

The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs

by the Venerable Master Yün and the Venerable Master Hua

Forty-seventh Generation, Dhyana Master Hung Jr (Magnificent Wisdom) of Tyan Tung (Heavenly Youth) Monastery



Dharma Master Hung Jr

Text:

The Master was a son of the Li family of Shr-jou Prefecture. He was ordained at Jing Ming (Pure Brightness) Monastery. At age fourteen he received the complete precepts, and at age eighteen he began traveling about in search of good teachers. He arrived at Fragrant Mountain Monastery at Ru Jou, and in his investigation of Chan, he became like a dried wooden stump. From further investigation, he had a certain awakening. Afterwards he went to study with Dhyana Master Dan Sya (Red Cloud), who asked him, "What is your true self before the cosmos began?" The

Master answered, "A frog at the bottom of the well swallows the moon; in the middle of the night there's no need to borrow a light from outside."

Master Dan Sya remarked, "You haven't got it. Try again." The Master was in the process of figuring out something else to say when Dan Sya hit Him with the whisk and cried out, "But you said you didn't have to borrow anything!" At those words the Master experienced a feeling of great relief. He made obeisance. Dan Sya then said, "Why don't you try to say something else?" The Master replied, "Today Hung Jr missed the opportunity and incurred blame."

Master Dan Sya said, "I don't have time to hit you. You can go now."

Afterwards the Master presided at monasteries such as Chang Lu, Tyan Tung, and others. Left-home people assembled at his Way-places like clouds.

During the cyclical year *ding chou* of the Syau Sying reign of the Southern Sung Dynasty, on the eighth day of the tenth month, the Master sat upright and said good-bye to the assembly. He wrote a verse and then left. His body was housed in the casket for seven days, and the color of his complexion remained as if he were still alive. His stupa was built in the valley east of Tyan Tung monastery.

A verse in praise says:

*Dan Sya wielded his whisk,
And the Master gave up his practice of the "clay pill" technique.
He went beyond the beginning of the cosmos,
And managed to feel his own nose.
At the third watch of night, there was no need to borrow a light,
But he lost his money and incurred blame.
From the solitary summit of Tai Bai Mountain,
His Dharma flows over the great earth.*

Another verse says:

*In his youth he renounced the mundane life and entered Pure
Brightness,
Resolutely he cut off the bonds of love and looked lightly upon
family ties.
A frog at the bottom of the well finds it hard to swallow the moon,
But the peng bird soars freely in space.
Trying to figure out an answer opposes the foremost meaning,
Discrimination leads to contradiction, and the path becomes
diversified a thousandfold.
The Dharma host of Tyan Tung transcends those of present and
past,
Under Dan Sya's whisk, he enlightened to the Truth.*

Commentary:

This Master is the forty-seventh Patriarch of the Tsau Dung school. He lived in Tyan Tung Monastery in Ningbwo, Jejiang Province. **The Master was a son of the Li family of Shr-jou Prefecture in Shansyi. He was ordained at Jing Ming Pure Brightness Monastery. At age fourteen, he received the complete precepts, and at age eighteen he began traveling about in search of good teachers.** He went to the various monasteries to observe their different styles of teaching and cultivation. **Then he arrived at Fragrant Mountain Monastery at Ru Jou Prefecture, and in his investigation of Chan, he became like a dried wooden stump.** His mind reached a state in which he resembled a piece of dry wood. **From further investigation he had a certain awakening.** By looking into his meditation topic, he had a bit of an awakening. **Afterwards he went to study with and draw near to Dhyana Master Dan Sya, who asked him, "What is your true self before the cosmos began?"** That was the exam topic that Master Dan Sya gave him.

The Master Hung Jr answered, "A frog at the bottom of the well swallows the moon." Is this possible? Can a frog lying at the bottom of a well swallow the moon? No. Rather, it's a case of the frog being unable to see the moon as it moves out of his perspective. That's what's meant by "swallowing the moon." **In the middle of the night, during the third watch, there's no need to borrow a light from outside.** What does this phrase mean anyway? It doesn't carry any great meaning. These words were spoken just so you wouldn't understand. They are designed to put an end to your discriminating, cognitive process. The basic idea is that your inherent nature is bright in and of itself. There's no need to borrow from an external source. The light of your own nature shines throughout the day and night and there's no need to rely on an outer condition.

After Master Hung Jr came up with this verse as a reply, **Master Sya remarked, "You haven't got it. Try again."** Say something else! You haven't quite got it. Master Hung Jr thought he could get away with this bit of Chan banter, that he could make it pass, but this time he had run into a real Master who had exacting standards and who demanded something more from him. At that point, Master Hung Jr felt pinched— maybe he could not manage without borrowing some external light after all. **The Master was in the process of figuring out something else to say.** In his mind he was trying to come up with another reply—he really hadn't reached the mark. Right at that point **Dan Sya hit him with the whisk and cried out, "But you said you didn't have to borrow anything!"** You claimed you didn't have to borrow an external light. Then what are you thinking about now?

At those words the Master experienced a feeling of great relief. At Dan Sya's yell, Hung Jr felt a great relief. His arrogance, his mad mind and wild thoughts, his pretensions to enlightenment—all of these vanished in an instant. His crazed mind came to a stop. Then **he made obeisance to Master Dan Sya. Dan Sya then said, "Why don't you try to say something else?"**

The Master, Hung Jr, replied, "Today Hung Jr missed his opportunity and incurred blame." I fell into the secondary meaning. I didn't make it through the gate. I've been working within the area of my discriminating consciousness."

