowledge and false views, deviant knowledge and deviant views, you fall into the three evil paths, those of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals. All of that is brought about from those various kinds of falseness.

DURING HIS SEVENTY-EIGHT YEARS, HE MADE THE GREAT TEACHING FLOURISH./ Dhyana Master Yan Jau lived to seventy-eight years old. The great teaching is the Buddha's teaching. It is also called the sagely teaching. He caused it to flourish. THROUGHOUT FIFTY-NINE SUMMERS, HE ENLIGHTENED TO THE WONDROUS INTENT./ For fifty-nine years he always sat upright instead of lying down. If it were us, we would lie down to sleep as soon as we didn't feel comfortable sitting up. We would put on more blankets or use an electric blanket so we could be warmer and more

comfortable. Cultivators of the Way are not greedy for comfort. If they can get by, that is good enough. The Dhyana Master sat upright for fifty-nine years and obtained the true non-dual Dharma door by working on the highest and most direct method.

WITH NON-RETREATING VIGOR AND VAST VOWS,/ He was vigorous. If he had not been vigorous, how could he have sat for fifty-nine years? His great vows left no room for retreating. HE WAS INDOMITABLE WITHIN THE DHARMA'S DOOR, AND SHOOK THE HALLS OF HEAVEN./ Within the Dharma's door, he stood firm amidst all adversities. It can be said that he propped up Buddhism, caused heaven to quake and the earth to move. Heavenly demons and the externalists all trembled, as he shook the halls of heaven. It was heaven that was quaking, it was not an earthquake.