

The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs

44th Generation Dhyana Master Chu Ywan
of Shr Shwang (Frost-on-Rock) Mountain



The Master was a native of Ching Syang (清湘) county of Chywan Jou (全州), and a son of the Li family. He went to bow to Dhyana Master Fan Yang (汾陽), and after two years, still had not become a room-entering disciple. Whenever Master Fan Yang saw him, he would berate and scold him. One day the Master complained to Master Fan Yang, "Ever since I came here to study beneath your Dharma seat, I have not received the Master's instructions. As the months and years pass, I still have not reached an understanding of the great matter concerning myself, and so I have lost the benefit of leaving the home-life." Scarcely had he finished speaking, when Master Fan Yang railed at him, "You are really a rotten person that you dare to defy me!" Then he angrily raised his cane and came after the Master. The Master was right at the point of uttering something in his own defense, when Master Fan Yang put his hand over the Master's

mouth. Instantly the Master had a great awakening, and remarked, "Now I know that the Way of the Lin Ji Sect is expressed through the most ordinary things!"

The Master continued to render his services to the temple for another seven years. Master Fan Yang then wished him good luck, and said, "Formerly, I was personally certified to samadhi at my teacher's place, and now you have obtained it. You should go to the south, and see to it that our path greatly flourishes."

In the first year of the Ching Li reign (1041 A.D.) of the Sung emperor Ren Dzung, on the fifth day of the first month, during the cyclical year Syin Sz, the Master entered the stillness. His worldly age was fifty-four and his precept age was thirty-two. His entire body was housed in a stupa and buried at Shr Shwang (Frost-on-Rock 石霜) Monastery. A verse in praise says:

He achieved a singular liberation;
The ten thousand precipices were leveled.
On the nose of the rag-robed monk;
Magpies chirp and ravens crow.
His jeweled sword was ever ready;
Ghosts wailed and spirits were alarmed.
The Master of Shr Shwang took his steps in reverse,
Walking like a three-legged donkey.

Another verse says:

In his search for eminent Masters, he went to study with Fan Yang.
Having drawn near to him for two years, their minds had not yet
meshed.
Scolded right to his face, obstacles in his mind were pushed out.
Dealt with a stunning blow, his maze of confusion was sundered.
Once you attempt to talk, you've made a mistake—do not open your
mouth.
The path of language is severed, do not speak in vain.
"Dhyana samadhi is what you've been certified to;
Conditions have matured in the south; cross over beings as numerous
as Ganges' sands."