

The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs

by the Venerable Master Yün and the Venerable Master Hua



*Forty-first Generational Patriarch Dhyana Master
Gwei Shen of Di Dzang ("Earth Store") Monastery*

ESSAY:

THE MASTER WAS FROM CONSTANT MOUNTAIN, AND A SON OF THE LI FAMILY. HE WENT TO STUDY WITH SYWAN SHA. SHA ASKED HIM, "THE THREE REALMS ARE ONLY THE MIND--WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THAT?"

THE MASTER SAID, "THE HIGH MASTER DOES NOT UNDERSTAND HOW THE THREE REALMS ARE ONLY THE MIND."

HE THEREUPON SAID, "I CALL IT BAMBOO AND WOOD. WHAT DO YOU CALL IT?"

THE MASTER SAID, "GWEI SHEN ALSO CALLS IT BAMBOO AND WOOD."

HE SAID, "IF ONE SEARCHED TO THE ENDS OF THE GREAT EARTH, ONE WOULDN'T FIND ANYONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THE BUDDHADHARMA."

THE MASTER FROM THEN ON HAD NO DELUSIONS, AND HE OPENED UP THE DHARMA AT EARTH STORE MONASTERY.

LATER, IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE TYAN CHENG REIGN PERIOD OF THE LATER TANG DYNASTY, IN THE FALL OF THE YEAR WU DZ, HE APPEARED TO HAVE AN ILLNESS FOR A FEW DAYS, THEN SAT DOWN AND DECLEARED THE END. AFTER HIS JHAPITA, SHARIRA WERE FOUND. THE STUPA FOR HIM WAS BUILT AT THE WESTERN CORNER OF THE MONASTERY. THE POSTHUMOUS TITLE CONFERRED UPON HIM WAS DHYANA MASTER TRUE RESPONSE.

COMMENTARY:

THE MASTER WAS FROM CONSTANT MOUNTAIN (常山 *Chang Shan*) County, AND A SON OF THE LI FAMILY. His father's name was Li. HE WENT TO STUDY WITH SYWAN SHA (the Fortieth Patriarch, Dhyana Master Shr Bei of Sywan Sha 玄沙師備禪師 see "Vajra Bodhi Sea" Issue #206, 1987, page 1). Sywan SYA ASKED HIM, "THE THREE REALMS ARE ONLY THE MIND--WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THAT? How do you explain it?"

THE MASTER, Dhyana Master Gwei Shen, then SAID, "THE HIGH MASTER DOES NOT UNDERSTAND HOW THE THREE REALMS ARE ONLY THE MIND. You don't understand either."

HE, Sywan Sya, THEREUPON SAID, "I CALL IT BAMBOO AND WOOD. WHAT DO YOU CALL IT?" The High Master had gone on to say, "I don't call it a chair; I call it bamboo and wood," and then had asked Dhyana Master Gwei Shen, "What do you say it is?" This exchange of questions and answers is known as Chan banter.

THE MASTER SAID, "GWEI SHEN ALSO CALLS IT BAMBOO AND WOOD. I call it that, too."

HE, Sywan Sya, SAID, "IF ONE SEARCHED TO THE ENDS OF empty space and THE GREAT EARTH, ONE WOULDN'T FIND ANYONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THE BUDDHADHARMA." He meant, "Your calling it that is just repeating what you have heard others say, without really understanding ."

THE MASTER, Dhyana Master Gwei Shen, FROM THEN ON HAD NO DELUSIONS. From hearing Sywan Sya say that even if one searched to the ends of the earth, one wouldn't find anyone who understood the Buddhadharma--that is, "Don't want too much; don't be so artificial and so attached"--from then on, he had no more delusions about any Dharma doors, AND HE OPENED UP THE DHARMA AT EARTH STORE MONASTERY. At Earth Store Monastery, he lectured on the Sutras and spoke the Dharma for people.

LATER, IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE TYAN CHENG REIGN PERIOD OF THE LATER TANG DYNASTY, IN THE FALL OF THE YEAR WU DZ, HE APPEARED TO HAVE AN ILLNESS FOR A FEW DAYS, THEN SAT DOWN in full lotus AND DECLARED THE END, completed the stillness. AFTER HIS JHAPITA (cremation), many SHARIRA (relics) WERE FOUND. THE STUPA FOR HIM WAS BUILT AT THE WESTERN CORNER OF THE Earth Store MONASTERY. THE POSTHUMOUS TITLE CONFERRED UPON HIM by the Emperor WAS DHYANA MASTER TRUE RESPONSE, and the Emperor called his stupa "Stupa of True Response."

A VERSE IN PRAISE OF HIM SAYS:

HE LOST HIS FOOTING AND TURNED THINGS OVER.

THE THREE REALMS ARE ONLY THE MIND.
HE PICKED IT UP AT EXACTLY THE RIGHT MOMENT.
VERTICALLY AND HORIZONTALLY THERE WAS NO OBSTRUCTION.
AMPLE RICE FROM PLANTING THE FIELDS.
ALL FROM THE VARIOUS DIRECTIONS ADMIRER HIM.
IT WAS AS IF LIGHT FROM THE ANCIENT
EARTH STORE BUDDHA STILL REMAINED.

