

# *The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs*

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

*The Forty-ninth Generation of Patriarchs Dhyana Master  
Da Hwei (Greatly Wise) Dzung Gao (Brilliant Purport)*



TEXT:

The Master was a son of the Syi family of Sywan Cheng. At age seventeen he had his head shaved at Hwei Yun (Cloud of Wisdom) Monastery at Dung Shan (Eastern Mountain). Afterwards he went to bow to Dhyana Master Jan Tang, and served as his attendant. After Master Jan Tang died of an illness, the Master went to study with Master Ywan Wu (Perfect Enlightenment). Once, after hearing Master Ywan Wu speak Dharma in the hall, the Master suddenly experienced a state in which the realm of before and after came to a halt. Master Wu spurred the Master on all the more.

The Master asked him, "It is said: 'The predication of is and is not: like a vine growing from a tree. 'What does that mean?' Master Wu replied, "Try to paint it, and you can't; try to sketch it, and you won't succeed."

The Master further asked, "But when the tree topples and the vine dries up, then what?"

Master Wu replied, "Simply follow along." Then the Master felt a great relief, and exclaimed, "Now I understand!"

The nobleman Jang Wei Gung invited the Master to preside over the monastery at Jing Shan, and soon a crowd of two thousand students gathered there. This incurred the wrath of the local governor, who had the Master banished. But afterwards the Master obtained a reprieve, and was pardoned. At the turn of the Lung Sying reign (A.D.1163), the Master manifested a slight illness, and said, "Tomorrow I'll be on my way." At the hour of the fifth drum (4 a.m.) he personally wrote a report to the throne, as well as a letter to Jang Wei Gung. The attendant asked for a verse, and the Master wrote out one. Then he entered the stillness. He was granted the posthumous title Pu Jywe (Universal Enlightenment), and his stupa was called Bau Gwang (Precious Light). A verse in praise says:

Master Bau Feng helped him put on his nose,  
And Master Tz Ming's ears were made deaf.  
The Buddha's sun dazzles all of heaven.  
With a bamboo comb the Master spurred the dragon onward.  
The tree fell over and the vine dried up;  
He transmitted the Dharma's orthodox lineage.  
A rancid and filthy stench  
Fills the universe.

Another verse says:

He drew near to wholesome friends and sought good teachers,  
His Dharma-selecting eye was opened; the moon's reflection  
impressed upon a lake.  
The three minds cannot be got at; there's no coming or going.  
The four marks are completely empty; put an end to birth and death.  
The five skandhas are not the self--this is deep prajna.  
The six sense organs have interpenetrating function—great spiritual  
penetrations.  
Due to the timely union of causes and conditions, he met with  
calumny and jealousy.  
From of old to the present, those whose characters are lofty often  
meet their opportunities late.

COMMENTARY:

**The Master was a son of the Syi family of Sywan Cheng District. At age seventeen he had his head shaved at Hwei Yun (Cloud of Wisdom) Monastery at Dung Shan (Eastern Mountain). He left the home-life there. Afterwards he went to bow to Dhyana Master Jan Tang, he drew near to him, and served as his attendant. He washed his towels and attended to such matters. After Master Jan Tang died of an illness, the Master went to study with Master Ywan Wu (Perfect Enlightenment). Once, after hearing Master Ywan Wu speak Dharma in the hall--the Master Ywan Wu ascended to the hall to speak Dharma--at that point the Master suddenly experienced a state in which the realm of before and after came to a halt. He lost all cognition of what came before or after. Master Wu spurred the Master on all the more. He pushed him on, to take one further step.**

**The Master asked him, "It is said: 'The predication of is and is not: like a vine growing from a tree.' Whether a dharma is conditioned or unconditioned, whether it can be spoken or not, it resembles a rattan vine leaning against a tree and growing with it. What does that mean?" The Master did not understand, and so asked Dhyana Master Ywan Wu this question.**

**Master Wu replied, "Try to paint it, and you can't. You can't possibly paint this picture. Try to sketch it, and you won't succeed. No matter how hard you try to render its image with your brush, you won't succeed."**

**The Master further asked, "But when the tree topples and the vine dries up, then what? What should one do at that time?"**

**Master Wu replied, "Simply follow along. Come along." Then the Master felt a great relief. When he heard this reply, he put down everything, and exclaimed, "Now I understand!"**

**The nobleman Jang Wei Gung, an official, invited the Master to preside over the monastery at Jin Shan, Gold Mountain, and soon a crowd of two thousand students gathered there. Two thousand left-home people lived there. This incurred the wrath of the local governor. He became jealous, and had the Master banished. The governor slandered the Master, and he said, "This left-home person is planning a revolt, a revolution." As a result the Master was banished by the emperor and ordered to join the army. But afterwards the Master obtained a reprieve, and was pardoned. Later, the accusation was cleared and the Master returned. At the turn of the Lung Sying Reign (A.D. 1163), during the time when the reign period was being changed, the Master manifested a slight illness. He was only slightly ill. And he said, "Tomorrow I'll be on my way. Tomorrow I will die." At the hour of the fifth drum, he personally wrote a report to the throne, the emperor, as well as a letter to the official Jang Wei Gung. The attendant asked for a verse. He said, "Since the Elder Master is about to leave us, would he leave us a verse?" And the Master wrote out one. Then he entered the stillness.**

**He was granted the posthumous title Pu Jywe (Universal Enlightenment), and his stupa was called Bau Gwang (Precious Light). A verse in praise says:**

**Master Bau Feng**, that is, Master Jan Tang, **helped him put on his nose/and Master Tz Ming's ears were made deaf**, as if he couldn't hear. **The Buddha's sun dazzles all of heaven**, like the middle sun. **With a bamboo comb the Master spurred the dragon onward**. He urged the dragon on. **The tree fell over and the vine dried up**; he transmitted the Dharma's orthodox lineage, the proper Dharma. **A rancid and filthy stench fills the universe**. The rancid, putrid and filthy stench fills the world. But now that this Dhyana Master has propagated the Buddhadharma, all of this stench is dispelled, and the world is returned to purity. When a great virtuous person appears in the world, he causes the bright light to reappear, and the horrible stench is chased away.

