

佛 祖 音 容 第 四 冊

虛雲老和尚略  
無相頌講  
佛 教 與 禪

史 (知定法師著)  
話 (融熙法師講)  
宗 (中英合刊)



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香港佛經流通處印行

虛雲老和尚嘉言錄

**EMPTY CLOUD: THE TEACHINGS OF XU YUN**

**and**

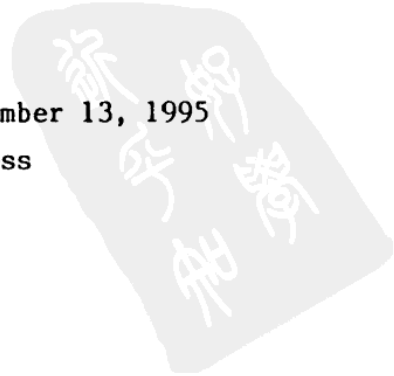
**A Remembrance of the Great Chinese Zen Master**

by

Jy Din Sakya, Abbot,  
Hsu Yun Temple, Honolulu, Hawaii

as related to  
Reverend Chuan Yuan Shakya  
and Upasaka Richard Cheung

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佛祖音容第四冊 · Teachings of Tsao Chi Book IV  
**虛雲老和尚略史 · 無相頌講話 (中英文)**  
**佛教與禪宗 (中英文)**

**Empty Cloud, The Teachings of Xu Yun**  
**The Commentary On Formless Gatha Buddhism & The Chan School**

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印贈者：張恒生堂全人  
張永儉居士 · 謝妙玉居士

- 贈送處：
1. 美國檀香山華僑佛教會虛雲寺  
42. KAWANANAKOA PLACE, HONOLULU  
HI 96817-1708 U.S.A.
  2. 美國張恒生堂  
1926 W. CACTUS ROAD, PHOENIX.  
AZ. 85029 U.S.A.
  3. 南華禪寺  
中國廣東省曲江縣馬壩
  4. 玉佛禪寺  
中國上海
  5. 香港佛經流通處  
香港北角英皇道 390 號亞洲大廈五樓 C 座

印行及  
藏版者：香港佛經流通處  
香港北角英皇道 390 號亞洲大廈五樓 C 座  
電話：2570 1478, 2571 0691  
傳真：2571 0431

**PRINTED BY: H.K. BUDDHIST BOOK DISTRIBUTOR**  
390, KING'S ROAD, 4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, FLAT "C"  
ASIA MANSIONS, HONG KONG.

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佛曆貳伍肆肆年 (西曆 2000 年) 歲次庚辰年本師釋迦牟尼佛聖誕良辰  
敬印「佛祖音容」式仟套 (每套伍冊) 普贈各界, 廣結法緣  
FIRST EDITION (TEACHING OF TSAO CHI) 2000 VOLUMES  
(FIVE BOOKS IN ONE VOLUME) FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION  
NOT FOR SALE APRIL 2544B.E. (2000 C.E.)

## 雲公老人像贊

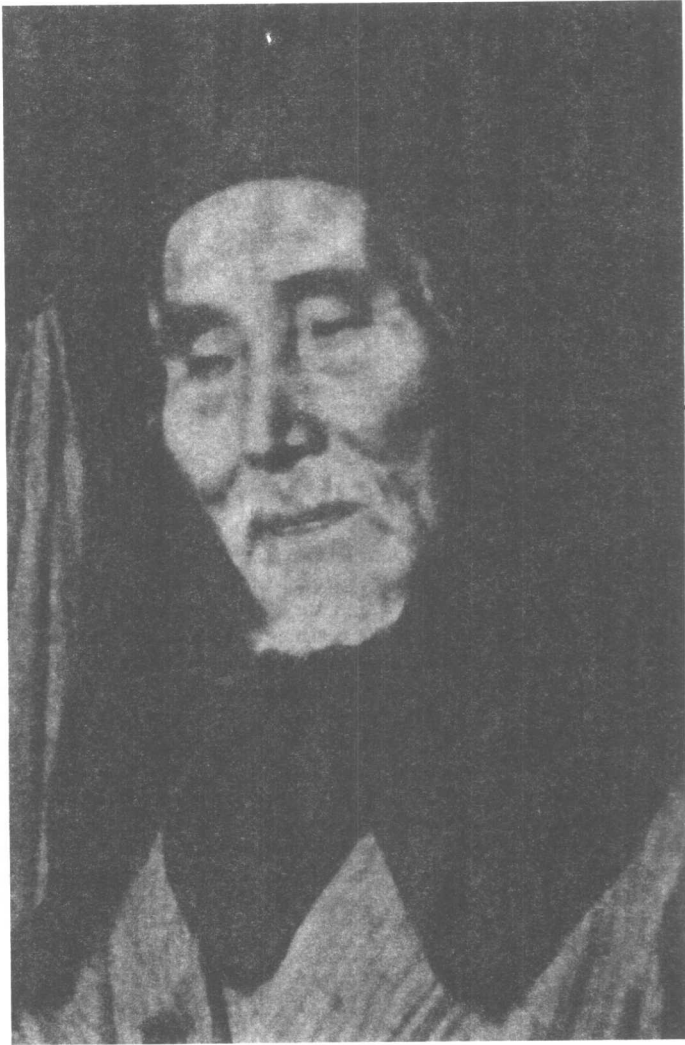
嗟嗟群生苦  
碌碌爲人忙  
終南得見地  
雞山住道場  
祖庭樹法幢  
曹溪振宗綱  
百齡尤苦幹  
功勳豈可量

