

# CHINESE ZEN MASTERS

## Lecture 6: Founding Patriarchs of Guiyang and Master Wei Chueh of Chung Tai

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In lecture 4 and 5 we introduced important Chan masters that culminated in the Linji (Rinzai in Japanese) House and the Caodong (j. Soto) House. We now introduce the founding masters of the Guiyang House, Masters Guishan and Yangshan.

There really is no time nor space to introduce the remaining two Houses, Fayan and Yumen, as originally planned. That will have to wait for the future. Being the last lecture in this series, we think it is fitting to introduce a modern master, the founder of Chung Tai Chan Monastery of Taiwan, Venerable Wei Chueh, and share some stories of his teaching. These are actual experiences collected from his disciples within the past ten years.

### Founding Patriarchs of the Guiyang House

#### 1 Master Guishan Lingyou (771-853) 為山靈祐 The Master of Mt. Gui

Chan Master Guishan Lingyou was a disciple of Baizhang, whose other eminent disciple, Huangbo and his descendent Linji, were responsible for the Linji House.

The name Guiyang House is taken from the names of Guishan and his disciple Yangshan. Their many dialogues during daily chores illustrate the gentle master-disciple-friends style of teaching, in contrast to the fervent, energetic, and often physical methods employed by Huangbo and Linji. If the Linji style is like the thunderstorm and lightning bolts that shatters delusions, then the Guiyang style is like the spring breeze that makes the flowers bloom. However, even a spring breeze can shake up quite a bit the grass which do not have firm roots!

Guiyang House is actually the first of the five Houses to be formed. During the end of the Tang Dynasty and the following Five Dynasties period (907-960), the Guiyang House flourished with many well known masters. But it gradually died out during the ensuing Sung Dynasty (960-1279).

Master Guishan's connection with Mt. Gui (where he gets his name) is a Chan classic, and he stayed there for forty years. During the last part of his life, Tang was plagued with corruption and a weak government, and the famous Huichang Persecution of Buddhism (841-846) by emperor Wuzong resulted in massive destruction of Buddhist monasteries, crippled development of Buddhist schools (except for Chan), and ended the golden age of Buddhism in China. During that time Guishan was forced into laity and in hiding.

At 83, Master Guishan sat in the lotus position and peacefully passed away. He had been a monk for 64 years.

### **The Sparkle Within**

Guishan Lingyou was 23 when he went to Jiangxie Province and visited Master Baizhang. He immediately became one of the leading disciples. Once when Guishan was attending Baizhang, Baizhang asked, “Who is it?”

“It’s me.”

“Go poke the furnace and see if there is any fire remaining.”

Lingyou poked the furnace and said, “There is no more fire.”

Master Baizhang got up himself, poked the ashes carefully and found some sparks of fire. He showed it to Lingyou and said, “And you say there is nothing there?”

Right then Lingyou had an awakening and told the master his realization. Baizhang said, “This is just a brief detour. The sutra says, ‘To know the meaning of the Buddha nature, the time and condition must be right.’ When the time is right, one is awakened suddenly from his delusions; it is also like one who suddenly remembers something that he has forgotten. Then we know what is originally ours and it doesn’t come from outside. Therefore the patriarchs say, ‘After awakening, it is the same as before awakening; there is no mind and no dharmas.’ It means then there are no thoughts of delusion and (the false) discrimination of the ordinary and the holy. Now that you understand it, guard and uphold it well. (That is, constantly be mindful of this understanding.)”

### **The Master of Mt. Gui**

A traveling monk Sima came from Hunan, and told master Baizhang, “I just discovered a mountain in Hunan named Great Gui, it is a place suitable for a master of 1500 disciples.”

Baizhang said, “Can I live there?”

“No, it is not for you.”

“Why not?”

“You are a ‘bone’ master, it is a ‘flesh’ mountain. If you go, you won’t have more than 1000 disciples.”

“Then is there someone among my Sangha who can preside over there?”

“Let me examine them.”

Master Baizhang sent for the head monk Hualin, and asked Sima, “How about him?”

Sima asked Hualin to make a cough, and to walk a few steps, and then said, “No, he is not the one.”

Baizhang then sent for Lingyou, who was the chef monk at that time. As soon as Sima saw Lingyou, he said, “This is the Master of Guishan (Mt. Gui).”

That evening Baizhang called Lingyou into his quarters and told him, “My karma connections are here. Guishan is a great place for you, go there, continue our lineage and liberate many to come.”

Hualin said, “I am the head monk, how come the chef monk gets to be the abbot?”

Master Baizhang said, “If you can say something extraordinary, then you can be the abbot.” He then pointed to the pure-bottle (water bottle) and said, “You can’t call it a pure-bottle, what can you call it?”

Hualin replied, “You can’t call it a wooden bolt.”

