

## **CHAN: Cutting Off One Arm for Dharma**

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Good morning!

Patriarch Bodhidharma came to China to transmit Chan Dharma. He sit for nine years in Song mountain until Shenguang came.

Shenguang was born in Luoyang, Henan. It's said that when he was born, the room was shone by devine light, so he was named Guang. He widely read many books, especially books of Confucianism. He was not interested in running a family or establishing a business. Later, when he had access to Buddhist scriptures, he felt that the teachings of Confucius and Laozi, etiquette, skills, satire, norms, books of Zhuangzi and Zhouyi did not reach the wonderful supreme truth, while the wonderful Buddha Dharma was where his heart could reside. He was detached from what was going on in the world and he was happy and pleased with himself. Then, he left the family and went to Long Men Xiang Mountain and became a monk there. Later he took complete precepts in Yong Mu temple and after that, he traveled to lecture halls in different places and learned Mahayana Buddhism and Hinayana Buddhism. After many years of study, though Guang had enough knowledge on the scriptures, how to be free from birth and death was still a mystery. at 33 years old, he came back to Xiang Mountain and started to self-practice.

He meditated from the morning to evening and wanted to get out of the cycle of birth and death through meditation. After 8 years, one day, in meditation, Hui Ke saw an immortal in front of him and told him, "If you want to obtain fruit, do not stay here any longer. The great Dao is not far. You should go south!" Guang knew that the Guardian was instructing him, so he changed his name to Shengguang.

When he heard that Patriarch Bodhidharma was proficient in Buddha Dharma, he then went to visit him. However, Patriarch Bodhidharma simply ignored him and kept

meditating. Shenguang put the palms together; stood after him; took good care of him and followed him like a shadow.

After many years, one day, Shenguang stood outside of the cave as usual with palms joined, waiting. It's winter and it started to snow hard unexpectedly in the evening. Not long after, the snow covered his knees and it seemed that he wore a thick layer of snow blanket. Shenguang still had the palms joined together and stood still in the snow respectively. The next morning, Patriarch Bodhidharma came out of meditation. He walked out of the cave and asked, "You stood in the snow all night. What is it for?" Shenguang cried, "Master, please be compassionate. Please expound the sweet dew dharma and widely transform living beings." Patriarch Bodhidharma rebuked him sternly, "To pursue the Buddha's supreme wonderful Dharma needs countless kalpas' diligent cultivation. It needs many exercises of practicing what is difficult to practice and enduring what is difficult to endure. You only have little virtue and small wisdom. How could you reach the true Buddha fruit. You are wasting your time."

After hearing this, Shenguang took out a sharp knife and cut off the left arm momentarily without any hesitation. Blood splashed everywhere and the snow became red. Patriarch Bodhidharma was touched by his aspiration and felt that he could carry heavy missions. So Patriarch named him Hui Ke.

Hui Ke followed Bodhidharma and tried to understand buddhist doctrines days and nights. One day, he asked Patriarch, "Please teach me the Heart Dharma in Buddhism."

Patriarch said, "The Heart Dharma of all Buddhas could not be obtained from others."

Hui Ke said, "My heart cannot settle. Please help me settle my heart."

Patriarch Bodhidharma said, "Find your heart and I will settle it."

When hearing this, Hui Ke was stupefied for a long time and sighed, "Where is my heart? I cannot find it."

Patriarch said, "I have your heart settled."

One day, Patriarch Bodhidharma wanted to return to India. He said to his disciples, "I am leaving. Talk about what you have learned."

Dao Fu Chan Master said, "As I understand, we should neither stick to words, nor depart from words. Only in this way, could we become the Dharma container."

Patriarch said, "You get the fur of Buddha Dharma."

Zong Chi Master said, "Just like Ananda saw the Buddha land, after he saw it, there was no need to see it again."

Patriarch said, "You get the flesh and blood of Buddha Dharma."

Dao Yu Chan Master said, "The four elements are empty and the five skandhas actually do not exist. As I understand, there is no Dharma to obtain."

Patriarch said, "You get the bones and muscles of Buddha Dharma."

Then it's Hui Ke's turn. He stood up and walked two steps forward. He bowed at Patriarch's feet and stood there without one word.

Patriarch said, "You get the marrow of Buddha Dharma. The Buddha transmitted the Proper Dharma Eye-Treasury to Maha Kasyapa. After many generations, it came to me. Today, I transmit the Proper Dharma to you. Do your best and carry it forward."

Hui Ke became the second Patriarch of Chan Buddhism in China.

After Bodhidharma transmitted Dharma to Hui Ke, he passed away. While propagating Dharmas and transforming living beings, the second Patriarch Hui Ke was also looking for the person who he could bestow the Chan Dharma.

