

大愚阿闍黎略传

A Brief Biography of Acharya Dayu

元音老人
By Acharya Yuanyin

大愚阿闍黎，武汉李氏子，俗名叔倍（宗唐），号时谥。参政于军阀割据时期，目睹诸军阀为争霸称王，抢夺地盘，互相残杀，掳掠民财，置国家危亡，生灵荼炭于不顾，于痛心疾首之余，乃奋而弃官出走，至庐山东林寺出家。

初修净土法门，后拜经，大病几死，继遇盗又几死，虽屡遭厄难，曾不稍懈。

嗣感人生苦短，佛法难遇，乃发奋修“般舟三昧”（译为“佛立三昧”，修法以七日或九日为一期，日夜经行，不可坐卧，能于空中感十方诸佛在其前立。）

三、五日后，双腿浮肿，寸步难移，师为贯彻初衷，决不后退，咬紧牙关，用手爬行。

一、二日后，两手也相继浮肿，每进一步，须付莫大艰巨的努力，个中苦难实非常人所堪忍受。故近代净宗行人绝少修此三昧，即修亦不能坚持到底。

Venerable Ācārya Dayu, a descendant of the Li family in Wuhan, bore the given name Shubei (Zongtang) and the alias Shi'an. During the warlord era he served in the government and witnessed the warlords fight over territories, slaughter each other, plunder people's belongings while turning a blind eye to the grave sufferings of the people, in order to gain power and reign supreme. Heartbroken and devastated, he denounced his government position and left to become a monk at the Donglin Monastery on Mount Lu.

He started with the Pure Land practice, followed by sutra recitation while prostrating. He almost lost his life from a grave illness and was on the brink of death when he encountered bandits. In the face of repeated adversities, he never let up on his practice.

He then came to realize how fleeting life can be and how rare it is to encounter Buddhism. So, he resolved to embark on the practice of Pratyutpanna Samādhi (Interpreted as “the Samādhi in which the Buddhas appear standing before one”, this practice is followed in sessions of seven or nine days, during which one engages in continuous walking meditation day and night, without sitting or lying down. The practitioner will thereby perceive the Buddhas of the ten directions appearing and standing before oneself in space.)

After three to five days, his legs became so swollen he could not move an inch. The Master adhered to his initial goal and refused to back down. He gritted his teeth and began to crawl on his hands and knees.

After another day or two, his hands also swelled up. Every single step took a tremendous amount of effort. The suffering involved is truly beyond what an ordinary person can endure. Thus very few practitioners of the Pure Land

师于力尽爬不动时，立誓除死方休，以身滚动前进，经此一番艰苦卓绝的奋斗，偷心死尽，泯然深入大定，感普贤菩萨现身，为之灌顶，授以心中心密法。

并谓《大藏经》中原有此法，甚为善巧，可检而参学。师检之果然，乃按菩萨所授与《大藏经秘密仪轨佛心经品亦通大随求陀罗尼》（二卷，唐菩提流志译）所说之六印一咒修持。经七年苦行，成就下山，开印心法门，为印心宗之初祖。

师下山后，为使世知有此善巧方便法门，所到之处，略显神通，大江南北无不为之轰动，当时求法者不下五、六万人，入室弟子近二百人。

嗣之广大信众重神通而不重道，师乃易装归隐四川成都，嘱得其心髓之弟子王骧陆老居士嗣法传道，后人尊为印心宗第二祖。

师约于 50 年代在其成都弟子家留诗一首：

school follow this practice, and even if they do start, they cannot persevere until the end.

When the master was completely exhausted and could no longer crawl, he vowed to continue only upon death and started to roll his body forward. After this extraordinary struggle of the utmost difficulty, the last bit of his ego evaporated, and he entered into a deep state of samadhi. He felt the presence of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, who bestowed empowerment upon him, and imparted the Mind-seal tantric teaching.

Bodhisattva Samantabhadra also told the Master that this method originally existed in the 'Tripitaka' and is very expedient and efficient. The Master verified this to be true and started the practice of six mudras and one mantra described in the 'Secret Rituals of the Tripitaka: The Buddha Heart Sutra, also known as the Great All-Encompassing Dharani' bestowed by the Bodhisattva (two volumes, translated by Bodhiruci in the Tang Dynasty). After seven years of diligent practice, he achieved realization and descended from the mountain, establishing the Mind-seal teaching. He is the founding master of the Mind-seal school.

After the Master descended the mountain, to call attention to this effective and convenient dharma method to the world, he demonstrated a bit of his supernatural powers wherever he went. This took people by storm across areas north and south of the great river. At the time, dharma seekers numbered in crowds no fewer than fifty or sixty thousand, with almost two hundred close disciples.

Subsequently, as the vast majority of his followers valued supernatural powers over the dharma, the Master changed out of his robe and retired into seclusion retirement in Chengdu, Sichuan. He entrusted his disciple, the elder lay practitioner Xianglu Wang, who had received essence of his teaching, to inherit the Dharma and propagate the teachings. Master Wang was later revered as the Second Patriarch of the Mind-Seal School.

Sometime in the 1950s, Acharya Dayu left a poem in the home of one of his disciples in Chengdu:

拈花怎么传，不妨密且禅，

归隐扬眉际，相逢瞬目边。

一期从古棹，三界任横眠，

临行无剩语，珍重一声○。

置于砚间，不辞而别，至今不知所终。师说法，贵直指心要，不立文字，其留传后世之著述，除早期所著《解脱歌》外，只此告别诗一首。

How to teach the flower-holding dharma

Why not go through tantric to Zen

Retire into seclusion with the raise of an eyebrow

Encounter it with the blink of an eye

Once you follow the ancient vessel

You can sleep carefree across the three realms

Upon my departure no words are left

Just “take care of ○”

He placed the poem beside an ink slab and left without saying goodbye. No one know where he went to this day. In his Dharma teaching, the Master valued direct pointing to the essence of the mind, without relying on words. Apart from the Song of Liberation composed in his early years, this farewell poem is the only written work he left for the world.

癸酉初冬弟子元音敬叙

Narrated with respect in winter of 1993

by disciple Yuanyin