

# Map of the Zen Ancestors

# 中國禪宗系譜



**Bodhidharma**  
Pāli: *Paṇḍita*  
Sanskrit: *पुनर्विहारी*  
Bodhi Daruma  
d. 536? C.E.

### Introduction

All Zen (Chinese, "Chan") schools in the world today are derived from the Buddhist masters of ancient China displayed on this "map." At the top is Bodhidharma, the twenty-eighth master of the traditional lineage descending from Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha. Remembered as the "First Ancestor" of China, Bodhidharma transmitted Zen from India around the late fifth century C.E. Below Bodhidharma are his spiritual descendants, who were in turn the disciples and masters of later Zen generations.

The "Sixth Ancestor," *Dajian Huineng* (16), is the most famous of the ancient Chinese Zen masters. Five traditionally prominent Zen schools, or "houses," trace their historical lineage to Huineng and his two students, *Huairang* and *Qiyunyan Xingsi*. These five houses are named, in chronological order, the *Caoyang*, *Linji*, *Caodong*, *Yunmen*, and *Fayan* schools. During the eleventh century the *Linji* school divided into the prominent *Huanglong* and *Yongji* branches. *Dajian Huineng* and his lineage are known as the "Southern" school of Zen. But besides this historically dominant school and its five houses, other Zen schools also existed. Four of them—the *Hezhai*, *Northern*, *Sichuan*, and *Heze* schools—are represented on this map with their founders.

Individual boxes on the map list, from top to bottom, each ancestor's name as it is written in Chinese pinyin transliteration, Chinese Wade-Giles transliteration, Chinese characters, and Japanese romanji transliteration, respectively. Birth and death dates are then indicated when known. Quotation marks indicate alternative names. Chinese names are omitted for individuals from Korea and Japan. Disciples of one teacher are arranged with the more senior student on the left.

The index lists the names of individuals alphabetically according to their pinyin spellings. The "Location" column displays each ancestor's position on the map. The chapter ("case") numbers of certain classic Zen texts where an ancestor prominently appears are indicated. Virtually all of the Zen masters on this map had other disciples who are not shown.

By tradition, the Indian Zen master *Vinitarika*, a disciple of the third Chinese ancestor *Jianshi Senqun* (13), established the first Zen school in Vietnam in 580 C.E. In 820 the Chinese master *Wei Yantong*, a disciple of *Baizhang Huaihai* (49), went to Vietnam and started the prominent *Vo-Ngon-Thong* Zen school. The Chinese monk *Guo Tang*, a disciple of the Chinese lineage master *Xuedou Hongshun* (116), established the Vietnamese *Thao-Duong* Zen school in the late eleventh century. Although these schools passed out of existence, Zen gained new life in Vietnam when the Nguyen Thien and Lieu-Quan schools, branches of the *Linji/Yangqi* lineage, were established there in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These two schools have continued to modern times.

Beginning with the fourth Chinese ancestor, *Duyi Daoxin*, many Chinese Zen masters had Korean disciples. In particular, some Chinese masters who studied under the great *Mazu Daoyi* (43) had Korean students. Several of these individuals returned home as confirmed Zen masters to help create the "Nine Sain (Zen) Mountains," nine famous schools of Korean Zen. The king of Korea once dispatched thirty-six monks from his kingdom to study under the Chinese Fayan master *Yongming Yanshi* (017), each of them receiving dharma transmission. The recorded teachings of the Chinese *Linji/Yangqi* teacher *Dahui Zonggao* (A22) exerted great influence on *Pojo Kinu* (1158-1210), the famous Korean master who revitalized Zen in that country. Perhaps most significantly, the Chinese Zen master *Shide* confirmed the enlightenment of the Korean master *Taegu Poun* (C23), passing to him dharma transmission of the *Linji/Yangqi* lineage. *Taegu Poun* then returned to Korea and unified the "Nine Mountains" into the *Chogye* order, thereafter the main Korean Zen school down to the present day.

Several individuals carried Zen to Japan during its early history. The first was the monk *Dōshō* (628-670), who introduced Zen to Japan after studying under *Huineng*, a second generation Chinese disciple of *Dazu Huike* (12). *Myōan Eisai* (A23) established *Rinzai* Zen in Japan after receiving dharma transmission from the Chinese *Linji/Huanglong* master *Xuan Huaichang*. Soon thereafter, *Eihei Dōgen* (E24) traveled to China and received transmission from the *Caodong* master *Tiantong Ruijiao*. *Dōgen* is regarded as the founder of *Sōtō* Zen in Japan. The *Yangqi* branch of the *Linji* school took root in Japan with the Japanese master *Nampo Jōmyō* (B23), a disciple of the Chinese master *Xiatang Zhiyu*. Eighteen generations after *Jōmyō*, this line reached *Hakua Ekaku*, who revitalized the Japanese *Rinzai* school during the eighteenth century.

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