Baizhang asked Lingyou the same question, Lingyou kicked over the pure-bottle and walked out. Baizhang laughed and said, “The head monk lost to the chef monk.” Lingyou then headed for Guishan.

Guishan turned out to be very high and steep, with no people living there. Lingyou lived among apes and monkeys and feasted on acorns and chestnuts for several year without a single visitor. He thought to himself, “I came here to start a monastery in order to benefit people. If there is nobody here, I’m only benefiting myself.” He then deserted his hut and headed out. When he was almost out of the mountain, he saw snakes, tigers, wolves, and panthers all blocking the road. He told them, “You guys don’t need to block the road. If my karma connection is with this mountain here, then you can all disperse. If not, I’ll keep on walking and you can eat me if you wish.” With these words all the animals dispersed, and Lingyou returned to his hut. Within a year, another disciple of Baizhang, Daan, came with several monks to assist Lingyou. Daan said, “I come to be your cook. Whenever you have five hundred disciples, then I’ll stop cooking and you let me go.” The residents below the mountain gradually knew about them, and built a monastery together. A general Lee Jingrang asked the emperor to grant the name Tongqing Monastery, the prime minister Pei Xiu came to ask about the profound teachings from the master, and so Master Guishan became well known and attracted Zen practitioners throughout China.

為山靈祐年二十三遊江西，參百丈，丈一見，許之入室，遂居參學之首。侍立次，丈問：「誰？」師曰：「某甲。」丈曰：「汝撥爐中有火否？」師撥之曰：「無火。」丈躬起深撥得少火，舉以示之曰：「汝道無這個呢！」師由是發悟，禮謝陳其所解。丈曰：「此乃暫時歧路耳。經云：欲識佛性義，當觀時節因緣。時節既至，如迷忽悟，如忘忽憶，方省己物不從他得。故祖師云：悟了同未悟，無心亦無法。祇是無虛妄凡聖等心，本來心法元自備足。汝今既爾，善自護持。」司馬頭陀自湖南來，謂丈曰：「頃在湖南尋得一山，名大為，是一千五百人善知識所居之處。」丈曰：「老僧住得否？」陀曰：「非和尚所居。」丈曰：「何也？」陀曰：「和尚是骨人，彼是肉山。設居徒不盈千。」丈曰：「吾眾中莫有人住得否？」陀曰：「待歷觀之。」時華林覺為第一座，丈令侍者請至。問曰：「此人如何？」陀請警欵一聲，行數步。陀曰：「不可。」丈又令喚師，師時為典座。陀一見乃曰：「此正是為山主人也。」丈是夜召師入室，囑曰：「吾化緣在此。為山勝境，汝當居之，嗣續吾宗，廣度後學。」華林曰：「某甲忝居上首，典座何得住持？」丈曰：「若能對眾下得一語出格，當與住持。」即指淨瓶問曰：「不得喚作淨瓶，汝喚作甚麼？」林曰：「不可喚作木栓也。」丈乃問師，師踢倒淨瓶便出去。丈笑曰：「第一座輸卻山子也。」師遂往焉。為山峭絕，竟無人煙。猿獠為伍，橡栗充食。經于五七載，絕無來者。師自念言，我本住持，為利益於人，既絕往還，自善何濟？即捨庵而欲他往。行至山口，見蛇虎狼豹，交橫在路。師曰：「汝等諸獸，不用攔吾行路。吾若於此山有緣，汝等各自散去。吾若無緣，汝等不用動。吾從路過，一任汝喫。」言訖，蟲虎四散而去。師乃回庵。未及一載，安上座〔即懶安也〕同數僧從百丈來，輔佐於師。安曰：「某與和尚作典座，待僧及五百人，不論時節即不造粥，便放某甲下。」自後山下居民，稍稍知之，率眾共營梵宇。連帥李景讓奏號同慶寺，相國裴公休嘗咨玄奧，繇是天下禪學輻輳焉。

### Why Did You Come?

Master Guishan Lingyou one day called the temple director. When he came the master said, “I called for the temple director, why did you come?”

The director had no reply.

The master then asked the attendant to get the head monk. When he came, the master said, “I called for the head monk, why did you come?”

The head monk also had no reply.

師一日喚院主，主便來。師曰：「我喚院主，汝來作甚麼？」主無對。又令侍者喚第一座，座便至。師曰：「我喚第一座，汝來作甚麼？」座亦無對。

### **All Things At Once**

Yangshan asked, “What do you do when a million things all come at once?”

The master replied, “What is blue is not yellow; what is long is not short. All things have their places, they do not affect me.” Yangshan prostrated to the master.

仰山問：「百千萬境一時來，作麼生？」師云：「青不是黃，長不是短，諸法各住自位，非干我事。」仰乃作禮。

### **Dream Interpretation**

The master just awoke from a sleep. Yangshan came in and bowed. The master arose and said, “I just had a dream, why don’t you try to interpret it for me.”

