

15 YANGSHAN PLANTS HIS HOE

INTRODUCTION Knowing before speech is called silent discourse; spontaneous revelation without clarification is called hidden activity. Saluting in front of the gate, walking down the hallway—this has a reason. What about dancing in the garden or wagging the head out the back door?

CASE Guishan asked Yangshan, "Where are you coming from?"
 Yangshan said, "From the fields."
 Guishan said, "How many people are there in the fields?"
 Yangshan planted his hoe in the ground, clasped his hands and stood there.
 Guishan said, "On South Mountain there are a lot of people cutting thatch."
 Yangshan took up his hoe and went.

COMMENTARY Teacher and apprentice join ways, father and son complement each other's actions; the family style of Gui and Yang is a guide for a thousand ages.
 Guishan asked Yangshan, "Where are you coming from?" Could Guishan not have known Yangshan had come from the fields? He was just using this question to have a meeting with Yangshan. Yangshan didn't turn away from the question put to him, simply saying this: "From the fields." Now tell me, is there any Buddhist principle here or not? Guishan entered deeply into the tiger's cave, going on to ask, "How many people are there in the fields?" Yangshan planted his hoe in the ground and stood with clasped hands, immediately meeting as a patch-robe monk.

Xuansha said, "If I had seen him then, I would have kicked over the hoe for him." I say, he can't control his zeal.

Chan Master Touzi Yiqing said in verse,

*Few really understand the point of Guishan's questions;
When Yangshan answered him by planting the hoe,
Buddhas and Patriarchs disappeared.
Xuansha, kicking it over, as a bystander doesn't agree,
To avoid letting the blue yellow green deepen with spring.*

I say, when the grass is withered, the hawk's eye is swift.

The verse of Chan Master Ping of Falun Temple on Nanyue says:

*Meeting on a narrow road, escape is impossible;
When planting the hoe, standing with folded hands,
Having come across the Bridge, he walks on the shore,
For the first time realizing his whole body is muddy and wet.*

I say, not worth looking around in the light of the moon.

The versification of these two old adepts (Touzi and Ping) only have the thousand-foot cold pine; look again—Tiantong lets out and draws forth a stalagmite. The verse says,

VERSE *The old enlightened one's feelings are many; he thinks of his descendants.
Now he repents of setting up a household.
We must remember the saying about South Mountain—
Engraved on the bones, inscribed on the skin, together requiring the blessing.*

COMMENTARY This verse is like the biography of Maoying in the *Book of the Han Dynasty*; 'real and conventional come up together.' When you take a look, Guishan is the old enlightened one; Yangshan and his successors are his descendants. If you go into it, then it's not so.

A monk asked Tiger Cen of Changsha, "Does the original man attain buddhahood?" Cen said, "You tell me—does the emperor of China cut thatch?" Thus we know that cutting thatch is the business of the minister. "But now he repents of setting up a household." A thousand-year shadowless tree, the bottomless shoe of the present; abiding master of the moon over the thousand peaks, robe and bowl, a valley and clouds.

All these are empowered descendants inheriting the family work. Thus we know that 'lord and minister, father and son,' as a teaching device, was not particularly first established by Dongshan and Caoshan; father and son Gui and Yang had already carried out this order. If not for Guishan thoroughly checking, Yangshan would have just reeked of gruel and rice in the gate of shadows of a light, ahead of an ass but behind a horse, taking this as his ordinary life—that would have been most regrettable. Therefore Tiantong instructs, "We must remember the saying about South Mountain—engraved on the bones, inscribed on the skin, together requiting the blessing."

Fadeng said, "The old peasants return with bundles of firewood, urging their wives to spin through the night. See how busy they are at home; but tell me, by whom are they empowered? When you ask them, they don't know, and suddenly give rise to doubt and confusion. Ah, how many people past or present know the virtue of gratitude?" How is it after they know of it? Cutting off an arm without feeling pain, standing in the snow without getting weary. That is why since I've grown old I have lived here in this Temple of Requiring Blessings.

ADDED
SAYINGS:
CASE

Where are you coming from?—It's not that he doesn't know where he's coming from.

From the fields—Why have you fallen in the weeds?

How many people are there in the fields?—Just two, father and son.

Yangshan planted his hoe in the ground and stood there with clasped hands—His letting go is a bit precipitous.

On South Mountain there are a lot of people cutting thatch—He beats the grass to roust the snakes.

Yangshan took up his hoe and went—His gathering back is too fast.

ADDED
SAYINGS:
VERSE

The old enlightened one's feelings are many; he thinks of his descendants—
Too doting.

*Now he repents of setting up a household—*For thirty years there's been no lack of salt and vinegar.

*We must remember the saying about South Mountain—*Noble people forget much.

*Engraved on the bones, inscribed on the skin, together requiting blessing—*The bitter feeling is not given up.