知定勳沐敬題

This is a poem to praise Ven. Hsu Yun by Master Jy Din in 1947, the meaning is:

How hardworking he was, even at the age 100, but all for the people and Dharma.  
At Zhong Nan Mountain, he was in deep meditation for 21 days,  
At various places, he rebuilt the monasteries,  
At Nan Hua Temple, he revived the religious orders for the Sangha and the preaching  
of Dharma.

虛雲和尚法像



## 中興曹溪虛雲和尚德相 (1840-1959)

虛雲和尚爲二十世紀的佛門禪宗泰斗，他蓮座下之弟子遍佈天下。雲公俗姓蕭，法名演徹字德清，又名古巖，後因在終南山一定三週，從而聲名大噪，故改名爲虛雲。雲公幼年自動不茹葷，喜讀佛經，不好儒學。十九歲出家於鼓山依妙蓮和尚受具足戒。開始以頭陀苦行爲修練方法，後被融鏡老法師指正，落實研經修行。雲公一生傳奇式故事，如拜五台，終南及緬甸一定等等很多，但綜合來說，雲公一生不爲自己設想，腰不纏貫，祇有一破衲衣，一塵拂，一斗笠及一鏟，只爲重建寺院，重興佛門而費心。由重興雞足山祝聖寺，昆明華亭寺，勝因寺，福建鼓山湧泉寺至廣東南華寺，雲門寺及圓寂於江西雲居山眞如寺等期間，重興了大小寺院不勝枚舉，又不忘弘經演教。雲公那種堅銳不拔，努力不邂，落實修行及重興寺院的事蹟，都可在他年譜內查到。

## Enliven Cao Xi Nan Hua Temple, Venerable Xu Yun (1840-1959)

Master Xu Yun was one of the greatest Chan Master in the 20th century. His disciples are all over the world. Xiao was his family name, De Qing and Gu Yan were both his ordained name. He became too famous after he was in deep meditation for 3 weeks in Zong Nan Shan that he changed his name to Xu Yun. He loved Buddhist books and hated classical Chinese literature when he was young. He became a monk at Gu Shan at the age of nineteen. In the beginning, he got into wrong practice of hardship endurance, later he was corrected and instructed by Master Yong Jing to study Dharma and practice Chan. He never cared himself but others. Wherever he went, a old and broken robe, a brush, a poncho, and a spade were all his belongings. His heart was only meant to rebuild the temples, to revitalize the discipline of the monkshood and to expound the Dharma by acts not only by words. He died at Zhen Ru Temple of Yun Ju Shan at Jiang Xi. Lots of his legendary stories can be found in his autobiography.

## **REMEMBERING MASTER XU YUN**

*by Jy Din Sakya*

The Master's name, Xu Yun, is translated into English as "Empty Cloud", a translation which often confuses people. We all know what a cloud is, but what, we wonder, is meant by "empty"?

In Chan (pronounced Jen) or Zen literature the term "empty" appears so often and with so many variations of definition, that I will begin by trying to clarify its meaning.

To be empty means to be empty of ego, to be without any thought of self, not in the sense that one functions as a vegetable or a wild animal--living things which merely process water, food and sunlight in order to grow and reproduce--but in the sense that one ceases to gauge the events, the persons, the places, and the things of **one's environment** in terms of "I" or "me" or "mine". A person who is "empty of self" seldom has occasion even to use these pronouns.

Let me be more specific. We have all heard about a parent, or **friend**, or lover who claims to be completely unselfish in his love for **another**. A husband will say, "I kept nothing for myself. I gave **everything** to her, my wife." This man is not empty. He has merely **projected** a part of his identity upon another person.