Yangshan went to get a basin of water for the master to wash his face. A little while later, Xiangyang also came in and bowed to the master. The master said, “I just had a dream, and Yangshan interpreted it for me. Why don’t you interpret for me also.” Xiangyang went and brought the master a cup of tea.

The master said, “You two’s understanding is better than Shariputra’s.”

師睡次，仰山問訊。師起曰：「我適來得一夢，你試為我原看。」仰取一盆水，與師洗面。少頃，香嚴亦來問訊。師曰：「我適來得一夢，寂子為我原了，汝更與我原看。」嚴乃點一碗茶來。師曰：「二子見解，過於鶩子。」

### **The Luminous Mind**

Master Guishan asked Yangshan, “(The Shurangama Sutra mentions that) the mind is profound, pure, and luminous, how do you see it?”

Yangshan said, “The mountains, rivers, earth, sun, moon, and the stars.”

“You only described phenomena.”

“What did the master ask?”

“The mind that is profound, pure, and luminous.”

“Can you call those ‘only phenomena?’”

“So it is! So it is!”

師問仰山：「妙淨明心，汝作麼生會？」仰曰：「山河大地，日月星辰。」師曰：「汝祇得其事。」仰曰：「和尚適來問甚麼？」師曰：「妙淨明心。」仰曰：「喚作事得麼？」師曰：「如是！如是！」

### **Proficiency and Skill**

Master Guishan asked Yangshan, “Of the 84 eminent disciples of Master Mazu, how many have achieved great proficiency, and how many have achieved great skillfulness?”

Yangshan said, “Baizhang achieved great proficiency, and Huangbo achieved great

skillfulness. The rest were just competent teachers.”

“So it is, so it is.”

為山問仰山：「百丈再參馬祖因緣〔三日耳聲〕，此二尊宿意旨如何？」仰云：「此是顯大機大用。」為云：「馬祖出八十四人善知識，幾人得大機，幾人得大用？」仰云：「百丈得大機，黃檗得大用，餘者盡是唱導之師。」為云：「如是，如是。」

### **Carrying Excrement**

A monk asked, “What is the Way?”

The master said, “No-mind is the Way.”

“I do not comprehend.”

“Just get that which does not comprehend!”

“What is that which does not comprehend?”

“Just you, nobody else.” And the master continued, “Now, people, just directly take that which does not comprehend, that is exactly your mind, that is exactly the Buddha in you. If one takes a little bit of external knowledge to be the Way of Chan, he would be completely off, he is bringing in excrement, not taking out excrement, and that contaminates your mind. That is not the Way.”

僧問：「如何是道？」師曰：「無心是道。」曰：「某甲不會。」師曰：「會取不會底好！」曰：「如何是不會底？」師曰：「祇汝是，不是別人。」復曰：「今時人但直下體取不會底，正是汝心，正是汝佛。若向外得一知一解，將為禪道，且沒交涉。名運糞入，不名運糞出，汙汝心田。所以道不是道。」

### **Cultivation After Enlightenment**

A monk asked, “Does someone who has achieved sudden enlightenment need to continue with cultivation?”

The master said, “If one really is enlightened to the original nature, he will know himself; to cultivate or not to cultivate are dualistic terms. Now even though the original mind is realized through (appropriate) conditions, so that in one single thought one suddenly awakens to the fundamental principle, there are still eons of karmic habits since beginningless time that cannot be immediately purified. He should cleanse out the existing karma and streaming consciousness; that is the cultivation. There are no other goals or achievements to cultivate for.

From listening (to the Dharma) one deeply understands the profound principle, so that the mind is complete and luminous with no more delusions. Even if thousands of wonderful insights come and go, these are like having gained a seat and putting on a robe, you still need to know what to do for the remainder of the path. Essentially, standing on the ground of truth, one takes in not one speck of dust; walking through all gates of liberation, not one method is rejected. If one cuts through directly with a broadsword, severing all that is mundane and sacred, manifesting the essence that is truly eternal, with the principle and the phenomena as one, that is to be the Buddha of Suchness.”

僧問：「頓悟之人更有修否？」師曰：「若真悟得本，他自知時，修與不修是兩頭語。如今初心雖從緣得，一念頓悟自理，猶有無始曠劫習氣未能頓淨，須教渠淨除現業流識，即是修也。不可別有法，教渠修行趣向。從聞入理，聞理深妙，心自圓明，不居惑地。縱有百千妙義，抑揚當時，此乃得坐披衣，自解作活計，始得。」

以要言之，則實際理地，不受一塵，萬行門中，不捨一法。若也單刀直入，則凡聖情盡，體露真常，理事不二，即如如佛。」

## 2 Master Yangshan Huiji (807-883) 仰山慧寂 Shakyamuni Junior

Master Yangshan was from the Guangdong (Canton) Province in southern China. He wanted to become a monk at 15, but his parents would not give permission. Two years later, he demonstrated his resolve by cutting off two of his fingers, knelt in front of his parents, and vowed to seek the true Dharma to repay his filial obligations. His parents finally agreed.

