

# The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs

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

*The Forty-fifth Generation of Patriarchs Dhyana Master Wen Sheng  
(Supreme in Literature) of Ling Yin (Efficacious Seclusion) Monastery*



ESSAY:

THE MASTER WAS A DHARMA HEIR OF DHARMA MASTER DAU CHI (CONSONANT WITH THE WAY) OF YUN JYU (CLOUD ABODE) MOUNTAIN. ONCE A MONK ASKED HIM, "WHAT IS AN ANCIENT MIRROR LIKE BEFORE IT IS POLISHED?"

THE MASTER ANSWERED, "AN ANCIENT MIRROR."

"WHAT IS IT LIKE AFTER IT HAS BEEN POLISHED?"

THE MASTER ANSWERED,"AN ANCIENT MIRROR."

THE MONK FURTHER ASKED,"IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO?"

THE MASTER ANSWERED,"JUST TAKE A LOOK IN THE MIRROR!"

ANOTHER QUESTION,"WHAT IS THE FAMILY CUSTOM OF THE VENERABLE MASTER?"

THE MASTER ANSWERED,"DO NOT BE ALARMED IF WE APPEAR LAX."

QUESTION,"IF GUESTS SUDDENLY ARRIVE, WHAT DO YOU DO?"

THE MASTER REPLIED,"WE GO AND DRINK SOME TEA."

A VERSE IN PRAISE SAYS:

THE MIRROR BEFORE AND AFTER IT'S BEEN POLISHED,  
IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO?  
"JUST TAKE A LOOK!"  
TWO HEADS AND THREE HANDS.  
DO NOT BE ALARMED IF WE APPEAR LAX.  
FAMILY CUSTOMS ARE EXPOSED FOR THEIR UGLINESS.  
WHEN GUESTS COME, SIMPLY GREET THEM.  
DRINK YOUR TEA, THEN QUICKLY BE ON YOUR WAY!

ANOTHER VERSE SAYS:

THE SEVEN BUDDHAS OF ANTIQUITY WERE ALL BASED IN  
HANGJOU;  
TODAY'S LING YIN MONASTERY WAS BUILT BY VIRTUOUS  
ONES OF OLD.  
DHYANA MASTER WEN SHENG WAS THE DHARMA HOST,  
AND STUDENTS OF THE SANGHA ALL CAME TO LEARN  
FROM HIM.  
WHEN GUESTS ARRIVE, DRINK TEA, AND QUICKLY BE ON  
YOUR WAY.  
AFTER PEOPLE ARE GONE, VIGOROUSLY HEAD FOR THE  
MOUNTAIN SUMMIT!  
WHEN THE MIND'S MIRROR IS BRIGHT, IT SHINES IN BOTH  
DARKNESS AND DAYLIGHT,  
WITH A DAZZLING AURA THAT SHOOTS ALL THE WAY UP  
TO THE BIG DIPPER AND ALTAIR.

## COMMENTARY:

The Dhyana Master lived in Ling Yin (Efficacious Seclusion) Monastery. THE MASTER WAS DHARMA HEIR OF DHYANA MASTER DAU CHI (Consonant with the Way) OF YUN JYU (Cloud Abode) Mountain in Jyangsyi Province. After he received the transmission of Dharma from his teacher, he went to Ling Yin Monastery and became the abbot there. Many left-home people lived there. Among them was a naughty monk -- he was garrulous and liked to talk. ONCE A MONK ASKED HIM, "WHAT IS AN ANCIENT MIRROR LIKE BEFORE IT IS POLISHED?" An ancient mirror is a symbol for the present thought in your mind. Before you cultivate, the habits and flaws accumulated from lifetimes are too many, and they cover over the mirror. At this point, what should one do?

THE MASTER Wen Sheng ANSWERED, "AN ANCIENT MIRROR." "It's simply a mirror. Before you have understood, before you have polished off the dust, it is still a mirror. You can't call it by another name."

"WHAT IS IT LIKE AFTER IT HAS BEEN POLISHED?" the monk asked. Since Dhyana Master Wen Sheng did not come up with any additional comment, the monk asked another question. In actuality, before you understand, it's a single thought of your mind. After you have understood, it is still a single thought of your mind. There's no difference.

But the monk was long-winded. He had not yet understood. THE MONK FURTHER ASKED, "IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO? I am not aware of any difference between the two: is there any? Before it is polished -- is there any difference between the two?"

Now Dhyana Master Wen Sheng came back with a more concise answer. He said, "JUST TAKE A LOOK IN THE MIRROR! Just take a look, and you will know the difference. Before you have polished, and after you have polished, take a look in the mirror and compare. After you understand your mind and see your nature, you will naturally obtain great wisdom. You will illumine and realize everything. The myriad phenomena, including houses and the outer environment, will all show up in the mirror. You have to make use of the mirror, and then you will know the difference. If you don't use it, it will remain an ancient mirror. If you make use of it, you will know the difference yourself."

ANOTHER QUESTION, "WHAT IS THE FAMILY CUSTOM OF THE VENERABLE MASTER?" Since that monk was not yet satisfied with the exchange, he came up with another question.

THE MASTER ANSWERED, "DO NOT BE ALARMED IF WE APPEAR LAX." "Do not make such a big fuss, saying, 'Oh, they are so lazy. They don't do anything.' Don't think it's so strange that we are lazy and casual. Don't think it strange that we do not cultivate the Way."

The Master was discussing the issue in a reverse way. "Don't think it strange that we are lazy." The underlying meaning is that we are certainly quite vigorous. That's one way to explain it. Another way to explain it: the people here look as if they are not doing anything. We are cultivators of the Way with no mind. Just that is applying effort. There are double innuendos in the Dhyana Master's comment: To work vigorously is our family tradition. To be lazy is also our family tradition. Don't think it is so strange.

