

# ZEN'S CHINESE HERITAGE

## The Masters and Their Teachings

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Foreword by Reb Anderson

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Once a monk asked, "Without a teacher, is there still a place for the body to manifest or not?"

Yantou said, "Before the sound, an old ragged thief."

The monk said, "When he grandly arrives, then what?"

Yantou said, "Pokes out the eye."

A monk asked, "What is the meaning of the ancestor's coming from the west?"

Yantou said, "When you move Mt. Lu to this place, I'll tell you."

Once, Jiashan sent a monk to Shishuang's temple. The monk then stood straddling the gate and said, "I don't understand!"

Shishuang said, "Your Reverence, there's no need."

The monk then said, "In that case, I'll say farewell."

The monk then went to Yantou's temple.

Acting as before, he said, "I don't understand."

Yantou gave out a great roar.

The monk said, "In that case, I'll say farewell."

Yantou said, "Although he's young, he's capable."

The monk went back and reported to Jiashan.

Jiashan entered the hall and said to the monks, "Will the monk who yesterday came back from Shishuang's and Yantou's places please come forward and tell the story as he did before?"

The monk came forward and told his story.

Jiashan said, "Does anyone in the congregation understand this?"

The assembly was silent.

Jiashan said, "If no one will speak, then I'm not afraid to risk losing my eyebrows by doing so!"<sup>123</sup>

Then Jiashan said, "Although Shishuang has the knife that kills, he doesn't have the sword that gives life. Yantou has the knife that kills as well as the sword that gives life!"

During the chaos at the end of the Tang dynasty, bandits were to be found everywhere. The congregation all left the temple to hide in the forest. Yantou alone stayed at the temple, where he sat in meditation. One day, the head of the

bandits came to the temple. Enraged because there was no booty there, he brandished his knife and stabbed Yantou. Yantou remained composed, then let out a resounding scream and died. The sound was heard for ten miles around. It was the eighth day of the fourth month of [the year 887]. His disciples cremated the master's remains and recovered forty-nine relics. They then constructed his stupa. He received the posthumous name "Zen Master Clear Severity."

## GUIFENG ZONGMI



GUIFENG ZONGMI (780–841) is remembered as the disciple of the Sichuan school Zen master Suizhou Daoyuan. However, Zen history also regards him to belong to the Heze Zen school of Heze Shenhui. He is widely respected as the leading Buddhist scholar of the late eighth and early ninth

centuries. He possessed an intimate understanding of various Buddhist schools and doctrines, and made important contributions to the advancement of Buddhism in China. He was also the fifth ancestor of the Buddhist Huayan school, which based its teachings on the Huayan ("Flower Garland") Sutra.

Guifeng came from ancient Guozhou (now the city of Xichong in Sichuan Province). In the year 807, when Guifeng was already twenty-seven, he happened to pass through Suizhou during a trip to the capital city of Luoyang. There he listened to a lecture by Zen master Daoyuan that profoundly affected him, leading him to enter that teacher's congregation and receive ordination. Later, at Daoyuan's urging, he went to study under Daoyuan's teacher Nanyin, another master of the Sichuan Zen school. During the next decade, Guifeng studied under other teachers, including a Huayan master named Chengyuan.

Guifeng then spent several years practicing on Mt. Zhongnan near the western capital, Changan. During this period he completed a famous commentary on the *Perfect Enlightenment Sutra* and other works. Later he moved to Gui Peak, to the south of his former residence, where he devoted himself to teaching, Zen meditation, and the chanting of sutras. Guifeng's reputation as a Zen master spread widely during this time. In the year 828, the emperor invited him to the capital and bestowed on him the honorific purple robe. During Guifeng's extended stay in the capital he received several famous statesmen and poets as his students, including Peixiu, a high official who later composed a famous treatise

known as the *Chuanxin Fayao* [Essential Dharma on the Transmissi Mind]. Later, Guifeng returned to his mountain retreat.

Guifeng's writings included commentaries on several Buddhist scriptures including the *Huayan*, the *Perfect Enlightenment*, and the *Diamond Sutra*. He also wrote a treatise on the *Ullambala Sutra*, an apocryphal work that is the basis for the Hungry Ghosts Festival observed in East Asia. In that treatise Guifeng discussed Chinese ancestor worship and filial behavior from a Buddhist perspective.

During Guifeng's era, Zen Buddhism suffered disputes between its various schools. The main arguments centered on the well-known division between "Northern" and "Southern" Zen. Guifeng compiled a collection of teachings from all the Zen schools into one text known as *The Complete Compilation of the Sources of Zen*. This collection may have been Chinese Zen's earliest historical survey. The text was broadly read, and helped to cement the religion into the foundation of Chinese culture as a unified movement. The body of the text is now lost, although its introduction still exists. Guifeng also compiled extensive genealogies and lineage charts of the various Zen schools.

Guifeng disdained the sectarianism between Zen schools of his age. He claimed to regard the division between the Northern "gradualist" and Southern "sudden" viewpoints as fundamentally artificial. He was impatient with the extreme teaching methods that he felt resulted from overemphasis on "sudden" teaching methods. He thus especially criticized the Hongzhou School of Mazu and its descendants, disdaining some teachers' repudiation of established Buddhist practices.<sup>124</sup>

What follows is an excerpt from the introduction to *The Complete Compilation of the Sources of Zen*.