He first studied with the heir of National Teacher Huizhong, where he had his first great insight, and then with Master Guishan, where he attained enlightenment. He stayed with Guishan for 15 years, and then started his own monastery at Mt. Yang, which he was known for. A few years before Yangshan passed away, he composed this verse:

*Completing seventy-seven years,  
Today I'm gone with old age.  
Floating and sinking with nature,  
Holding bent knees with my hands.  
And that's exactly how he died at 77.*

### **Circular Forms**

Yangshan first practiced under Master Danyuan, where he had gained insight to the profound principle. Danyuan told Yangshan, “The National Teacher (Huizhong, Danyuan’s master) received the teaching of 97 Circular Forms from the Sixth Patriarch Huineng, and transmitted it to me. Then he said, ‘Thirty years after I’m gone, a shramanera (novice monk) from the south will come, and widely spread this teaching. Continue this teaching and don’t let the lineage end.’ Now I transmit it to you, you shall uphold it well.” So he gave the manuscript to Yangshan. Yangshan examined it once, and burned the manuscript. One day Danyuan reminded him, “You should treasure those forms from a while ago.”

Yangshan said, “After I saw them I burned the book.”

“Nobody understands this teaching, except the past Master (Huineng), the ancient patriarchs, and the saints of the world. How could you burn it?”

“I read it once and understood their meanings. What is important is to apply them but one should not get attached to the forms.”

“Even though you may be able to do it, but the future generation may not have enough faith.”

“If the master wants, it is not hard to reproduce it.” So Yangshan made another copy and turned it in, without leaving out anything. Danyuan said, “Fine.”

初謁耽源（慧忠國師嗣），已悟玄旨，耽源謂師曰：「國師當時傳得六代祖師圓相，共九十七個，授與老僧。乃曰：『吾滅後三十年，南方有一沙彌到來，大興此教，次第傳受，無令斷絕。』我今付汝，汝當奉持。」遂將其本過與師。師接得一覽，便將火燒卻。耽源一日問：「前來諸相，甚宜秘惜。」師曰：「當時看了便燒卻也。」源曰：「吾此法門無人能會，唯先師及諸祖師、諸大聖人方可委悉，子何得焚之？」師曰：「慧寂一覽，

已知其意。但用得不可執本也。」源曰：「然雖如此，於子即得，後人信之不及。」師曰：「和尚若要重錄不難。」即重集一本呈上，更無遺失。源曰：「然。」

### **A Novice With A Master**

Yangshan came to learn from Master Guishan. The master asked, “Are you a shramanera (novice monk) with a master, or one without a master?”

Yangshan replied, “One with a master.”

“Where is your master?”

Yangshan walked from the west end of the room to the east end. Guishan thought he was someone special.

Yangshan then asked the master, “Where does the true Buddha reside?”

The master replied, “Use the profound thought of no-thought, reflect on the infinite spiritual flame, return to the source that lies beyond thought, where form and nature are eternal, phenomena and principle are not two, and the true Buddha is suchness.”

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師隨為山遊山，到磐陀石上坐。師侍立次，忽鴉銜一红柿落在面前。為拾與師，師接得洗了度與為。為曰：「子甚處得來？」師曰：「此是和尚道德所感。」為曰：「汝也不得無分。」即分半與師。

### **Return to Truth**

Yangshan was herding the cattle in front of Mt. Gui, when he saw a monk going up the mountain (to visit Master Guishan), but came back down after a little while. So he asked the monk, “Venerable, why don’t you stay in the mountain (monastery)?”

The monk said, “Our karma do not accord with each other.”

“What happened? Tell me about it.”

“The master asked what my name was. I said, ‘Guizhen (‘return to truth.’)’ The master asked, “Where is Guizhen (where is the truth to return to)?” and I had no reply.”

Yangshan said, “Venerable, go back to the master, and say that you have an answer. If the master asks, ‘What is it?’ then you say, ‘in the eye, in the ear, in the nose.’”

The monk went back and replied as he was told. Guishan said, “You bluffing charlatan, this is an answer from a master of 500 disciples.”

