

HOLY TEACHER, JI-GONG LIVING BUDDHA

濟公活佛恩師

1. His birth

Human beings usually learn to practice dharma in a meditative way, by sitting quietly; they fail to realize the spiritual joys and the wondrous in movement. Ji-Gong Living Buddha, well known in the **Chinese Song Dynasty**, is the incarnation of Xiang-Long-Luo-Han (Luo-Han means **Arhat**), who was so wise and carefree as to expound dharma in an active way for more than fifty years. Ji-Gong Living Buddha's story has become a favorite subject for people, before and now.

2. The incarnation of Arhat 羅漢應世

There was a government official named Li, Mao Chun living in Tiantai County of Zhejiang Province, China. It was during the Song Dynasty. Li, Mao Chun was a simpleminded, cautious and respectful person. He was not greedy for fame and wealth. Although he worked in the government, he was honest and incorruptible. In fact, he was not interested in being a government official. His wife, whose maiden family name was Wang, was a charitable person. They did not have a baby after thirty years of marriage. However, Mao Chun was not willing to marry another woman in order to have a baby. Thus, this couple prayed to the Buddhas all the time.

Their sincere prayers touched the Buddhas. One night, Wang dreamed of a god who gave her a colorful lotus. She received and swallowed it immediately without hesitation. Since then, Wang was pregnant. In 1131, Wang gave birth to a baby boy who was very good looking and His face was just like a full moon. When the baby was born, the house was filled with a sandalwood fragrance and an auspicious red light. Mao Chun was so happy to have a baby when he was of an old age. He hurried to burn incense and a candle to show his heartfelt gratitude to the Buddhas and for the Bodhisattva's mercy.

3. Congratulations from an eminent monk 滿月高僧來賀

When 1 month had passed, an elder monk named Xing-Kong of Guo-Qhing Temple in Tian-Tai Mountain came to Li's house and named the baby Xiu-Yuan. The **meaning of the name is "practice True Self, do well with good karma and initiate or guide sentient beings"**. The elder monk touched the baby's head and said, "*Heaven and the human world is far from each other; have a good stay though, don't go in the wrong direction or way.*" The baby smiled; it seemed that He understood what the elder monk was saying. The elder monk lightly hit the baby's buttocks twice and said happily and loudly "**Don't laugh! Don't laugh! I know you very well. You don't feel much for my**

still meditation and would like to move in active cultivation. Well, it doesn't matter; however, do not lose your way. The lust of flesh will burn the body; anger will mislead you; wealth does not do any good to your spirit. Hardships and trials will result in great wisdom. You have your mission while I have my own job." The elder monk explained the cause of the baby's birth clearly to his parents. Before the elder monk passed away, he told Mao-Chun that when Xiu-Yuan grows up, He could go to Ling-Yin Temple and become a disciple of elder monk Yuan-Xia-Tang.

4. Clever with the accumulated wisdom of generations

When Ji-Gong Living Buddha was **eight years old**, his parents hired a tutor to teach Him and his cousin Wang-Chuan. During the time of this study period, Ji-Gong Living Buddha's personality was quite different from others. When He was happy, He studied the books loudly day and night. But when He did not want to study, He became very quiet, sitting alone and thinking. Sometimes, He faced up toward the sky and had a good laugh. When anybody asked Him why He was laughing, He would not say anything.

When Ji-Gong Living Buddha was **twelve years old**, He had learned all of the classic books very well, such as the Four Books and the Five Scriptures. Besides, He was very good at poetry. The day before the Qing-Ming Festival (one of the traditional Chinese festivals, during which people pay respect to their ancestors and clean their tombs), Ji-Gong Living Buddha and his cousin Wang-Chuan accompanied their tutor. During the return trip, they passed by Zhi-Yuan Temple and entered it. They met with an official who had the permission from government to tonsure a little monk. The officer had to choose a good one from many little monks; it is not easy for him. Thus, **the officer wrote a poem and asked all the little monks to write two sentences to describe the whole meaning of the poem.** Every little monk tried hard to think about the answer. **Ji-Gong Living Buddha had a look at the poem and immediately wrote two sentences, "In the view of the simple mind and clear eyes, the universe with its different Worlds is but a thatched cottage."** The abbot of this Temple, an elder monk named Dao-Qing, was greatly amazed by Ji-Gong Living Buddha who was just a twelve year old boy.

(Sentient beings discriminate against each other and make their hearts or minds complicated, while enlightened Buddhas treat all sentient beings equally).

5. Three Major Matters 三件大事

The abbot Dao-Qing intended to visit Mao-Chun's house to persuade Ji-Gong Living Buddha to become a monk of the temple. Ji-Gong Living Buddha said, **"I have three major tasks which are not completed yet.** Therefore, it is difficult to accept the abbot's kind wish. The three matters are:

(1) There has been no dull and obtuse monk since the ancient time. I am still very young

and not well-learned; I dare not disgrace the essence of the supreme dharma.