A person who is truly empty possesses nothing, not even a consciousness of self. His interests lie not with his own needs and desires, for indeed, he is unaware of any such considerations, but only with the welfare of others. He does not evaluate people as being likeable or unlikeable, worthy or unworthy, or as useful or useless. He neither appreciates nor depreciates anyone. He simply understands that the Great Buddha Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite



Light and Goodness, dwells within every human being, and it is in the interest of this Buddha Self that he invests himself.

Attaining such emptiness is never easy. An old Chan story illustrates this:

A Chan Master once undertook the instruction of a novice who was having great difficulty in detaching himself from the persons of his former, secular life. "You cannot serve the Dharma until you sever these bonds," said the Master. "You must destroy these possessive relationships! Kill them! Regard them as if they no longer existed!"

The novice asked, "But my parents? Must I slay them, too?"

"And you, Master," said the novice, "must I kill you, too?"

And the Master smiled and said, "Don't worry. There is not enough of me left for you to get your hands on."

Such a master was Xu Yun. There was not enough of him left for anyone to grasp. In 1940 the Japanese Imperial Air Force bombed Nan Hua Monastery in which he sat meditating; but they could not get their hands on him. In 1951, when he was an old man of ninety-three, cadres of communist thugs beat him repeatedly; but although they broke his bones and did succeed in killing younger, stronger priests, they could not get their hands on him, either. There was not enough of him left for anyone to grasp. How can the Buddha Self be killed? Xu Yun would not die until he was ready to die, until he accomplished the tasks which he had set for himself.

I will tell you about this remarkable man, this Empty Cloud whose presence so defined my life. I will tell you things that I remember and I will do my best to transmit to you his Dharma teachings. Perhaps if you learn from him you will be able to experience some of the joy I knew from knowing him.

To be in Xu Yun's presence was to be in the morning mist of a sunny day, or in one of those clouds that linger at the top of a mountain. A person can reach out and try to grab the mist, but no matter how hard he tries to snatch it, his hand always remains empty. Yet, no matter how desiccated his spirit is, the Empty Cloud will envelop it with life-giving moisture; or no matter how his spirit burns with anger or disappointment, a soothing coolness will settle over him, like gentle dew.

This is the Empty Cloud of Xu Yun that still lingers with us. Time and the sun cannot destroy it, for it is the sun, itself, just as it is also eternal.

Now I will tell you some of the history he and I share.

During the 1920's, when I was still a boy, Xu Yun had not yet come to Nan Hua Monastery, the monastery which Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of Chan, had founded near the town of Shao Guan, where I lived. Shao Guan lies about one hundred miles north of Guang Zhou (Canton) in Guang Dong Province, which is in the south of China.

In all the centuries since its founding in 675 AD, Nan Hua Monastery had gone through cycles of neglect and restoration; but when I was a boy, it was definitely in one of its neglected phases. As I can clearly remember, it was much more like a playground than the shrine it is today.

In those days, Shao Guan was a sleepy, little river-town, a place with not much for kids to do. Going out to Nan Hua monastery was our equivalent of a trip to Disneyland.

What made this Monastery playground even more exciting to visit was that no one seemed to be in charge of it. About a hundred monks and a few dozen nuns lived there, but mostly they busied themselves with bickering. And the buildings of this great religious

center were merely the places in which all these arguments took place. It didn't seem to matter that the wood was rotting and the stonework was crumbling and the ironwork of the old red and white pagoda was rusting. The decay had merely kept pace with the decline in monastic discipline. Devout Buddhists, like my parents, would visit and put money in the donation boxes; and if the unruly boys they brought with them, like my older brother and me, climbed on ancient structures, or played hide and seek behind the sacred statuary, or ran through hallowed hallways, well, nobody objected. To have restrained us from enjoying ourselves might have restrained the donations. I suppose the monks figured that they already had to suffer with dilapidated buildings, so why should they risk worsening their problems with financial shortages.

So we always had a good time whenever we went to Nan Hua.

We'd run across the Caoxi (Ts'ao Xi) River bridge and climb one of the nearby mountains in which there was a natural stone niche. The Sixth Patriarch was said to have meditated in this niche. We'd sit in it and laugh, imitating his pious posture.

No wonder that the Sixth Patriarch appeared to Xu Yun in a vision and begged him to go to Nan Hua Monastery to straighten out the mess it had become!

I didn't meet Xu Yun until 1934 when I was seventeen years old and he was in his eighties. He looked then just like the photograph I have reproduced at the beginning of the text. I'll tell you about this meeting. But in order to appreciate it, you'll need to know a little more of my background.