師在為山前坡牧牛次，見一僧上山，不久便下來。師乃問：「上座何不且留山中？」僧曰：「祇為因緣不契。」師曰：「有何因緣，試舉看。」曰：「和尚問某名甚麼，某答歸真和尚。曰：歸真何在？某甲無對。」師曰：「上座卻回向和尚道，某甲道得也。和尚問『作麼生道』，但曰眼裡耳裡鼻裡。」僧回一如所教。為曰：「脫空謾語漢，此是五百人善知識語。」

### **Bodhisattva Cow**

Guishan and Yangshan were herding cattle. Guishan asked, “Is there a bodhisattva among them?”

Yangshan replied, “Yes.”

“Which one is it? Show me.”

“Which one does the master think is not, show me.”

Guishan quit.

為山同師牧牛次，為曰：「此中還有菩薩也無？」師曰：「有。」為曰：「汝見那個是，試指出看。」師曰：「和尚疑那個不是，試指出看？」為便休。

### **There Is No Buddha Nature**

Master, Yanguan lectured, “All sentient beings have the Buddha nature.” But once Guishan lectured, “All sentient beings have no Buddha nature.” Two monks came from Yanguan to visit Guishan, and when they heard this teaching, they couldn’t comprehend it, and developed disrespect for Master Guishan. One day, after Yangshan talked to them, he advised the monks, “Dharma brothers, be diligent in learning the Dharma, don’t take it lightly!” And then he made a circle with his hands, made a gesture of offering it to them, but then threw it behind his back. Then he opened both hands as if asking for the circle from them. They had no idea how to respond. Yangshan said, “Dharma brothers, be diligent in learning the Dharma, don’t take it lightly!” and he left.

The two monks headed back to Master Yanguan. After 30 li (a measurement close to kilometers), one of them suddenly had an awakening, and said, “You know, what Guishan said about sentient beings having no Buddha nature—I see it is true.” And he returned to Guishan. The

other monk walked a few more li, and as he was crossing a stream, he also had an awakening, and sighed, “As Guishan said, all sentient beings have no Buddha nature, he does have a point.” He also returned to Guishan and practiced there for a long time.

為山示眾曰：「一切眾生皆無佛性。」鹽官示眾曰：「一切眾生皆有佛性。」鹽官有二僧往探問，既到為山，聞為山舉揚，莫測其涯，若生輕慢。因一日與師言話次，乃勸曰：「師兄須是勤學佛法，不得容易！」師乃作此○相，以手拓呈了，卻拋向背後，遂展兩手就二僧索，二僧罔措。師曰：「吾兄直須勤學佛法，不得容易！」便起去。時二僧卻回鹽官，行三十里，一僧忽然有省，乃曰：「當知為山道，一切眾生皆無佛性，信之不錯。」便回為山。一僧更前行數里，因過水忽然有省，自歎曰：「為山道，一切眾生皆無佛性，灼然有他恁麼道。」亦回為山，久依法席。

### **Man in Well**

A monk asked Master Xingkong of Mt. Shishuang, “Why did Bodhidharma came from the west?”

Master Xingkong said, “A man is trapped in a well 1000 feet deep, if you can get him out without any ropes, then I’ll answer your question.”

The monk said, “Recently Master Chang in Hunan started to teach Chan, he also gives answers that have nothing to do with the question.”

Master Xingkong called a novice (who was Yangshan) and said, “Drag out this dead body.”

Later, Yangshan asked Master Danyuan, “How does one get the man out of the well?”

Danyuan berated him, “Fool! Who is in the well?”

Yangshan later asked Master Guishan the same question. Guishan called out, “Huiji!” Yangshan answered. Guishan said, “He’s out.”

Later when Yangshan was teaching Chan himself, he often brought up this koan and told the assembly, “I got a name from Danyuan, and I got the ground from Guishan.”

潭州石霜山性空禪師，僧問：「如何是祖師西來意？」性空曰：「如人在千尺井中，不假寸繩，出得此人，即答汝西來意。」僧曰：「近日湖南暢和尚出世，亦為人東語西話。」性空喚沙彌：「拽出這死屍著。」（沙彌即仰山）。山後問耽源：「如何出得井中人？」源曰：「咄！癡漢，誰在井中？」仰山復問為山。為山召慧寂，山應諾。為山曰：「出也。」仰山住後，常舉前語謂眾曰：「我在耽源處得名，為山處得地。」

### **Name the Mirror**

When Master Yangshan was presiding at Dongping Monastery, Master Guishan asked a monk to send a book and a mirror to him. Yangshan ascended the Dharma seat and held up the mirror, “Is this a Guishan mirror, or a Dongping mirror? If you say it is a Dongping mirror, it was sent by Guishan; if you say it is a Guishan mirror, it is now in my hand. If anyone can answer this, we’ll keep the mirror; otherwise I’ll break the mirror.”

All were silent, so the master broke the mirror and left.

師往東平時，為山令僧送書并鏡與師。師上堂，提起示眾曰：「且道是為山鏡，東平鏡？若道是東平鏡，又是為山送來。若道是為山鏡，又在東平手裡。道得則留取，道不得則撲破去也。」眾無語，師遂撲破，便下座。

### **Junior Buddha**

A monk came down from the sky. The master asked him, “Where did you come from?”

