

Record of Shide

The Meditation Master Fenggan, as well as Hanshan and Shide, all manifested themselves in turn at the Guoqing Temple during the Zhenguan era of Emperor Taizong of the Tang [627–649].

As for Shide: Meditation Master Fenggan was once traveling on a path through a grove of pine trees, strolling along a way that ran by the side of Redwall. He happened to hear the sound of crying. When he went to investigate, he found a child about ten years old. At first he assumed it to be the son of a herdsman of the local village. When he paused to question the lad, the lad replied: “I have neither home nor surname.” Fenggan then brought him back to the temple, where he was attached to the storehouse compounds.¹ They waited for someone to claim him. After several weeks had passed, they gave up trying to locate his relations. He was then sent to serve Lingyi, the monk in charge of the storehouse. After three years had gone by and he could understand the words of others rather well, he was put in charge of looking after the offerings made for the incense lamps in the refectory.

One day he was found sitting in front of the images, eating out of the offering trays. Then he moved back in front of the Holy Monk statues² and was heard to mutter, “a lesser stage of attainment . . .” and then, “Your teachings are harmful!” Lingyi told the senior monks that the boy was mad and should not be allowed to present offerings. So he was sent to the refectory kitchen, where he was put to washing dishes. Whenever he was rinsing off the leftovers, he would place them in a bamboo tube. Master Hanshan would take it with him whenever he came. Once the boy said out loud, “I have a jewel buried in a hidden place, but no one can tell it is there!”³ Everyone thought he was a fool.

1 This anecdote accounts for the monk’s name, Shide (“foundling”).

2 The images here are referred to as 聖僧 (“holy monks”), a term used to describe the statues in the temple refectory to whom sacrifices are made. They usually represented major bodhisattvas.

3 I suspect there is a pun here, playing on the character *yin* 隱, which can refer to the *skandha*, but may also refer to the genitalia. In that case, this is an obscene version of the Buddha-Nature jewel metaphor (seen for example in HS 202).

寺內山王。僧常參奉。及下供養香燈等務。食物多被鳥所耗。忽一夜。僧眾同夢見山王云。捨得打我。瞋云。汝是神道。守護伽藍。更受沙門參奉供養。既有靈驗。何以食被鳥殘。今後不要僧參奉供養。至旦。僧眾上堂。各說所夢。皆無一差。靈燿亦然。

喧喧未止。燿下供養。忽見山王身上。而有杖痕所損。燿乃報眾。眾皆奔看。各云夜夢斯事。乃知捨得不是凡間之子。一寺紛紜。具狀申州報縣。符下。賢士遜跡。菩薩化身。宜令號為捨得賢士。「自此後常使淨人直香火供養。」

There was an image of the mountain god in the temple, and the monks would always present it with offerings. After they had made them, had burnt incense, and had carried out other duties, the food would often be consumed by crows. One night, the assembly monks all had the same dream. The mountain god appeared to them and said, "Shide has given me a beating! He glared at me and said, 'You are a god, and you protect this temple. Besides, you receive offerings from all of the monks. Since you have supernatural powers, how can you eat what the crows leave behind?' From now on don't offer me anything." When dawn came, and the monks assembled in the hall, each of them told what he had dreamed. It was the same in every particular. Lingyi as well had had an identical dream.

Before the hubbub could subside, Lingyi went in to make his offerings, and he suddenly noticed that there were gouges in the statue of the mountain god that had been made by a staff. He reported this to the assembly, and they all hurried in to see. They all agreed that since they had all dreamed of this the previous night, they knew that Shide was not an ordinary lad. The whole temple was thrown into confusion. They reported the matter in detail to both the county and the district. They then received a directive, saying that Shide was a Worthy concealing his traces, in fact a bodhisattva's avatar; and that it was fitting that he be called the Honorable Shide. (Note: From this time on, lay stewards have always been sent to set out the incense offerings.)