During the Northern Zhou Dynasty, Emperor Wu ordered to destroy Buddhism. During that time, to protect sutras, Patriarch Hui Ke hid in the worldly people and later went south to Si

Kong Mountain in Shu Zhou. While living there, he met Seng Can who at that time was in his 40s and had leprosy.

Seng Can came to worship Hui Ke. It maybe because he was seriously sick. The suffering made him feel that his hindrances and sin were deep and heavy and he must repent completely. So, he asked Patriarch Hui Ke, "I have leprosy. Please repent for me."

Patriarch Hui Ke said, "Give me your sin and I will repent for you."

Seng Can pondered for a long time and then answered, "I looked for it, but could not find."

Patriarch said, "Then I have repented all your sin. You should take refuge in the three jewels and live a monk's life."

Seng Can said, "I have seen you and knew what is a sangha. But I still don't understand the meaning of Buddha and Dharma."

Hui Ke Patriarch said, "The heart is the Buddha. The heart is the Dharma. Buddha and Dharma is not two, so is the Sangha. Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are all one heart. They share the same body, but have different names. They are not inside nor outside."

After Seng Can heard this, he understood right away and said joyfully, "Today I knew that sin is not outside, not inside and not in the middle either. Buddha and Dharma is no difference."

After Hui Ke heard what he said, he thought highly of him and said, "My treasure."

One day after two years, Patriarch Hui Ke told Seng Can, "Bodhidharma came far away from India and transmitted the Proper Dharma Eye-Treasury to me. Today, I bestow it upon you. You should protect it and never let it end. Listen to my verse:

Originally, there is ground in affinity.

In the ground, the seed grows and flowers bloom.

Originally, there isn't the seed;

And flowers never bloom either.

After he said the verse, Patriarch Hui Ke handed the Dharma robe to Seng Can and advised him, “You accept my teaching. It’s better to live in the deep mountains. It’s not time to give dharma talks yet because Buddha Dharma is in danger right now.”

According to historical records, after the 2ed Patriarch Hui Ke transmitted Chan Dharma to Seng Can, he went to Kuang Jiao Chan Temple in Ye Du. He paced up and down in the broken walls and sighed with all sorts of feelings. He restored the lectern and began to give Dharma talks. According to records, after Patriarch Hui Ke giving Dharma talks, all four kinds of people would take refuge in him. When he gave talks, flowers rained from the sky; lotus flowers came out from the ground; and all living beings from the hell realm, asura realm and ghost realm were also listening. When he gave talks, peasants stopped plowing; business men closed their stores; people came from thousands of miles away; and all the streets were empty. Patriarch Hui Ke stayed in Kuang Jiao Chan Temple for 34 years.

He also played in the world. Sometimes he hid his capabilities; wore random clothes; gave Dharma talks according to conditions. He entered various liquor stores, or visited the meat market, or chatted with people on streets; or followed those labors.

Someone once asked Patriarch Hui Ke, “You are a Master. Why did you do this?”

Patriarch Hui Ke answered, “I observe and adjust my heart. It’s not your business.”

Patriarch Hui Ke was good at debate. Though he did not intend to promote his Chan Dharma, more and more people knew his Chan Dharma.

When Patriarch Hui Ke became well known, his Dharma propagation became the target of those Buddhists who stucked to the written scriptures. At that time, there was a Master whose name was Bian He. He was talking about Nirvana Sutra in one temple. After his disciples listened to Hui Ke’s Dharma talks, they gradually left him and followed Hui Ke to

learn Chan Dharma. Bian He Master was angry and jealous. He prepared generous gifts and went to talk to the county magistrate whose name was Zhongkan Di. Magistrate Di rose from the ranks. He was a vicious person, cruel and fierce. He also liked money and good goods. He took bribes and bent the law, but he also liked to pretend to be a nice person and sometimes came to the temple to listen to Dharma talks. Bian He Master knew him well. Bianhe master slandered Hui Ke in front of Magistrate Di. He said that Hui Ke was spreading fallacies to mislead people. The magistrate believed what Bian He Master said and persecuted Hui Ke illegally.

Magistrate Di sent people to capture Patriarch Hui Ke and asked him, "They say you are a demon. Is this true? Patriarch Hui Ke answered, "Yes." He then asked, "You are confusing people. Is it correct?" Patriarch Hui Ke answered, "Yes."

Later, Patriarch Hui Ke's head was chopped off. He died at 107 years old.

People felt surprised and wondered how could the 2ed Patriarch be killed by the county magistrate? The reason was that that was Patriarch Hui Ke's life debt.

This is the story of the 2ed Patriarch Hui Ke. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> Patriarchs are Seng Can, Dao Xin, Hong Ren. Next week, we will focus on the 6<sup>th</sup> Patriarch, Hui Neng. We will see how Chan Dharma was transmitted to Hui Neng.

Thank you for listening!