He said, “India.”

“When did you leave?”

“This morning.”

“What took you so long?”

“I’ve been sight-seeing.”

“I admit you have some special powers, but you have to come to me for matters of the Dharma.”

The monk said, “I came to the Eastern Land to pay my respect to Manjusri Bodhisattva, but instead I met Shakyamuni Junior.” He produced some palm-leaf sutras, respectfully offered them to the master, and flew off into the air. From then on the master had a nickname “Shakyamuni Junior.”

有梵僧從空而至，師曰：「近離甚處？」曰：「西天。」師曰：「幾時離彼？」曰：「今早。」師曰：「何太遲生！」曰：「遊山翫水。」師曰：「神通遊戲則不無，闍黎佛法須還老僧始得。」曰：「特來東土禮文殊，卻遇小釋迦。」遂出梵書貝多葉，與師作禮，乘空而去。自此號小釋迦。

## The Ways of Linji, Caodong, and Guiyang

Each House of Chan has developed its own techniques or teachings to illustrate the profound truth. Here we give an overall description of the general characters of each of the three Houses introduced so far. It would require many more hours of advanced study to go into the specifics.

### **The Way of Linji House**

Great expertise in making use of all potentials,  
Combining striking and shouting together,  
Like the sprint of the tiger and flight of the dragon,  
The shooting stars and flashes of lightning.  
To fold, to spread, to release or to capture,  
To kill or to let live at will,  
To get rid of all conceptions and feelings,  
And to break away from all entrapment.  
*Do you want to know Linji?*  
A thunderbolt out of the clear blue sky,  
A billow arising on land.

全機大用，棒喝齊施，虎驟龍奔，星馳電掣，負沖天意氣，用格外提持。卷舒縱擒，殺活自在，掃除情見，迴脫廉纖。要識臨濟麼？青天起霹靂，陸地起波濤。

### **The Way of Caodong House**

The king and his ministers agree well,  
The primary and the support complement each other.

Indiscernible like the bird path (in the sky),  
Yet (a perfect match like) the golden needle and silk thread,  
With the internal and the external mutually affecting.  
The principle and the phenomena intermingle,  
Not a single thing stands by itself.  
The original self prior to the kalpas is the essence,  
After a long silence one will understand.  
*Do you want to know Caodong?*  
Before the Buddha was born,  
Outside of the kalpa of emptiness,  
The primary and the support  
Fall neither into existence nor extinction.

曹洞家風，君臣道合，正偏相資。鳥道玄途，金針玉線。內外回互。理事混融，不立一法。宗劫以前自己為宗，良久處明之。要見曹洞麼。佛祖未生空劫外。正偏不落有無機。

### **The way of Guiyang House**

The father is kind and the son is filial;  
The one on top issues the orders and the subordinate follows.  
If you're getting the rice, I'll pass the broth;  
If you are going across the river, I'll row the boat.  
Seeing the smoke in the mountains, I know there is a fire;  
Seeing the horns behind the wall, I know there is a bull.  
*Do you want to know the Guiyang House?*  
When the moon sets it leaves no reflections in the lake;  
When the clouds arise the mountains wear clothes.

為仰宗者，父慈子孝，上令下從。爾欲捧飯，我便與羹；爾欲渡江，我便撐船；隔山見煙，便知是火；隔牆見角，便知是牛。要見為仰宗麼？月落潭無影，雲生山有衣。

## Founding Abbot of Chung Tai Chan Monastery

### Master Wei Chueh (1928-) 中台惟覺

Master Wei Chueh was born in Ying Shan, Sichuan Province of China. In his youth he was educated in the Confucian classics and delved deeply into the study of Buddhism. In 1963, he was ordained under Master Lin Yuan, himself a heir of Master Empty Cloud, at the Great Enlightenment Chan Monastery in Keelung, Taiwan. To further his practice, Venerable Wei Chueh went into solitary seclusion for over ten years in the mountains near Wan Li, a suburb of Taipei. Over time, passersby gradually learned of this eloquent master of Dharma. He built Lin Quan Monastery at the very place of his retreat, expanding later to Chung Tai Chan Monastery in the

town of Puli in central Taiwan, which is now a landmark of religious architecture in Taiwan. He has tirelessly taught the Dharma, conducted Chan retreats, and devoted himself to training the over 1200 monastic disciples.

An innovator on many fronts while a holder of traditional Buddhist ideals, Master Wei Chueh is instrumental in bringing this ancient wisdom tradition to a new generation of followers in the modern age. The following are samples of real life stories collected from his disciples over the past ten years, edited from the collection *Chung Tai Koans*. (Many in the stories are female disciples. Since it's impossible to keep track of the gender, we use the male voice below.)