COMMENTARY:

HE LOST HIS FOOTING AND TURNED THINGS OVER./ He overturned Heaven and earth. THE THREE REALMS ARE ONLY THE MIND./ The three realms are not beyond a single thought in the mind. HE PICKED IT UP AT EXACTLY THE RIGHT MOMENT./ It was exactly right, and at the appropriate time. VERTICALLY AND HORIZONTALLY THERE WAS NO OBSTRUCTION./ If you want to go east, you can go east. If you want to go west, you can go west. If you want to go south, you can go south. If you want to go north, you can go north. Vertically and horizontally within the three realms, there were no obstructions. AMPLE RICE FROM PLANTING THE FIELDS./ He did not seek outwardly. He ate very plain and bland food and planted the fields there--speaking the Buddhadharma as if planting the fields. People in the assembly bringing forth the resolve for Bodhi was like the fields producing grain.

ALL FROM THE VARIOUS DIRECTIONS ADMIRER HIM./ People from all are as esteemed and cherished him. All the people in the Way place admired and respected him very much. IT WAS AS IF LIGHT FROM THE ANCIENT/ EARTH STORE BUDDHA STILL REMAINED./ In Earth Store Monastery, he was like the ancient Buddha Earth Store, as if that Buddha was still emitting great light.

ANOTHER VERSE IN PRAISE OF HIM (by Venerable Master Hua) SAYS:

THE THREE REALMS ARE MIND ALONE --WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING?
"CHAIR," "WOOD," "BAMBOO" ARE ALL FALSE NAMES.
YOUR MIND IS THAT WAY, FREE FROM CALCULATIONS.
THE PATH OF MY THINKING IS CUT OFF AND WORDS ARE RARE.
THROUGHOUT SPACE AND THE GREAT EARTH, NO ONE KNOWS ME.
IN SEAS OF KSHETRAS LIKE MOTES OF DUST, FEW RECOGNIZE ME.
DHYANA MASTER TRUE RESPONSE'S LIGHT SHINES EVERYWHERE.
THE FOURFOLD ASSEMBLY OF DISCIPLES ALWAYS FOLLOW HIM.

COMMENTARY:

THE THREE REALMS ARE MIND ALONE--WHAT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING?/ What do you think? Do you think the three realms only being the mind is right or not? Do you understand or not? If you understand, then what is meant by the three realms only being the mind? What is the meaning of everything being made from the mind alone? As it is said:

If a person wishes to understand
All Buddhas of the three periods of time,
He should contemplate the nature of the Dharma Realm:
Everything is made from mind alone.

What is meant by, "Everything is made from mind alone?" What is made?

"CHAIR," "WOOD," "BAMBOO" ARE ALL FALSE NAMES./ "Chair" is a false name; "bamboo" and "wood" are false names, too. They have no actual substance to them. Then why are they called those names? It is because living beings gave them those names. Actually, whether they are really called those names is beyond the scope of discussion. And so they are all false names. If from the start people had not been called "people," but had been called "dogs," no one would consider it insulting to be addressed as a dog. But now that the terms are fixed, if you call people by some other name, they don't like it. They get angry and say, "You're calling me names!!!" That's simply because the terms have been defined, and people have developed attachments concerning them. But if at the beginning, before any terms existed, people had been called something else—for example, when a child was born, if you called it "kitty," then it would be a cat. If you called it "doggy," it would be a dog. If when the child grew up you referred to it as "doggy," or "kitty," the child wouldn't know you were insulting it. That would simply be its name.

YOUR MIND IS LIKE THAT, FREE FROM CALCULATIONS./ "Your mind is like that, and my mind is like that, too." One should be free from attachments and reckonings, that is, from thinking of what something is and what it is called. THE PATH OF MY THINKING IS CUT OFF AND WORDS ARE RARE./ The path of my thinking, my reflecting, is gone.

The path of language is cut off,
And the place of the mind's workings is extinguished.

THROUGHOUT SPACE AND THE GREAT EARTH, NO ONE KNOWS ME./ To the exhaustion of empty space and the entire great earth, there isn't anyone who truly knows me. IN SEAS OF KSHETRAS LIKE MOTES OF DUST, FEW RECOGNIZE ME./ There isn't anyone who knows my sound or who recognizes me—no one.

DHYANA MASTER TRUE RESPONSE'S LIGHT SHINES EVERYWHERE./ Dhyana Master True Response was able to be a sturdy candle in a gale, pure gold in a blazing fire, a dragon and elephant among people, the sun, moon, and stars in the sky—and so his light shines universally. THE FOURFOLD ASSEMBLY OF DISCIPLES ALWAYS FOLLOWS HIM./ The fourfold assembly of his disciples—Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, and Upasikas—always follow him to study the Buddhadharma.