QUESTION,"IF GUESTS SUDDENLY ARRIVE, WHAT DO YOU DO? Your family custom being that way, if guests come, how do you greet them?"

THE MASTER REPLIED, "WE GO AND DRINK SOME TEA. We simply invite them to some tea." The word "go" implies that after the tea, if the guests wish to leave they are free to do so. It can also mean that we accompany them and together we go for some tea.

A VERSE IN PRAISE SAYS:

A VERSE IN PRAISE SAYS:Venerable Syu Yun wrote eight lines of verse, with four characters each, in praise of this Dhyana Master. Having recited this verse out loud, I still do not understand it; and when you hear me explain it, you also will not understand it. However, I will do what is difficult for me to do and try to explain it for you. And although you do not understand, it won't hurt if you reserve some time to listen to this Dharma which you do not understand.

THE MIRROR BEFORE AND AFTER IT'S BEEN POLISHED: This is a bronze mirror, not a glass mirror. An ancient mirror is fashioned from bronze, therefore you have to rub it constantly.It's said in the verse:

The body is a Bodhi tree,  
The mind a bright mirror stand.  
At all times diligently wipe it clean;  
Let no dust alight.

The Venerable Shen Syou composed this verse.The body is like a Bodhi tree, and our mind is like a bright mirror stand. Always we should polish the mirror so that it is clear. Do not let dust alight. Before the mirror is polished it is covered with dust and you cannot see anything in it. That is, before one understands one's mind, what is it like? And, having polished it, what is it like? IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO?

The Dhyana Master drew in the two eyes of the dragon. He pointed out: Ultimately, who is making the discrimination anyway? Before the mirror was polished, what is it like? After it is polished, what is it like? Ultimately, who is entertaining all those random thoughts and making all those discriminations? Basically no one.

"JUST TAKE A LOOK!"If you want to know, simply take a look in the mirror. Before the mirror is polished, you cannot see anything in it. After it is polished, you can see into

it. When your mind is cluttered with habits and flaws, you can't illumine and reflect things. After you change your mistakes, then "When things come along, they are reflected. After things pass by, they are no longer there." Quite naturally you will know the difference. People endowed with great wisdom are able to do things just right. They won't go to excess, nor will they stop short. However, if you lack great wisdom, you may have intentions of doing what is good, but the outcome is not so favorable. That is because you don't know how to deal with the situation in the right way.

TWO HEADS AND THREE HANDS. Take a look in the mirror. Will you see two heads and three hands? No, you will still see one head and two hands. If you see a strange creature with two heads and three hands, then the reflection in the mirror is off. You haven't done a good job of polishing your mirror. In cultivating the mind, be sure to recognize principles clearly. You can't go for something that appears to be right but which is in fact off. That way you won't tally with the truth. After you polish the ancient mirror well, you won't come up with an image of someone with two heads and three hands. If you get an image of one head and two hands, then you have done a good job. DO NOT BE ALARMED IF WE APPEAR LAX. Don't make a mountain out of a molehill, thinking that we are lazy. In fact, if we are truly lazy, we are not afraid of letting people know about it. We should speak the truth. If we are not lazy, we won't need to publicize it outside. FAMILY CUSTOMS ARE EXPOSED FOR THEIR UGLINESS. If we put out false publicity, then we are exposing our ugliness. If we want to conceal our shortcomings, then we are exposing our ugliness. Our family custom is that we act in a true and actual way. We are not afraid of letting people know about our mistakes. We also do not want to let people know even if we have virtue in the Way. WHEN GUESTS COME, SIMPLY GREET THEM. When the six thieves arrive (extra arrive in original scan) at the gate of the six senses, when external defiling states called "guest-dust" come along, do not refuse them. Simply deal with them. DRINK YOUR TEA, THEN QUICKLY BE ON YOUR WAY. Invite them to tea. After the tea, they should quickly leave. Why should they leave? Because they are guests.

ANOTHER VERSE SAYS: THE SEVEN BUDDHAS OF ANTIQUITY WERE ALL BASED IN HANGJOU. The District of Hangjoui in China was a land of blessings. The Seven Buddhas of the past were all born there. Therefore Hangjoui was a land graced with magical energies. TODAY'S LING YIN MONASTERY WAS BUILT BY VIRTUOUS ONES OF OLD. It was a famous Way-place in China. According to the popular novel, BIOGRAPHY OF THE MONK JI GUNG, the monk Ji Gung lived at Ling Yin. Everyone in China knows that he lived there. For that reason, Ling Yin Monastery was considered a magical Way-place. It was built by virtuous ones of old. DHYANA MASTER WEN SHENG WAS THE DHARMA HOST. He was the abbot there, the Dharma Host of that area. AND STUDENTS OF THE SANGHA ALL CAME TO LEARN FROM HIM. Left-home people and lay scholars came and sought the Dharma from him.

Someone asked him, "When guests arrive, what do you do?" The Master replied, "We go and take some tea." WHEN GUESTS ARRIVE, DRINK TEA, AND QUICKLY BE ON YOUR WAY. AFTER PEOPLE ARE GONE, VIGOROUSLY HEAD FOR THE

MOUNTAIN SUMMIT — work for the highest level of your cultivation! WHEN THE MIND'S MIRROR IS BRIGHT, IT SHINES IN BOTH DARKNESS AND DAYLIGHT, WITH A DAZZLING AURA THAT SHOOTS ALL THE WAY UP TO THE BIG DIPPER AND ALTAIR. Understanding your mind and seeing your nature, causes a great brilliance to soar up to the heavens.