### **The Art of Walking**

There was a man who had practiced the Dharma for over ten years before he became a monk. For six consecutive years, he had organized national activities that gave offerings to the monks, and he was an important leader in the Buddhist community in southern Taiwan. Once somebody asked him, "Why didn't you become a monk before since you practiced for so long? Why was it that as soon as you met the master, you decided to be a monk?" The monk replied, "Just to learn how the master walks will already take a whole life time."

### **Getting Up Early**

Before becoming a monk, a certain disciple worried that he would not be able to wake up on time to attend the morning service (at 4:30 am). He appealed to the Master,

"Master, if I can't get up, may I be excused from the morning service?"

The master replied, "That's fine."

After he became a monk, the chore assigned to him was striking the wooden plank to wake everyone up (at 3:45 am) for morning service.

### **The Meaning of Morning Service**

Because of his low blood pressure, one of the monks was unable to join the morning and evening services, and this made him feel uncomfortable. He came to the master's office and asked, "master, since I am not able to join the morning and evening services, what should I do?" The master said indifferently, "Unable to attend the morning and evening services, that's fine."

Upon hearing this, the monk interjected, "But it is the duty of a monk to attend the morning and evening services." The master responded, "Working earnestly is equivalent to attending services. Working with a mind undisturbed is the same as attending the services."

### **One's Own Children**

A monk felt he had encountered a setback, and he told the master, "It is really difficult to teach the Dharma to sentient beings sometimes. Often they are not only stubborn, but they also criticize the Dharma and insult the Sangha. That's really frustrating!"

The master answered, "Buddhas and Bodhisattvas treat sentient beings like their own children such that when their child makes a mistake, they only hope that the child will learn from

it and correct it. How can parents be angry with their own children?"

The monk was deeply touched and inspired upon hearing this.

### **Plan A Towards Buddhahood**

Before becoming a member of the Sangha, a certain monk's nickname was "Perfect Planner." On the night he was ordained, he immediately planned a schedule for practice: everyday he would recite the Diamond Sutra seven times, chant the Great Compassion mantra 108 times, prostrate to the Buddha 108 times ... ..

After three days, the master asked him, "How do you feel after becoming a monk?" He replied proudly, "I chant the Great Compassion mantra 108 times everyday," thinking that the master would be proud of his diligence. But instead the master replied, "Don't chant any mantras."

The monk thought, "If I do not chant any mantras, then it should be okay to recite sutras?" So he said to the master, "I also recite the Diamond Sutra seven times and do prostration 108 times everyday." The master said, "Don't recite any sutra and don't do prostrations."

The monk was dumbfounded and finally asked, "Master, if a monk doesn't recite sutras, doesn't do prostration, what should he do?" The master answered, "Keep the present mind still as such, and behold the Reality of the Middle Way."

### **Sitting through the Night**

A very dedicated monk desired to practice the method called "sitting through the night," where a person sits up throughout the night instead of lying down to sleep. He inquired of the master on how he might achieve this goal.

The master responded, "'sitting through the night' means not to give rise to a single thought."

### **Pick up the Beats**

Once during a morning service, the monks were all chanting with great concentration. Unexpectedly, the master walked in with his hands folded behind his back. His eyes were cast down looking back and forth across the ground. The monk on duty hurried over and asked, "Master, are you searching for something?" The Master replied, "The beats! Haven't you seen them? The beats are all over the floor! Go fetch a broom and sweep them up!"

After the service, the monks who were responsible for playing the ritual instruments and leading the service knelt in front of the Buddha statue in repentance.

### **Blame It All On Me**

At the Ling Quan Monastery during a staff meeting, the master harshly pointed out that the monks' chanting was unacceptable. He called on the chef monk, "Tell me what the reason is: Is it because you didn't cook enough food so that everyone had to chant with an empty stomach?" Obediently, the chef monk stood up with his palms together and said "Yes, master."

As the meeting continued, the master learned that construction was behind schedule. He called on the chef monk again, "Did you forget to prepare snacks for the monks who were working hard at the construction site? Is that why we are behind schedule?" The chef monk replied

respectfully, “Yes, master.”

Throughout the meeting the chef monk repeatedly stood up in response to the master’s severe questioning, each time calmly answering only with “Yes, master.”

### **Bouncing Ball**

A monk was troubled with his wandering thoughts. Not knowing how to deal with them, he had no peace and asked the master what to do.

The master said, “Thoughts come, and thoughts go. Just ignore them. Like a bouncing ball, if you don’t hit it, it won’t bounce.”

### **Earthworm Puzzle**

In the early days of Ling Chuan Monastery the monks were working on its expansion. One day while digging ground, they discovered an earthworm chopped in two, and each half was wriggling by itself.

