

The Bodhi Seal of the Patriarchs

by the Venerable Master Yun and the Venerable Master Hua



*Forty-fourth Generational Patriarch
Dhyana Master Yi Ching of Tou Dz*

This Dhyana Master is the forty-fourth patriarch in the lineage descending from Patriarch Bodhidharma. TOU DZ is the name of a place. YI CHING is this Dhyana Master's name.

THE MASTER WAS A SON OF THE LI FAMILY OF CHING SHE. His lay surname was Li. IN HIS YOUTH, AFTER PASSING AN EXAM ON THE SUTRAS, HE WAS ORDAINED AS A MONK. During the Tang Dynasty, a person had to have several Sutras committed to memory before he was allowed to leave the home-life. We in the City of 10,000 Buddhas are going to reinstate the system of the Tang Dynasty, and so if one wishes to leave the home-life at the City of 10,000 Buddhas, one must be able to recite from memory the SHRAMANERA VINAYA, THE FOUR DIVISIONS VINAYA, THE BRAHMA NET SUTRA, and THE SHURANGAMA SUTRA. Only after

individuals have committed these Sutras to memory will I recognize them as true left-home people.

ONCE, WHEN LISTENING TO A LECTURE ON THE FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA, he came to the phrase, "Just this is the inherent nature of the mind." When the Master read that passage of the Sutra he understood that the FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA was saying that the mind is the nature; the mind and the nature are one. At the subtle level, it is called the nature. At the coarse level, it is called the mind. Actually there is not a great difference between "mind" and "nature."

AND HE SUDDENLY HAD A PROFOUND AWAKENING. When the Master heard this line, he suddenly became awakened. He thought, "Oh, originally it was just like this: they are nothing but false names. Originally there was nothing—how could dust alight?" Thereupon, he became enlightened.

HE WENT TO FU SHAN MOUNTAIN. After he became enlightened, the Master went to Fu Shan, which is the name of a place. AT THAT TIME, MASTER YWAN JYAN HAD A DREAM IN WHICH A REMARKABLY HANDSOME FALCON CAME TO HIM; THEREUPON, THE MASTER KEPT THE FALCON. Right during that time, Dhyana Master Ywan Jyan dreamt that he obtained a handsome falcon.

MASTER YWAN JYAN INSTRUCTED THE MASTER TO INVESTIGATE THE FOLLOWING MEDITATION TOPIC: "AN EXTERNALIST ASKS ABOUT THE BUDDHA, BUT DOES NOT ASK ABOUT THAT WHICH CAN BE EXPRESSED IN WORDS." Dhyana Master Ywan Jyan told him to investigate the topic, "An externalist asks about the Buddha." What does he ask? He wants to know that which cannot be expressed in words. He wasn't supposed to just listen to the topic, "An externalist asks about the Buddha." He was supposed to look at it from another angle: how would he answer him? But he couldn't use language to answer him.

THIS THE MASTER DID FOR THREE YEARS. Dhyana Master Yi Ching lived there for three years.

THEN MASTER JYAN ASKED HIM, "DO YOU STILL REMEMBER YOUR MEDITATION TOPIC?"

THE MASTER WAS READY TO COME UP WITH A REPLY. When asked that, he was thinking about how to answer and preparing to give a reply, WHEN MASTER JYAN PUT HIS HAND OVER THE MASTER'S MOUTH. Suddenly Master Jyan used his hand to cover up Master Yi Ching's mouth. What do you suppose he was doing, asking a question and then covering the Master's mouth with his hand? AT THAT INSTANT, THE MASTER BECAME ENLIGHTENED. Instantaneously, Dhyana Master Yi Ching understood and became awakened. Then he bowed to Master Ywan Jyan to express gratitude.

Then Master Jyan FURTHER QUESTIONED HIM, "HAVE YOU ACHIEVED A WONDERFUL MESHING WITH THE PROFOUND PURPORT?" You understand now. But have you truly realized the mysterious and wonderful principle?

THE MASTER ANSWERED, "EVEN IF I HAD, STILL I'D HAVE TO SPIT IT OUT. Even if I had genuinely meshed with the purport of Chan, still, I'd have to spit it out, and not keep it. Originally, there isn't a thing—so how could dust alight?" There isn't anything at all. Once you have understood this, then the ten thousand dharmas are not apart from your inherent nature. Therefore, we have the saying, "When not even a single thought arises, the entire substance manifests." Originally it was like this. However, "When the six sense organs move, there is a covering of clouds." At the place of absolutely not engaging in any thought, you can perceive your inherent nature. At that moment, your Buddhature manifests. However, when the six sense organs move--when your eyes wish to look, your ears want to hear, your nose wants to smell, your tongue wants to taste flavors, your body wishes to experience sensations, and your mind entertains some kind of a notion--then you are covered over by clouds. It's that wonderful. And so we say, "When not even a single thought arises, the entire substance manifests. When the six sense organs move, there is a covering of clouds."