(2) In this world, there is no Buddha or Bodhisattva who does not take on the duty of taking good care of his or her parents. I still have parents at home; besides, I don't have any brothers to help taking care of my parents. How can I abandon them to become a monk?

(3) To become a monk, one needs to be initiated by a high monk. Nowadays there are very few well-learned or cultivated monks even though the number of temples is so many. So, I dare not become a monk rashly."

Elder monk Dao-Qing thought that Ji-Gong Living Buddha should have no problem with the first and second matter, and he himself should be qualified to meet the third matter. However, **Ji-Gong Living Buddha asked: "How long has your physical body lived in this world?"**

Dao-Qing answered, "Already sixty two years".

Ji-Gong Living Buddha asked again: "Since you have lived for sixty two years, then where does the spirit light live in this physical body?" Dao-Qing was unable to answer.

6. Becoming a monk 出家

Time flies. When Ji-Gong Living Buddha was **eighteen years old**, his parents were looking for a suitable lady for his marriage. **It is sad that his mother became ill in that year and passed away very shortly afterwards, and that was then followed by his father's death soon after. Ji-Gong Living Buddha felt that life was so short and impermanent; nobody can neglect the matter of life and death.** So He went to Abbot Yuan Xia Tang at the Ling Yin Temple in Hang Zhou, China and became a monk there.

The abbot realized Ji-Gong Living Buddha's predestined and extraordinary affinity, and he asked Him to go to the Meditation Hall to learn meditation first. However, Ji-Gong Living Buddha just could not get used to the way of meditation. Though, He tolerated it and continued his study.

Several days later, He was thinking:" **My expected purpose to be a monk here is to be enlightened and get more insight about Dharma. But, right now I am just sitting like a dead person; it makes no difference to those statues.**" So He was ready to bid farewell to the abbot.

7. Achieving Enlightenment 開悟

The abbot already knew what was going on in Ji-Gong Living Buddha's mind. When Ji-Gong Living Buddha approached his room, he **asked Him to come closer and slapped Him.** Ji-Gong Living Buddha almost fell down. The abbot shouted at Him and said, **"Why should you ask me about your origin? Go and realize it by yourself. This slapping is just to remind you of it."** Ji-Gong Living Buddha was enlightened immediately and knew his own origin and cause; the supreme wisdom had sprouted in his mind.

8. Playing as a carefree fool and helping people 8、裝瘋賣傻，濟世救人

Ji-Gong Living Buddha always stayed with people though He was already a Living Buddha. His movements looked like a drunk. He played games with the kids and sometimes He went to mountains to somersault with the apes; either He was tripping and singing songs by Himself in mountains and at riversides or He made friends with people in cities. His shoes were worn, his cap was torn and his cassock was worn out; though, wherever there was injustice, there was Ji-Gong Living Buddha.

There was a man who was to hang himself due to his failure to find his own daughter. Ji-Gong Living Buddha persuaded him not to do so and helped him to find his daughter for a family reunion.

Once Ji-Gong Living Buddha passed by a village where the villagers were celebrating a wedding. He knew that the nearby mountain was going to have a landslide very soon; He told the people of the emergency but nobody listened to Him. At a critical moment, He picked the bride up on his back and start running. All the villagers were infuriated and chased them. When all the villagers were completely out of the village at a safe distance, He stopped running and told them to look back. Amazed, they saw the horrible landslide and that the whole village was destroyed. Everyone was much shocked and they realized Ji-Gong Living Buddha was a real Living Buddha to rescue sentient beings everywhere and at any time.

Ji-Gong Living Buddha was very **familiar with government officials as well**. Officials in the dynasty were talking about his miracles and merciful heart to rescue people. There was an official named Shen Wu Guan, who was a friend of Ji-Gong Living Buddha. Once **he invited Ji-Gong Living Buddha to have a drink. He wanted to test Ji-Gong Living Buddha to see if He could discipline Himself after becoming drunk by arranging for a lady to accompany Him**. Ji-Gong Living Buddha was drunk, but even so, his mind was calm, as solid as a mountain. Through the night, He was sleeping on a heated brick bed by Himself while the lady was sleeping on another separate bed by herself. The next morning, the lady reported the details to Shen Wu Guan. Shen Wu Guan deeply admired Ji-Gong Living Buddha and said, “A tiger and dragon will crouch only for a well-cultivated and enlightened man to ride; god and ghost respect the virtuous one. What a well-cultivated and enlightened monk is Ji-Gong Living Buddha! No wonder all the dynasty officials admire Him so much.”

For His more than fifty years of living carefree and miraculous to benefit sentient beings, Ji-Gong Living Buddha had been praised by the people of that time and also of today. He preached to people, educated them and also conquered devils. He continued the orthodoxy of the Heavenly Decreed True teaching and supported the mainstay and ethics of the society. He has been well known to people since then, and his story has prevailed.