又於莊頭牧牛。歌詠叫天。又因半月布薩。眾僧說戒。法事合時。捨得驅牛至堂前。倚門而立。撫掌微笑曰。悠悠哉。聚頭作相。這箇如何。老宿律德怒而呵云。下人風狂。破於說戒。捨得笑而言曰。無瞋即是戒。心淨即出家。我性與汝合。一切法無差。尊宿出堂打趨捨得。令驅牛出去。捨得言。我不放牛也。此群牛皆是前生大德知事人。咸有法號。喚者皆認。時捨得一一喚牛云。前生律師弘靖出。時一白牛作聲而過。又喚。前生典座光超出。時一黑牛作聲而過。又喚。直歲靖本出。時一牯牛作聲而出。又喚云。前生知事法忠出。時一牯牛作聲而出。乃獨牽謂牛曰。前生不持戒。人面而畜心。汝今招此咎。怨恨於何人。佛力雖然大。汝辜於佛恩。

He would also look after the oxen on the temple estate, when he would sing and shout to the sky above. One time, during the fortnightly retreat when the monks came together in a service to hear the Precepts, Shide drove the oxen to the front of the hall just as the ceremony was drawing to a close. He stood there leaning against a gate, clapping his hands and smiling. “How common, this way you continue to produce the marks of existence? What’s up with that?”¹ The Venerable Lüde grew angry and shouted at him. “You lowborn maniac! You’ve interrupted the reading of the precepts!” Shide laughed. “Not getting angry is actually a precept, and keeping the mind pure is the same as becoming a monk. My nature is the same as yours! There isn’t the slightest difference in our dharma.” The Venerable came out of the hall to drive him off and to make him lead the oxen away. But Shide said, “I’m not the one who let the oxen out. Rather, they were all men of great virtue and wisdom in their previous lives. All of them have dharma names—if you call them out, they’ll acknowledge them!” Shide then called out to the oxen one by one: “Past Life Vinaya Master Hongjing come forth!” A white ox lowed aloud as it passed by. “Come forth, Past Life Kitchener Guangzhao!” A black ox also passed by lowing. “Labor Steward Jingben, come forth!” A lowing bullock came out. “Past Life Director of Affairs Fazhong come forth!” Another lowing bullock came out. Shide then led them off himself, saying to them as he did so, “You did not observe the Precepts in your past lives. You had human faces but the hearts of beasts, and so you have brought this misfortune on yourselves. Who else could you blame? Though the power of the Buddha is great, you have proved yourself unworthy of his grace.”

¹ Shide is probably criticizing the monks for continuing to manifest themselves as beings subject to karma, and hence to rebirth.

大眾驚訝忙然。因茲又報州縣。使令入州。不赴召命。盡代人仰。因此顯現。寺眾彷徨。咸歎菩薩來於人世。聊纂實錄。貴不墜爾。兼於土地堂壁上書語數聯。貴示後人。乃集語曰。

東洋海水清，
水清復見底，
靈源涌法泉，
研水無刀痕。

⁴ 我見頑囂士，
燈心柱須彌。
寸樵煮大海，
甲扶大地石。

⁸ 烹砂豈成飯，
磨瓢將作鏡。
說食終不飽，
¹² 直須著力行。

The monks were confused by this, and once more they reported the matter to the district authorities. The authorities sent an order that Shide should come to the prefectural capital, but he did not obey this command. He had manifested in response to the reverence of others, but the temple monks had hesitated in recognizing him. Since all now marveled that a bodhisattva had come into the human world, the monks planned to compose a true record of what had happened so that they would no longer be remiss. They combined this record with various couplets Shide had written on the walls of local shrines, wishing to make it known to later generations. Here are the collected sayings:¹

The water of the Great Ocean is clear;
 And since it's clear, one can see to the bottom.
 A dharma spring wells up from a sacred source;
 4 Chop at the water—it leaves no marks.

I see a crude, self-satisfied man:
 He's like a lampwick supporting Mount Sumeru,²
 Or a splinter of firewood boiling the sea
 8 Or a fish-scale supporting a mighty boulder.

Steaming sand will never produce food;
 You're polishing a tile to make a mirror.
 Just talking about food won't make you full;
 12 You just have to apply some effort!³

1 Most of these verses, like the ones attributed to Fenggan, fall into four-line units. Many of them repeat or adapt lines from both the Shide and Hanshan collections in an arbitrary way (as the editor mentions in a note appended to the beginning of SD 40). It may be possible that this “Record of Shide” originally circulated independent of the poetry collection and was inserted here later. It is also notable that, unlike the Fenggan note, it does not have Lüqiu Yin as its purported author.