Anyone who manages not to give rise to a single thought can obtain the true Buddhadharma. Anyone who lets his eyes take over, or lets his ears listen to sounds, his nose smell odors, his tongue taste flavors, his body experience sensations, and his mind grasp at dharmas--such a one is covered over by clouds. For example, if you engage in too much talking, you use up your gasoline. You end up expending too much of your resources.

That's why Dharma Master Yi Ching said, "Even if I had it, still I'd have to spit it out." This means even if he were engaging in a single thought he'd still have to clean it up—he would have to cast it out and get rid of it.

ANOTHER THREE YEARS PASSED. He stayed there for another three years. MASTER JYAN CONTINUALLY INSTRUCTED HIM WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF MASTER DUNG SHAN. He often talked to him about the doctrines and the methods of cultivation taught by Dhyana Master Dung Shan who founded the Tsau Dung sect. THE MASTER ALWAYS ACHIEVED A WONDERFUL INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THEM. The doctrines of Master Dung Shan were very profound and ultimate, and Dhyana Master Yi Ching was able to grasp them fully. He understood whatever he was told.

THE MASTER, Ywan Jyan, FURTHER SHOWED HIM THE SUMMIT-MARK OF DHYANA MASTER TAI YANG, AND TOLD HIM, "YOU SHOULD REPRESENT ME IN PERPETUATING THE REPUTE OF THE TSAU DUNG SECT. DO NOT LINGER IN THIS AREA ANY MORE. You should further propagate the Dung Shan doctrines on my behalf. Don't stay here anymore. You should travel outside to propagate the Buddhadharma."

SUBSEQUENTLY THE MASTER WENT TO TOU DZ, AND LATER MOVED TO HAI HWEI (SEA-LIKE ASSEMBLY) MONASTERY. He first moved to the area of Tou Dz, and afterwards to Hai Hwei Monastery. BESIDE KEEPING HIS RAG ROBE AND ROUGH HEMP QUILT WITH HIM, HE NEVER HOARDED ANY OTHER PERSONAL BELONGINGS. He wore a tattered robe, or a coarse robe that was woven from hemp. He did not have anything that was made of silk. And he did not store up any nice belongings or valuables. Personal belongings means especially valuable items, or things that one was very fond of. He did not want anything.

IN THE FIFTH MONTH OF THE CYCLICAL YEAR KWEI HAI (c. 1078), DURING THE YWAN FENG REIGN OF THE SUNG EMPEROR SHEN DZUNG, THE MASTER WENT INTO THE DHARMA HALL, WROTE OUT A VERSE, AND ENTERED THE STILLNESS. After he composed a verse, he passed away. FIVE-COLORED SHARIRA WERE OBTAINED AFTER THE CREMATION, The relics that were found after his body was cremated had five hues. HIS REMAINS WERE BURIED AT SAN FENG (THREE SUMMIT) TEMPLE.

A VERSE IN PRAISE SAYS:

HIS TEACHER DREAMT OF A BLUE FALCON. / Dhyana Master Ywan Jyan had a dream about a blue falcon.

FROM BIRTH THE MASTER HAD REMARKABLY FINE FEATURES. / From birth he had the air of an immortal. His entire physiognomy and bone structure revealed the makings of a Dharma vessel.

HE KICKED OVER FU SHAN. / He went to Fu Shan to have a talk with Dhyana Master Ywan Jyan.

AND OVERCAME THE COMMAND OF MASTER TAI YANG. / He even overshadowed the ordinances of Dhyana Master Tai Yang.

HIS TONGUE ROLLED UP WIND AND THUNDER. / He was as loud and resonant as a thunderclap when he spoke the Dharma. There was tremendous movement connected with his speaking.

COMMON MORTALS AND SAGES ARE TOGETHER SMELTED AND REFINED. / He forged sages out of ordinary individuals.

THE SPRING SUN DAWNS ON YING YANG. / The manner of his Way, his entire style, was extremely lofty.

HIS SONG REVERBERATES THROUGHOUT SYIN FENG. / At Syin Feng, he also maintained a very lofty style. Most people could not compare with him.

ANOTHER VERSE SAYS:

HE PASSED AN EXAM ON THE SUTRAS AND ENTERED THE DOOR OF EMPTINESS. / He passed the exam on the Sutras, and was "crossed over." What does that mean? It means he entered the door of emptiness, left the home-life, and became a monk. Within this door, there isn't anything. Not a single dharma is set up, and the myriad thoughts are all empty. For this reason it is called the door of emptiness.