*Chan* is an Indian word. It comes from the complete word *chan na* [in Sanskrit, *dhyana*]. Here, we say that this word means "the practice of mind" or "quiet contemplation." These meanings can all be put under the title of "meditation." The source of Zen is the true enlightened nature of all beings, which is also called "buddha nature," or "mind-ground." Enlightenment is called "wisdom." Practice is called "meditation." "Chan" is the unity of these two terms.

This nature is the fundamental source of Zen. The ancients called it "Zen's source," or "chan na," or "The practice of principle." This fundamental source is the Zen principle. When one forgets the passions and meets this principle, then that is Zen practice, which is what the ancients called the "practice of principle." Of course, now authors from the various Zen schools all write much

about the Zen principle, but very little about Zen practice. For this reason I have entitled this book, "*The Sources of Zen*."

In these times there are people who have seen that true nature is Zen, but they have not attained the practice of principle, and moreover they don't understand the meaning of these Chinese and Indian sounds.

There is a Zen body that is not separate from true nature. Yet living beings are confused about the truth and are caught up in the world. This is known as "distraction." When the world is left behind and one unites with truth, this is "Zen meditation."

If we speak directly about "fundamental nature," then there is no "truth" and no "delusion," no "leaving behind" and no "uniting with," no "meditation" and no "dissipation." So what is it that we call "Zen"?

Moreover, this true nature is not only the source of the Zen gate. It is also the source of the ten thousand things of the world. Thus, it is also called Dharma nature. It is also the source of the delusion and enlightenment of living beings, and is thus called [in the *Surangama Sutra*] the "Tathagatas' Storehouse Consciousness."<sup>125</sup> It is also the source of the ten thousand virtues of the buddhas, and thus it is called "buddha nature." It is also the source of the ten thousand practices of a bodhisattva, and thus is known as the "mind-ground." [In the *Brahma-Net Sutra*] it says, "It is the fundamental source of all buddhas; it is the foundation of the path of practicing bodhisattvas; and it is the source of all beings and all buddhas." These ten thousand practices do not go beyond the six *paramitas*.<sup>126</sup> Zen meditation is only one of the six *paramitas*. It is the fifth one. Yet, it can be said that anyone who witnesses true nature is practicing Zen. Moreover, the practice of Zen meditation is most sublime and mysterious, and it fosters an imperturbable wisdom upon its practitioner's nature. All of the sublime functions, the ten thousand practices, and the ten thousand virtues that lead to the pervasive spiritual light come forth from Zen meditation.

For this reason, persons of the three vehicles [Buddhists] who wish to follow the sacred path must all practice Zen. Aside from this there is no other entrance gate. Aside from this there is no other path, including the paths of calling out Buddha's name to gain birth in the Western Paradise, practicing the sixteen precepts, attaining samadhi by chanting Buddha's name, practicing the *pratyuppanna samadhi*, and so on.<sup>127</sup>

True nature has no pollution or purity, nor is there a difference between sacred and mundane. Zen schools that hold to ideas of "shallow" and "deep," various "stages" of practice, and so on, or who claim to have some mystical "strategy," or who practice while taking pleasure in what is above and despise-

ing what is down below, are practicing heretical Zen. If someone believes karma and practices with the idea of good and bad, then that is the Zen of ordinary people. Practicing for the sake of the partial truth of self-enlightenment is the way of Hinayana Zen. Practicing for the enlightenment of the self and all beings is the way of Mahayana Zen. (Within these four types of Zen, each has its own different type of form and emptiness.) If you instantly realize that your mind is fundamentally pure, that from the beginning there are no defilements and that you are fully endowed with an imperturbable wisdom, then you know that this mind is buddha mind, without any difference.

Practicing in this manner is the Zen of the highest vehicle, and it is known as the pure Zen of the Tathagatas, the Zen of one practice and three samadhis or the samadhi of true thusness.

Guifeng died in the year 841 while visiting Xingfuta Monastery to perform ordination ceremonies. His body was returned to Gui Peak for cremation and his remains were interred there. He received the posthumous name "Meditation Wisdom."



### Thirteenth Generation

NANYUAN HUIYONG XIYUAN SIMING ZIFU RUBAO

BAJIAO HUIQING TONGAN DAOPI HUGUO SHOUCHEG

YUNMEN WENYAN CUIYAN LINGCAN JINGQING DAOFU

TAIYUAN FU XUANSHA SHIBEI BAOFU CONGZHAN

CHANGQING HUILENG LUOSHAN DAOXIAN RUIYAN SHIYAN

### NANYUAN HUIYONG, "BAOYING"

NANYUAN HUIYONG (860–930) was a disciple of Xinghua Cunjiang. He came from ancient Hebei. Nanyuan was extremely strict and uncompromising in his approach to teaching Zen. He lived and taught at the "South Hall" (in Chinese, *Nanyuan*) of the Baoying Zen Monastery at Ruzhou. Nanyuan is the most important teacher of the third generation of the Linji school, and is a direct link in the lineage that stretches down to modern times.

Nanyuan entered the hall and said to the assembled monks, "On top of a lump of red flesh, a sheer precipice of 8,000 feet."

A monk asked, "'On top of a lump of red flesh, a sheer precipice of eight thousand feet.' Isn't this what you said?"

Nanyuan said, "It is."

The monk then lifted and turned over the meditation bench.

Nanyuan exclaimed, "This blind ass has run riot!"

The monk started to speak.

Nanyuan hit him.

Nanyuan asked a monk, "Where have you come from?"

The monk said, "From Longwater."

Nanyuan asked him, "Did it flow east or west?"

The monk said, "Neither way."

Nanyuan then asked, "What did it do?"

The monk bowed and began to leave.

Nanyuan hit him.