My family name is Feng. Originally my family came from Fujian Province, but my father moved to Shao Guan and that is where my older brother and I were born and raised. By local standards my family was considered rich. My father owned two businesses: a building materials and supply business and a

commercial shop in which he sold dried foods such as mushrooms, scallions, and other varieties of vegetables.

I suppose my parents originally hoped that one day my brother would take over one business and I would take over the other. But my brother's talents were not in any of the academic pursuits and my parents soon began to worry about his abilities. When I was four years old I began to study with the private tutors they had engaged to educate him. He was then two years ahead of me. But I learned quickly and began "skipping" grades until I was ahead of my brother. So, at the conclusion of the Six Year Primary School education, although I was two years younger than my brother, I was graduated two years ahead of him.

I then entered Secondary or Intermediate School. The school I attended was named Li Qun which means a school that "encourages people". It was a Roman Catholic school and all the teachers were Catholic priests and nuns. It was considered the best school in the area. But the study of Christianity was more or less optional; and in my case, it was definitely more less than more. All I really cared about was ball playing. If you could throw it, kick it, bounce it, or hit it, I was interested. In Intermediate School that's what I felt most "encouraged" to do.

But I attended to my studies sufficiently to gain admittance to a three-year Education College. I didn't feel much like selling dried vegetables so I thought I'd become a teacher.

And there I was, in 1934, a cocky kid of seventeen... a smart Alec, you'd say.. who one holiday went out, as usual, to Nan Hua Monastery with all the other teen aged boys and girls to have some fun. I had never even heard of Xu Yun and I certainly didn't expect to discover that a holy man had just come to Nan Hua. And there he was...

Something happened to me when I looked into his face. I suddenly dropped to my knees and pressed my forehead against the ground, kowtowing to him. My friends were all astonished. I had never kowtowed to anybody in my life... and there I was, inexplicably, with no suggestion from anyone that I do so, humbling myself before him. Filled with awe and wonder, I kowtowed to Xu Yun three times in succession. The Great Master smiled at me and asked, "Who are you and where are you from?" I barely whispered, "I'm Feng Guo Hua, and I come from Shao Guan." And Xu Yun smiled again and said, "Enjoy yourself here at Nan Hua Temple." He was surrounded by many other monks who looked on silently. I suppose they didn't know what to make of it, either.

Now I couldn't wait until I returned to Nan Hua... but not to have fun... I wanted to see Xu Yun again.

The second time I saw him he asked me if I wished to take Buddhist Precepts, that is to say, formally to become a Buddhist. I said, "Yes, of course." And so I received the Precepts from Xu Yun. He gave me the name Kuan Xiu, which means "big and wide practice".

No more soccer, basketball, or even ping pong. Now, during my summer vacation, I traveled the twenty miles or so out to Nan Hua Monastery twice each week. I'd take the train to Ma Ba mountain and then I'd walk four miles to the monastery. Xu Yun gave me books about Buddhism to study; and that is how I spent my vacation time. For the first time in my life, I felt religion in my heart. I had a desire to become a priest.

But my sudden religious conversion caused confusion at home. Things there were not so simple. In the first place, when I was born my parents went to a famous astrologer to have my natal horoscope cast. This astrologer clearly saw in the stars that I would become a high ranking military officer and that I would die by the time I was

thirty. Having a dead hero in the family was an honor that they'd just as soon pass up. They therefore were happy that I did so well in school. That meant that the family businesses would be safe in my hands, especially since it was becoming more and more apparent that the businesses wouldn't do too well in my brother's hands. When my parents finally learned of my desire to become a priest, as Buddhists, they received the news happily; but as businessmen, they were very apprehensive. The wrong son had desired to become a priest!

But before I actually felt called to the priesthood, I had had other intentions about my future. I had never put any credence in the astrologer's predictions, so, being a little bored with the prospect of becoming a school teacher, I decided that after I finished Education College I'd go ahead and enter Chiang Kai Shek's Military School (Whampao Academy) in Canton. Chiang was Commandant of Whampao in those days.

Because of this ambition of mine, my brother was forced to prepare himself as best he could to take over the family businesses. Fortunately, or unfortunately, he never had to prove himself in the commercial world. After the Japanese invasion came the Communist revolution and there were no businesses left to take over.

But in 1934, when I was seventeen, and in my first year of Education College, the War with Japan had not yet begun. In 1937, I was graduated from Education College and planed to enter Chiang Kai Shek's Military School (Whampao Academy). Xu Yun, with the foresight of the truly wise, immediately discouraged my military ambitions, and asked me to become a priest. To me it would have seemed less conceited to say that I wanted to become a general than to say that I wanted to become a priest. But I followed his words. That autumn, at the Mid-Autumn Festival in mid-September, or the Eighth Month Full Moon by the Chinese calendar, I had my head shaved. Immediately I moved into Nan Hua monastery as a resident novice and awaited the Ordination Ceremony which would take place

in three months' time. And sure enough, I and two hundred other monks were ordained at the mid-December, 1937, Ordination Ceremony.