The master saw it and asked, “In which end resides the Buddha nature?”

All were silent.

### **Reality Check**

A disciple said, “Master, I really, really want to change my duties!” The master replied, “In this world there is nothing real.”

### **Golden Opportunities**

A monk appealed to the master, “I am afraid to face the public. What should I do?” The master responded, “Without sentient beings it is impossible to fulfill the merits of bodhisattvas. When facing anxieties brought about by others, we should view this circumstance as a golden opportunity, and think: they are all facilitating my practice.”

### **How Old Are You?**

A group of visitors was visiting the monastery, and one of them asked curiously, “Master, how old are you?” The master remained silent.

The visitor asked again for the second time, “Grand Master, how old are you?” And still the Master did not reply.

The visitor asked one more time very loudly, “Grand Master, I mean, how-old-are-you?”

The Master asked him in return, “From which life time should I start the counting?”

### **Stop Breathing?**

A monk was unable to reconcile the Mahayana and Hinayana disciplinary codes. One day, he asked the master, “When building a monastery, we need to weed the grass, and this will hurt many sentient beings like the insects and ants, isn’t this breaking the precept of no killing?”

The master asked him in return, “Every single breath we take hurts many microbes too. Will

you not breathe anymore? There are a lot of tiny beings on your hair and scalp. Will you not wash your head anymore?"

The master continued, "In building monasteries, by dedicating the merits of the monastery we bring unlimited merits to countless sentient beings."

### **Too Old and Too Tired**

A monk who served as an abbot complained, "Grand Master, I am getting older, and I wish to rest. I don't want to be the abbot." The master asked, "How old are you?" The monk replied, "Fifty." The master replied, "I am already in my seventies!"

Another monk asked, "Grand Master, I am doing many chores at the same time. Is there one chore I can do without?" The master asked, "Why?" The monk responded, "I am very tired."

The master remarked, "I am very tired, too."

The monks, "....."

### **A Little Bit Too Proud**

In a very limited time, a few disciples produced a specially issued booklet entitled, "Chung Tai Blossom." It was well received and quickly ran out. Several Zen centers requested more copies of the booklet. The chief editor monk was elated with the response and reported to the master, "The booklet is in great demand, and we only have a little stock left, do we need to print more?" Thinking he would be praised, the master instead frowned and said, "Don't print it anymore! This is a poor job. Look, why use this picture here? This article is not well written. When we work on something, we need to do it well... No more, definitely no more printings."

Later, the chief editor monk, a little dejected, met the monk who was in charge of publications, and told him that the booklet will not be reprinted. Astonished, the latter said, "The master just told me to order another 50,000 copies."

### **Building Your Pure Land**

A monk had immigrated to the United States with his family in his youth. Even though he had studied Buddhism for many years and had intended to become a monk, he had never heard of the master Wei Chueh.

One night in his dream, he saw an old monk meditating on a huge stone. He moved forward and asked, "Is it true that the Pure Land is as magnificent as described in the sutras?" The old monk opened his eyes and spoke kindly, "The Pure Land has not been completed; it awaits you for its construction." When he heard this, he was very surprised and puzzled.

The next day, a friend of his, invited him to attend a Dharma talk by the master who was visiting the United States. After listening to the illuminating talk that pointed directly towards the nature of the mind, he was filled with Dharma joy. He thought, "Grand Master, if I have the opportunity to be a monk, please call on me."

At this time, the master suddenly beckoned him from far away. He knew that he was going to become a monk.

One year after he became a monk, he had an occasion to ask the master some questions regarding the Chan School and the Pure Land School. The master said, “Chan is the cause. Pure Land is the result. If we do not work hard on the cause, how can we have the result of Pure Land? Therefore, the Pure Land is not yet completed; it awaits you for its construction.”

When the monk heard this, he was shocked. He said to the master immediately, “I have dreamed of this before.”

The master laughed and said, “Indeed! Dreams sometimes can tell us truth too.”

### **Thundering Thoughts**

One day when the master was giving a Dharma talk to the public, a lay disciple who sat behind the master had many wandering thoughts. He even consoled himself thinking, “That’s okay. The master does not know what I am thinking.”

Unexpectedly, the master abruptly stopped his talk and turned his head to look at the lay disciple and said, “The thoughts of ordinary people are as loud as the sound of thunder.”

### **Polishing Pebbles**

Many years ago, the master observed at his feet the clear, rippling waters of the creek at the Ling Chuan Monastery, and he said to the monk who was standing beside him, “In the years to come, my disciples will all be like the round pebbles in this gushing creek.”

In the ensuing years, many have come to be disciples of the master. They have indeed grown round in the continuous flow of the Grand master’s Dharma teachings as well as from the grinding and polishing interactions with each other.

## **References and Further Readings**

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