9. Incarnated **seventy two times** 倒裝降世七十二世

In order to rescue sentient beings, instead of living in Heaven, Ji-Gong Living Buddha incarnated into the human world for seventy two times to preach and guide people everywhere and at any time. **Many of us were his friends, family members or disciples in past lives. And nowadays in the Three Worlds' Final Salvation, we become his disciples again. This is because of the affinities accumulated in past lives, which resulted in an extraordinary karma affinity with Him in this life.**

10. The extraordinarily predestined 一大事因緣三曹普渡十八代祖
The Eighteenth Enlightening Master (Holy Teacher)

It is the grace of God that Ji-Gong Living Buddha was incarnated to the world today as the Eighteenth Enlightening Master (Holy Teacher) with Yue-Hui Bodhisattva for the Last Salvation of the Three Worlds. The Heavenly Decree started in **1930**. Many movies and TV play shows and re-enact the stories and merciful vows of Ji-Gong Living Buddha, who has deeply impressed people. We disciples should join in and shoulder the holy mission in order to repay God's grace and the Holy Teachers' mercy.

Titles of Conferral

[活佛師尊]、「師尊」和「天然古佛」三個佛號

A few of the Heavenly Titles Holy Teacher Ji Gong Buddha has been conferred with are: “Huo Fo Shi Zun” (Living Buddha Ji Gong), “ Shi Zun” (Patriarch Zhang) and “Tian Ran Gu Fo (Ancient Buddha of Nature)”. They are the same Buddha.

[活佛師尊] 就是一般民間俗稱的「濟公活佛」，祂出生在宋朝，俗家姓李，名叫修元，十八歲時在靈隱寺出家，法號「道濟」，人稱「道濟禪師」，或「瘋濟顛」。“Huo Fo Shi Zun” is called “Ji Gong Living Buddha” in the folk custom. He was born in the Song dynasty, surnamed Li, and named Xiu Yuan. He became a monk in Ling yin Temple when he was 18 years old. His religious name was “Dao ji”. People also called him “Dao ji Master” or “Mad Ji dian”.

Holy Teacher Ji Gong Buddha likes drinking and eating dog meat, doesn't that destroy the image of being a monk?

“Ji Gong Living Buddha” is incarnated from an Arhat (Arhat is a Heavenly immortal). He feels sympathy for the suffering of the living creatures and comes down to the earthly world again. So his drinking and eating dog meat is different from ours.

Most people only see him drinking and eating dog meat. He was actually saving their souls. Holy Teacher Ji-Gong Buddha has already attained Absolute Enlightenment at the time which meant that he was transcendental and capable of encompassing all of space and the universe and beyond, meaning He possesses omnipotent abilities. **Even though He appeared to be putting them in his mouth but he was in fact healing these creatures inside and helping them transcend the cycle of suffering. He wasn't actually swallowing them. One minute the birds or dogs were hurt, Holy Teacher would touch or put them in his mouth, but the next minute, the animals would fly out of his mouth alive!** In fact, his insane words mean to awaken the stubbornness of people. Therefore, his gourd is full of philosophical insight and wisdom.

The Living Buddha Ji Gong shows an insane and wild image. This is actually a kind of great wisdom. He uses a care-free life style to solve the suffering of people. The Living Buddha Ji Gong salvages many righteous persons and enlightens people who have great affinity with Buddha. He is enlightening people with different and flexible approaches so people called him "Living Buddha". This way is livelier and more acceptable to common people. If he talks too much about truth, other people may not want to listen.

It's because of the last salvation and the universal propagation of Dao that "Huo Fo Shi Zun" incarnated into the human form again in the Qing Dynasty. He succeeded to Jin Gong Grand Patriarch and became the 18th enlightening Holy Teacher, we call Him "Shi Zun."(Patriarch Zhang)

Shi Zun's Surname is Zhang and given name is Kui Sheng. He is also known as "Guan Bi" and by the Dao name "Natural." He was born in Jining County of Shandong Province, in 1888. In 1930, he was commanded by Lao Mu, along with Shi Mu (Matriarch Sun), to become Enlightening Masters in charge of the Dao lineage and Dao propagation. Those who had the Dharma affinity with Shi Zun and Shi Mu had the opportunity to become enlightened in this era.

If it were not for Shih Zun being enlightened by Buddha, and devoting himself to the spreading of Dao worldwide, we wouldn't have the chance to receive Dao in foreign countries, to realize our true nature, and to transcend the cycle of life and death. We all should be grateful. It sounds that we were born in the right

time and are fortunate enough to receive and cultivate Dao!

Those who were born fifty years earlier or later won't necessarily get the chance to receive Dao. If it were not for Shi Zun's life-long devotion to Dao, we couldn't benefit from Dao right now. Shi Zun passed away on the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1947. He was later bestowed by Lao Mu as "Tian Ran Gu Fo ". Huo Fo Shi Zun", "Shi Zun" and "Tian Ran Gu Fo" all refer to the same Buddha-Ji Gong Living Buddha. They just lived in different eras and have various incarnation names and were bestowed different divine titles by Lao Mu (God), after they attained enlightenment.