"JUST THIS IS THE MIND'S INHERENT NATURE" AND HE ENLIGHTENED TO TRUE PRINCIPLE. / Right in our own mind is the Buddhanature. By understanding the mind and preceiving the nature, one enlightens to the true doctrine.

"AN EXTERNALIST ASKS ABOUT THE BUDDHA—THAT WHICH CANNOT BE EXPRESSED IN WORDS." / Dhyana Master Ywan Jyan told him to look into this meditation topic. To look into means to investigate an externalist's asking about the Buddha. However, he could not use language to formulate it or describe it.

A BRIGHT LIGHT ILLUMINED HIS INNER CLARITY: HE TRIED TO SPEAK, BUT HIS MOUTH WAS COVERED UP. / "Inner Clarity" means inner sagehood, that is, great wisdom-light. That his mouth was covered up means nothing can be said. For this reason, Dhyana Master Ywan Jyan covered up the Master's mouth. Once you open your mouth and speak, you've made a mistake. Anything that falls under the scope of words is not the actual meaning. It is not true. Therefore, first the mouth had to be covered up, before he was allowed to speak.

THE LOFTY AIRS OF THE TSAU DUNG ARE LIKE THE SPRING SUN SHINING EVERYWHERE. / This kind of virtue was obtained by everyone.

THE DHARMA RAIN OF FU SHAN FALLS, AND THICK DEW DROPS FORM ON THE FLOWERS. / The Dharma words spoken by the Buddha are especially pure.

TRANSCEND THE COMMON AND ENTER SAGEHOOD; LEAVE ATTACHMENT. / Transcend the attachments of common people. Common people are attached to such notions as, "This body is mine." They become attached, scheming for benefits of the "self." People will only do something if it is of personal advantage to them. If something is of harm to them, they won't do it. They are attached to their reputation, or their position, or their power, or their status--in fact, everything connected with themselves. Basically, people need not become attached to any of these things. However, common people are attached. Once they become attached, they are no longer free. They get more and more attached until they become stuck. If they are attached to emotion, they are stuck to emotion, If they are attached to love, they are stuck to love. Whatever they are attached to, they become stuck to that thing. If you wish to separate from these attachments, you have to be without attachment towards anything. You should have the attitude, "Everything's okay, no problem." That's separating from all attachment. If someone can really embody this attitude, "Everything's okay, no problem," then even if people scold him, there will be no problem. Even if they hit him, or kill him, still there's no problem.

The nature is like empty space,

*The true and false are contained within it.
Once you enlighten to the original substance,
With a single penetration, every thing is penetrated.*

If you experience a single breakthrough, you can break through everything.

If you are attached to this thing, you will have this kind of affliction. If you are attached to that, you will have that kind of affliction. If you are attached to fame, you will have the afflictions connected with fame. When you fail to get a good name, you will become upset. Even if you get a name, you are afraid of losing it. If you are attached to benefit, then you will have the afflictions connected with obtaining benefits. Before getting it, you worry over not getting it; having obtained it, you worry over losing it. Wouldn't you say that was a lot of trouble? From morning to night you addle your brains trying to protect yourself--protecting your name, your position, your authority, protecting everything you have. Even to the point that if one uses drugs, one schemes about ways to hide one's stash. If one is concerned about getting benefit for one's family, one goes so far as to engage in killing and arson, or become an opportunist, all for the sake of one's attachments, all because one is unable to separate from them.

ROAM EVERYWHERE, CAREFREE AND HAPPY, PUT AN END TO LANGUAGE AND WORDS. If you can separate from your attachments, then you are happy and carefree to roam everywhere. Language and words perish. There's nothing to say--everything is finished. From the moment of birth all the way until death, you have been so intently attached to east, west, north, south, the four intermediary directions, above, and below. However, at the time of death, there's nothing. You have to put it all down. That being the case, why do you have to wait until death before you put down these things? If you could do it when you are alive, wouldn't that be much better?

Someone protests, "Won't I become bereft of everything?" Well, what use are all your attachments anyway? When death comes, you lose your wisdom, you lose your energy and spirit. You only manage to make yourself stupid, so that you fare worse life after life. Because of your greed for wealth, sex, fame, food, and sleep, you harm yourself. You fall more day by day, and become increasingly stupid and ignorant. What's it all for, anyway?

If you can be without attachment, then your basic wisdom will manifest. Your memory will improve, you will become intelligent, and you won't fall. Take a look at horses, cows, sheep, chickens, pigs, and so forth. They are more stupid than human beings. Although they seem to understand a little, their wisdom is far inferior to that of people's. Why is that? It's because they used up too much of their gasoline.