

# The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs

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

**44th Generational Dhyana Master Yi Hwai  
(Embracing Righteousness) of Tyan Yi (Heavenly Robe)**



TEXT:

THE MASTER WAS A SON OF THE CHAN FAMILY, A NATIVE OF LE CHING, YUNG JYA COUNTY, WEN JOU PROVINCE. HE WENT TO STUDY WITH MASTER MING JYWE ("BRIGHT ENLIGHTENMENT"), WHO SAID TO HIM, "THIS WAY WON'T DO; NOT THIS WAY WON'T DO. THIS WAY OR NOT THIS WAY STILL WON'T DO". JUST AS THE MASTER WAS READY TO COME UP WITH A REPLY, MASTER MING JYWE HIT HIM AND CHASED HIM OUT. THIS HAPPENED FOUR TIMES IN A ROW. THEN THE MASTER WAS MADE "WATER-HEAD". ONE DAY AS HE WAS DRAWING WATER FROM THE WELL,

THE CARRYING-POLE SNAPPED. INSTANTLY THE MASTER BECAME ENLIGHTENED. HE PRESENTED A VERSE:

"ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX, SEVEN,  
LONE-FOOTED, I STAND ON THE SUMMIT OF TEN  
THOUSAND RIDGES.  
FROM THE JAWS OF THE BLACK DRAGON, SNATCH THE  
LUMINOUS PEARL.  
A SINGLE WORD CAN DEFEAT VIMALAKIRTI!"

WHEN MASTER MING JYWE HEARD THE VERSE, HE TAPPED THE TABLE LIGHTLY TO EXPRESS HIS APPROVAL.

AFTERWARDS THE MASTER PRESIDED OVER SEVEN WAY-PLACES, AND HIS TEACHINGS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO ENTER THE STILLNESS, HIS DISCIPLES ASKED HIM, "WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE AFFAIR?" THE MASTER RAISED HIS FIST. AND THEN HE LAY DOWN, PUSHED AWAY HIS PILLOW, AND ENTERED THE STILLNESS. HIS INTACT BODY WAS HOUSED IN A STUPA BUILT ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE MONASTERY. DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE CHUNG NING REIGN (1102-1106 A.D.) OF THE SUNG DYNASTY, HE WAS GRANTED THE POSTHUMOUS TITLE DHYANA MASTER JEN DZUNG ("AROUSING THE SCHOOL'S REPUTE").

A VERSE IN PRAISE SAYS:

CARRYING WATER IS NOT EASY;  
BREAKING THE BEAM-POLE IS HARDER STILL.  
HE SNATCHED THE BRIGHT PEARL  
SO THAT IT ROLLED QUITE FREELY AROUND IN A BASIN.  
TEN THOUSAND PEAKS LAY CRUSHED UNDER HIS FEET.  
HIS SCHOOL'S EMBLEM WAS FOUNDED  
HE ROWED A BOAT ON LAND;  
HOW THE WAVES BILLOWED AND SURGED!

Another verse says:

THIS WAY, THAT WAY — NONE OF IT WILL LAST.  
A STUNNING BLOW DESTROYED THE CLOUD OF DOUBT.  
HE PRESENTED A VERSE AND SNATCHED THE PEARL — A  
CLUE WAS IN SIGHT,  
SUBTLE WORDS EXPOSED THE MYSTERY OF PAST AND  
PRESENT.  
HIS DISCIPLES INQUIRED ABOUT THE ULTIMATE  
MEANING.  
THE VENERABLE ONE RAISED HIS FIST TO REVEAL THE  
WONDERFUL PURPORT.

LYING IN THE AUSPICIOUS POSTURE, HE PASSED AWAY  
WITHOUT ANY ILLNESS,  
HAVING SUDDENLY AWAKENED TO AND TRANSCENDED  
THE GATE OF BIRTH AND DEATH.

COMMENTARY:

THE MASTER WAS A SON OF THE CHAN FAMILY, A NATIVE OF LE CHING 樂清, YUNG JYA COUNTY 永嘉, WEN JIU 温州 PROVINCE. HE WENT TO STUDY WITH MASTER MING JYWE 明覺 ("Bright Enlightenment"), WHO SAID TO HIM, "THIS WAY WON'T DO; NOT THIS WAY WON'T DO. THIS WAY OR NOT THIS WAY STILL WON'T DO. This way won't work, that way won't work, this way or that way still won't work." JUST AS THE MASTER WAS READY TO COME UP WITH A REPLY, MASTER MING JYWE HIT HIM AND CHASED HIM OUT. THIS HAPPENED FOUR TIMES IN A ROW. THEN THE MASTER WAS MADE "WATER-HEAD." In a monastery there is a water-head. A rice-head is in charge of cooking rice, and a vegetable-head is in charge of the vegetables. ONE DAY AS HE WAS DRAWING WATER FROM THE WELL, THE CARRYING-POLE SNAPPED. INSTANTLY THE MASTER BECAME ENLIGHTENED. HE PRESENTED A VERSE upon his awakening.

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, LONE-FOOTED, I STAND ON THE SUMMIT OF TEN THOUSAND RIDGES. I stand on one foot, alone. FROM THE JAWS OF THE BLACK DRAGON, SNATCH THE LUMINOUS PEARL. Grab the pearl from the mouth of the black dragon. A SINGLE WORD CAN DEFEAT VIMALAKIRTI! With a single phrase, I can convince the Layman Vimalakirti, a layman who lived during the Buddha's time.