2 This image is also found in SD 39.

3 This verse, which incorporates separate images from HS 97 and HS 213, seems self-contradictory.

恢恢大丈夫，
堂堂六尺士。
枉死埋冢間，

16 可惜孤標物。

不見日光明，
照耀於天下。
太清廓落洞，

20 明月可然貴。

余本住無方，
盤泊無為里。
時陟涅槃山，

24 徐步香林裏。

左手握驪珠，
右手執摩尼。
莫邪未足刃，

28 智劍斬六賊。

般若酒清冷，
飲啄澄神思。
余閑來天台，

32 尋人人不至。

Imposing, a great stalwart;
Impressive, a six-foot man.

16 Yet they die for naught and are buried in mounds;
How sad, their solitary markers!

Haven't you seen how the light of the sun
Illumines all the world below it?¹
The great void of sky is broad and empty,
20 And the bright moon is worthy of reverence.

Where I dwell is Nowhere Place;
I linger in the village of Karmic Freedom.²
At times I climb Nirvana Hill,
24 Or stroll idly in Xianglin.³

Left hand grasps the dragon pearl,
Right hand holds the *manj* gem.
A blade beyond Moye's talents,
28 The sword of wisdom beheads the Six Bandits.⁴

How cold is the wine of wisdom!
Those who drink will clarify their divine thoughts.⁵
I came idly to Tiantai
32 Seeking for someone who did not come.

1 A variant of the opening of SD 41.

2 I read the variant 里 ("village") for the text's 理 ("principle") here and in SD 42.

3 With a minor change in the fourth line, these are the first four lines of SD 42.

4 Moye was a legendary swordsmith. These images are also found in SD 43.

5 Compare with SD 44.

寒山同為侶，
松風水月間，
何事最幽邃，

36 唯有遯居人。

悠悠三界主，
古佛路棲棲，
無人行至此。

40 今跡誰不蹋，
旋機滯凡累。

可畏生死輪，
輪之未曾息。

44 嗟彼六趣中，
茫茫諸迷子。

人懷天真佛，
大寶心珠祕。

48 迷盲沈沈流，
汨沒何時出。

拾得自問丘太守拜後。同寒山子把手走出寺。跡隱。後因國清僧登南峯采薪。遇一僧似梵儀。持錫入巖。挑鎖子骨而去。乃謂僧曰。取拾得舍利。僧遂白寺眾。眾方委拾得在此巖入滅。乃號為拾得巖。在寺東南隅。登山二里餘地。聊錄如前。責示後人矣。

Hanshan became my companion,
Mid the pine breeze and the water-moon.
What matter is most hidden and remote?

36 Only becoming a recluse.

You multitudinous lords of the Three Realms!
The path of past Buddhas is drear and chill,¹
And no one can walk it and reach them.

40 Who would not tread in their steps?

But all return to their devices, hobbled by mundane bonds.

How frightful the wheel of life and death!
One can never rest on it.

44 Alas, all those on the Six Courses,

The vast hordes of those who are lost.

People have within them the true Buddha,
A great treasure, a mind-jewel hidden away.

48 But they are lost and blind, sunk in the current,

Rolling about, and will never emerge.

After Governor Lüqiu took office, Shide fled the temple with Master Hanshan and disappeared. Later, some monks from Guoqing climbed a peak to the south to gather firewood, and they encountered a monk with an Indian demeanor, holding a ringed staff and entering a cliff. There he picked out some bones that were linked together with a chain.² As he left, he said to the monks, “I am taking the relics of Shide.” The monks then reported this to the assembly. The assembly concluded that Shide had entered nirvana at this cliff, and they named it “Shide Cliff.” It is located at a nook southeast of the temple, on some fallow land about two *li* up the mountain. They recorded this as they had with earlier events, wishing to make it known to later generations.

1 Compare with SD 32.

2 Relics consisting of linked bones occur in some Tang hagiographies and tales as marks of a bodhisattva.