It was on this occasion that Master Xu Yun gave me the name Jy Din (pronounced as Zhi Ding) which means "to understand and achieve peace". He also gave me many of his old garments which I felt very privileged to wear.

Shortly after I became a monk, the Japanese invaded China and I began to suspect that Xu Yun had had a premonition - that he had deliberately discouraged me from attending Military School because he feared that if I became an Army officer I might also become an Army casualty. He had other work for me to accomplish. And Xu Yun was a man for whom the word "failure" did not exist. He had goals; and to him, I was one of the instruments he would use to achieve his goals.

Life at Nan Hua monastery was hard. The monks and nuns raised their own vegetables, did their own cooking and cleaning, and even sewed their own clothes. They slept on wooden planks that were covered only by a thin grass mat. Money was obtained from charitable donations and from rents received from tenant farmers who leased monastery land.

When Xu Yun arrived at Nan Hua in 1934, he knew that there could be no happiness there until discipline was restored. He therefore established strict rules and regulations. The first time someone broke a rule, he or she was punished. The second time that person broke a rule, he or she was dismissed.

Xu Yun departmentalized all of the various jobs and duties and established a hierarchy, an ascending order of responsibility, to oversee each department. Everybody had to do his job, and Xu Yun tolerated no laxity. He had a strong stick which he carried with him wherever he went, and he was not afraid to use it. Amazingly, all of

the arguments and misbehavior ceased. Law and order brought peace.

It was not enough, however, to restore monastic discipline. Xu Yun knew that the monastery buildings also had to be restored. Although my father did not supply any of the building materials - another company received the contract - he did donate money to support the rebuilding project. Fortunately, the dormitory buildings were the first to be restored and everyone who lived at Nan Hua was able to appreciate the improvement in accommodations.

In 1938, Master Xu Yun was invited to come to Hong Kong, where Cantonese is spoken, for a long series of instructional talks and services. Since Master spoke Hunan, a northern dialect, and I spoke both Hunan and Cantonese, it was necessary that I accompany him in order to act as interpreter.

While we were there, the Japanese attacked Shanghai, to the north, and Nanjing, to the south. The casualties in Shanghai were staggering and, as far as Nanjing was concerned, the attacks there were so terrible that to this day the attack is known as the infamous Rape of Nanjing because of the deliberate slaughter of so many innocent civilians.

Because there were so few roads out of Nanjing and these were all dangerous, many refugees tried to escape the Japanese invaders by taking river routes. Naturally, because the city of Shao Guan is located at the confluence of two rivers, many boatloads of refugees arrived there.

When Xu Yun learned of the attacks on Shanghai and Nanjing, he anticipated this refugee crisis and immediately concluded the talks in Hong Kong. He and I returned to Nan Hua and began a program of refugee assistance.



Xu Yun decreed that the monks of Nan Hua adopt the ancient Buddhist custom, still followed by Theravadin Orders, of eating only two meals a day, breakfast and lunch. No food of any kind could be taken after the noon hour. The food that would have been eaten was donated to the refugees and, when necessary, to Chinese soldiers. Because of the people's great distress, Xu Yun held many additional religious services for the dead and injured. These services helped to bring hope and consolation to many anguished souls.

But to Xu Yun, a goal was a goal, and not even the Japanese invasion would deter him from restoring Nan Hua Monastery. The rebuilding program, therefore, continued.

In 1939 the famous Directional King statues were created and the Temple for their housing was built. The official installation ceremony was held in 1940. The rebuilding effort had a salutary effect on everyone's morale. It provided a sense of purpose and futurity.

Now I will tell you about the bombing of Nan Hua monastery to which I earlier referred:

After the Japanese attacked Nanjing and Shanghai, governors from fourteen Chinese provinces (states) held a series of meetings at Nan Hua Monastery in an attempt to develop a coordinated defensive policy and strategy for resisting the Japanese invaders. These meetings were supposed to be top secret; but the Japanese, who had established an air base at Guang Zhou (Canton City), quickly learned about them.

Of course, though later everyone tried to blame the security leak on spies within one or another governor's staff, the fact is that, in the way that politicians usually are, nobody took much trouble to conceal the meetings. The governors and their entourages arrived splendidly... in limousines. There was enough dazzling chromium in Nan Hua's parking lot to attract the attention of someone on Mars. The Japanese