**Another verse says: He drew near to wholesome friends and sought good teachers.** He went everywhere looking for wholesome companions and bright teachers. The ancients did not hold on to any class concept. For example, Kumarajiva studied the Small Vehicle Teachings from a certain master, who afterwards bowed to Kumarajiva as his teacher of the Great Vehicle. Master and disciple swapped positions and there was no problem. But nowadays, people have this kind of attitude, "I am the teacher and you are the disciple. I will put on the airs of a teacher, while you fulfil your role as a disciple." They are attached to the class concept and aren't willing to relinquish it." If as a disciple you go against your teacher, you are an unfilial rebel and you will fall into the eighteen hells!" Look at how fierce that is. The teacher wields such incredible authority and power. However, although I've been a teacher for many years I feel that I haven't done my job well. I keep on wanting to be the disciple. But no one wants me. I wanted to bow to Master Ren Jou as my Master, but he complained that I am very stupid.

**His Dharma-selecting eye was opened.** When you go out visiting teachers you cannot follow them blindly. You must have your Dharma-selecting eye opened so you can recognize whether people have spoken correctly or not. You cannot cultivate and practice blindly, or study ignorance after ignorant people. When you have the Dharma-selecting eye, it is like: "In a thousand pools there are a thousand reflections of the moon. For ten thousand miles, there is an open expanse of a cloudless sky." It's like **the moon's reflection impressed upon a lake**. The way and the response are intertwined. If you understand the Dharma, when you visit a good knowing teacher you will obtain true benefits from the visit. This is like the reflection of the moon impressed upon a lake. **The three minds cannot be got at:** The past mind cannot be got at, the present mind cannot be got at, and the future mind cannot be got at. The realms of past and future are forgotten. And **there's no coming or going**. If you wish to understand the Buddhadharma, you must study the Dharma. After your studies you will realize that there is basically no coming or going. **The four marks are completely empty; put an end to birth and death.** When the mark of a self, the mark of others, the mark of living beings, and the mark of a lifespan are all done away with, how could there be any more birth and death? But you'll have to truly understand how to put an end to the four marks. **The five skandhas are not the self--this is deep prajna.** Of the five skandhas: form, feeling, thinking, activities, and consciousness, where is the self? There is no self! But you'll have

to obtain profound wisdom in order to arrive at this state. Deep prajna refers to not being turned by situations. No matter what state arises:

"When something comes up, respond to it. When it goes away, become quiet.

"When the Buddha comes, slay the Buddha, when the demon comes, slay the demon.

"Sweep away all dharmas, separate from all marks."

That's deep prajna.

**The six sense organs have interpenetrating function--great spiritual powers.** This is totally incredible to most people. The nose can eat, it can speak, it can hear sounds; the mouth can see things. Who can do that? Well, if you have obtained the interpenetrating function of the six sense faculties, then every sense faculty is capable of performing the function of the other five. Every sense faculty is replete with six functions. Basically the eye can only see things, but now it can also hear. Basically the ear cannot see things, but now it can. Who would believe this? You say, "Well, I can't do it." Of course you can't. You haven't achieved the interpenetrating function of the six sense organs. You shouldn't assume that the six sense faculties: your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind--are based on the external faculties themselves. Rather, they are based in the mind. From the wonderful functions and transformations of the mind, six departments come forth, each in charge of a different matter. But once you obtain spiritual penetrations, the six sense organs will interact in mutual penetration. Therefore, the true greatly-good knowing advisor may not have to open his eyes, but he knows everything. He may not use his ears to listen to you speak, but he hears the words of everybody. It's that wonderful. Not only does he know what a single individual says, he's capable of knowing the words of thousands of tens of thousands of people, everything that they say. He can also see everything, including all the thoughts in your mind. His eyes can eat and his ears can drink. That's the interpenetrating function of the six sense faculties. Although the six sense faculties work at the same time, they can also come to a stop at the same time. The gateway of the six sense faculties have closed. They are no longer turned by external states. Wouldn't you say these are great spiritual powers? They're even more wonderful than a magic show.

**Due to the timely union of causes and conditions, he met with calumny and jealousy.**

Everything comes about from the timing of causes and conditions. The Master encountered both good and bad causes and conditions. On the one hand, two thousand left-home people drew near him to study the Buddhadharmas. However, as the saying goes, "A great tree attracts the wind," and so he attracted jealousy. People accused him of leading a revolt. Since the emperor's greatest fear was a possible revolt, he had the Dhyana Master banished. Later, some people put in a good word for him, saying, "There's nothing wrong with him. He's a very fine old cultivator." Thereupon the Master was released and allowed to go home. **From of old to the present, those whose characters are lofty often meet their opportunities late.** Since they are recognized only by a few people, they meet their opportunities late in life. From ancient times until now, those

whose characters are too high-minded are bound to attract jealousy. Their paths are not very smooth; however, although their paths are not smooth, the rough spots are actually aiding factors, helping the person to solidify his determination and accomplish his work in the Way. Once he becomes unmoving towards any state, whether people recognize him or not, whether he meets opportunities or not, it doesn't matter. There's no problem in this case.