Master Dan Sya said, "I don't have time to hit you. You can go now." It was a form of certification. Master Dan Sya acknowledged that the activities of Master Hung Jr's intellect and discriminating consciousness had come to a stop.

Because of the principles involved in the above interchange, Great Master Yung Jya said in his *Song of Enlightenment*:

*"Dharma wealth is lost
And merit and virtue destroyed,
Due to nothing other than the conscious mind.
Through the use of Dhyana, the mind is ended,
And one suddenly enters the powerful, unproduced knowledge and
insight."*

It's just the intellect and conscious mind that obstruct people in their cultivation. Therefore, in Chan we seek to put an end to the workings of the intellect and discriminating consciousness so that we can enter the wisdom of non-production.

Afterwards the Master presided at monasteries such as Chang Lu, Tyan Tung and so forth. He was abbot at those well-known Way-places in China. **Left-home people assembled at his Way-places like clouds.** They were profuse like clouds as they came together to draw near him.

During the cyclical year Ding Chou of the Syau Sying reign of the Southern Sung Dynasty, on the eighth day of the tenth month, the Master sat upright and said good-bye to the assembly. He said, "Today I'm going to leave. All of you work hard. Don't let the time pass in vain." **He wrote a verse and then left.** He entered the stillness. If he didn't have the self-mastery of coming and going at ease, if he did not have command over birth and death, how could he enjoy such a state? **His body was housed in the casket for seven days, and the color of his complexion remained as if he were still alive.** Nothing changed in his complexion even seven days after his death. He looked just as he did when he was alive. **His stupa was built in the valley east of Tyan Tung Monastery.** His flesh-body was housed in a stupa in the valley east of the monastery.

A verse in praise says: Dan Sya wielded his whisk and hit him lightly, and the Master gave up his practice of the "clay pill" technique. This is the Taoist technique of sending out a little man from the top of one's head. Before, the Master was attached to his "conscious spirit" and tried to gain immortality. However, this is still the state of a "corpse-guarding ghost." But after Master Dan Sya struck him with the whisk, he gave up his former pursuits, realizing that the technique was still caught within the realm of the conscious spirit.

He went beyond the beginning of the cosmos. What era was that? There's no way to date this period. This is the stage of emptiness before anything came to be. ***And managed to feel his own nose:*** he was able to recognize his original face. He knew whether his nostrils pointed up or down. If you ask me, "Do my nostrils point up or down?" I won't be able to tell you. You have to find out for yourself.

At the third watch of night, at midnight, there was no need to borrow a light. It's not necessary to borrow a light from a lamp or from the mind. One's nature is inherently bright. ***But he lost his money and incurred blame.*** He lost his opportunity—this is like losing money. Here "incurring blame" does not mean creating an offense. It means missing one's opportunity. The potentials did not mesh.

From the solitary summit of Tai Bai Mountain. Just as this peak stands alone, unrivalled, so, too, after Dhyana Master Hung Jr became enlightened, he stood out unrivalled and surpassing his peers. ***His Dharma flows over the great earth.*** His lofty and high-minded integrity spread throughout the great earth. Many people were influenced by his example to bring forth the Bodhi resolve.

Another verse says:

In his youth he renounced the mundane life and entered pure brightness. When he was still very young, probably at the age of twelve or thereabouts, he set forth from the home-life. ***Resolutely he cut off the bonds of love and looked lightly upon family ties.*** He looked lightly upon the affection shared among the six kinds of close relatives. ***A frog at the bottom of the well finds it hard to swallow the moon.*** Such a frog would certainly not be able to swallow the moon. ***But the peng bird soars freely in space.*** Nobody could tell *this peng* bird what to do. It flies and roams freely in space. If you understand, you can be as free as *the peng* bird. The *peng* bird eats dragons when it gets hungry and drinks water when it's thirsty. It flies up to the skies to play.

Trying to figure out an answer opposes the foremost meaning. When asked a question, if you cannot come up with a direct answer but have to deliberate over a reply, you have missed the foremost meaning. You have fallen into the secondary or third meaning. ***Discrimination leads to contradiction, and the path becomes diversified a thousandfold.*** Once you start to make discriminations with your conscious mind, the more you discriminate, the further you will stray from the truth.

The Dharma host of the Tyan Tung transcends those of present and past. Because of his great wisdom, most people could not compare with him. ***Under Dan Sya's whisk,*** having undergone that kind of beating, he emerged, ***enlightened to the truth.*** He understood the true meaning of the Sutras.

Upcoming Special Events

at the Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

Sep. Sep. 2: Sunday celebration of Ullambana

Sep. 14 eve. - Sep. 17 eve.: three days of recitation of Earth Store Bodhisattva's name

Sep. 16: Sunday celebration of Earth Store Bodhisattva's Anniversary

Oct. 28 eve. - Nov. 4 eve.: one week of recitation of Gwan Shr Yin Bodhisattva's name

Nov. 4: Sunday celebration of Gwan Shr Yin Bodhisattva's Leaving Home

Nov. 5: Monday (actual day) celebration of Gwan Shr Yin Bodhisattva's Leaving Home

Nov 22 eve. - Nov. 29 eve.: Seven day Chan Meditation Session (orientation/instruction)