WHEN MASTER MING JYWE HEARD THE VERSE, HE TAPPED THE TABLE LIGHTLY TO EXPRESS HIS APPROVAL. He thought that the verse was quite fine.

AFTERWARDS THE MASTER PRESIDED OVER SEVEN WAY-PLACES. He established all those places, AND HIS TEACHINGS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. In China he taught and transformed many people. WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO ENTER THE STILLNESS, THE DISCIPLES ASKED HIM, "WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE AFFAIR?"

THE MASTER RAISED HIS FIST. The Master made a fist with his hand and showed it to his disciples. That was the ultimate affair, the final, great affair that his disciples wanted to ask about. AND THEN HE LAY DOWN, PUSHED AWAY HIS PILLOW, AND ENTERED THE STILLNESS. HIS INTACT BODY WAS HOUSED IN A STUPA BUILT ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE MONASTERY. DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE CHUNG NING (崇寧) REIGN (A.D.1102-1106) OF THE SUNG DYNASTY, HE WAS GRANTED THE POSTHUMOUS TITLE DHYANA MASTER JEN DZUNG (振宗 "Arousing the School's Repute").

A VERSE IN PRAISE SAYS:

CARRYING WATER IS NOT EASY; BREAKING THE BEAM-POLE IS HARDER STILL. For that beam-pole to snap was also not easy. HE SNATCHED THE BRIGHT PEARL from the black dragon, SO THAT IT ROLLED QUITE FREELY AROUND IN A BASIN. The pearl ran back and forth inside the basin. TEN THOUSAND PEAKS LAY CRUSHED UNDER HIS FEET. HIS SCHOOL'S EMBLEM WAS FOUNDED. He erected the banner of his school. HE ROWED A BOAT ON LAND; HOW THE WAVES BILLOWED AND SURGED! Although he sailed his boat on dry land, there were many waves.

ANOTHER VERSE SAYS:

In times of old, whether "they raised their fists or glared with their eyes, the ancients were speaking the Dharma. THIS WAY, THAT WAY — NONE OF IT WILL LAST. Master Ming Jywe was saying, "This way, that way, still it won't do. Ultimately what way will do?" This is a method to teach people to not make wild guesses with their conscious mind, to not engage in speculation and cognitive thinking. Whether this way or that way, the dharma will not be ultimate and it cannot be transmitted to posterity. Once it has a mark, an appearance, something contrived, it cannot act as an eternal, unchanging standard. In the Chan School, you get to a place where there's no way out. Right then and there you find another path." When the mountains and waters have been exhausted, and you doubt if there is any way out, amidst the dark willows and bright flowers, appears another village." It's also said,

"If you want to see for a thousand miles,  
Climb up another flight of stairs."

For this reason, every time the Master wished to speak, Master Ming Jywe hit him. He hit him many times, every time the Master opened his mouth to speak. A STUNNING BLOW DESTROYED THE CLOUD OF DOUBT. By whacking him over the head, Master Ming Jywe broke through the Master's cloud of doubt and delusion. HE PRESENTED A VERSE AND SNATCHED THE PEARL. The Master carried water every day, establishing outer merit. A person has to establish merit. Only after you have developed some virtuous practices can you then cultivate. If you do not have virtuous practices and you insist on cultivating, but you lack the merit and virtue to support you, then you might catch a demon. Therefore the Master became a water-head, carrying water for everyone. Nowadays there is tap water. But during those times people had to carry water, bucket by bucket, over a long distance. That was a way of polishing his nature, too. He had to bear what he could not bear, and take what he could not take. One time, as he was carrying water, his beam-pole snapped, and right then and there he became enlightened. He severed his feeling of doubt, and ended the cycle of birth and death. Thereupon he presented his verse. Upon hearing the verse, Master Ming Jywe agreed that the Master had become enlightened. HE PRESENTED A VERSE AND SNATCHED THE PEARL from the mouth of the black dragon — A CLUE WAS IN SIGHT. He had grasped a fragment of the entire scheme of things. SUBTLE WORDS EXPOSED THE MYSTERY OF PAST AND PRESENT. A few words revealed very wonderful, subtle principles.

When he was about to enter the stillness, HIS DISCIPLES INQUIRED ABOUT THE ULTIMATE MEANING. THE VENERABLE ONE RAISED HIS FIST TO REVEAL THE WONDERFUL PURPORT. He raised his fist to say, "This is the ultimate affair." LYING IN THE AUSPICIOUS POSTURE, HE PASSED AWAY WITHOUT ANY ILLNESS. He was not sick before he entered stillness. He simply lay down in the auspicious position and went off to rebirth, HAVING SUDDENLY AWAKENED TO AND TRANSCENDED THE GATE OF BIRTH AND DEATH. Having smashed through the gate of birth and death, he was free to come and go. If he wanted to come he could come, if he wanted to go he was free to go. He had put an end to the cycle of birth and death.

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IS IT TIME TO SAY GOOD-BYE?

The man is pulling;  
The ewe is resisting;  
The kids are bleating;  
"Where is mother going?"