

Dharma Master Jian Zhen

Written by Lin Sen-shou
Monday, 03 May 2010 11:04



The Transmitter of the Buddhist Precepts in Japan

Master Jian Zhen (鑑真) sat in front of a window overlooking the beautiful Japanese landscape. He was lost in thought. A passing observer might have assumed he was absorbed in the scenery, contemplating the splendor and serenity of the day. In reality, Jian Zhen was completely blind, his mind thousands of miles away from the room in which he sat. It had been seven years since he had left China for Japan. Now, in 760, he was feeling all of his 72 years. He was getting old. The past seemed to resurface in his mind as though it had all just taken place. Not even the passage of time could dim the memories of his dramatic life.

Background

Jian Zhen was born in 688 in what is today the city of Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, on China's east coast. Little is known of his childhood, other than that he grew up in a devout Buddhist family. One day, when he was 14 years old, he followed his father to worship at Dayun Temple in the city. At the temple, he was profoundly touched by the gigantic illuminated statues of the buddhas. The experience so moved the young boy that he immediately asked his father for permission to leave home and become a monk. His father, a devout Buddhist, could understand the zeal that the temple visit had awakened, and so he readily agreed to his son's request.

Soon after, Jian Zhen was accepted as a novice in the temple. He spent the next five or six years learning all that he could, and he was ordained a monk when he turned 20 years old. After his ordination, he left the temple in Yangzhou. The young monk traveled far and wide, studying all the doctrines, sutras and Buddhist precepts that he could. [The Buddhist precepts are the rules and etiquette governing the functions of the Buddhist congregation and the conduct of each individual monk or nun, so he or she will not go astray or do things improper or unaccepted by the congregation.] His knowledge and insight deepened immensely during this time. He returned to Yangzhou when he was 26, and he began to give lectures on the Buddhist precepts. Listeners were impressed by the young monk's wisdom and deep understanding of the precepts. As his reputation grew, so did his following. He soon became renowned as the "Master of Buddhist Precepts."



Jian Zhen lived during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), one of the most powerful dynasties in Chinese history. Surrounding countries would regularly dispatch ambassadors to China on diplomatic missions. A typical diplomatic group might consist of an ambassador and his deputies, sailors, doctors, scholars, students, and monks. Japan regularly sent such groups to China during this era.

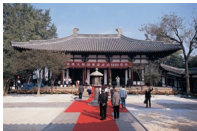
Of all the persons in the Japanese delegations, the students and the monks shouldered the most important mission. They went to China to study Chinese culture, medicine, architecture,

religion, and literature. They would then carry the newly acquired knowledge back to Japan and incorporate it into their own culture. In fact, modern historians recognize that many aspects of Japanese culture have their origins in China during the Tang Dynasty. Such aspects include, among other things, the structure of the government, architectural styles, written language, and even social customs.

By this time, Buddhism had begun to flourish in Japan. However, it had not reached the level of sophistication that it had in China. Japanese farmers often became monks simply to avoid paying taxes. They did not know the Buddhist precepts and therefore failed to abide by them. The disorder and lack of discipline among the monks and nuns resulted in a variety of social troubles. The Japanese government was at a loss as to how to address these problems.

Even worse, the Japanese monks were not actually monks at all. The Buddha had stipulated that a novice could only be officially ordained as a Buddhist monk in the presence of three senior monks and a minimum of seven witnessing monks. Any candidate who failed to find all ten monks for his ordination ceremony could not be considered a true monk. Because this protocol for official ordination was not practiced in Japan, Japanese "monks" lacked official status.

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Yoei and Fusho begin their quest

Against this historical and cultural backdrop, two Japanese monks, Yoei and Fusho, traveled to China in 733 with a diplomatic delegation. They were hoping to find a Buddhist master who could preach and instill the Buddhist precepts among the Japanese. They had a dual purpose in this search. First, they wanted to help their fellow monks understand and abide by the precepts. Second, they hoped to help the Japanese monks achieve official status like their counterparts in China and in this way achieve social recognition.

The two Japanese monks searched for many years for the right master. Eventually, their search led them to Dao Hang (道航), one of Jian Zhen's disciples. Dao Hang told the two monks about his master, renowned for his deep understanding of the precepts. In 742, Yoei and Fusho visited Jian Zhen in Yangzhou and told him about their desire to bring the Buddhist precepts to Japan.

Sensing the imperative need of Japanese Buddhists, Jian Zhen asked his disciples if any of them were willing to shoulder the important task of going to Japan to promote the precepts. When no one spoke up, Jian Zhen scolded them: "How can you be so concerned about your own well-being? You are monks! Instead of fearing for your own safety, you should be more concerned about spreading the Buddha's teachings and precepts so others may learn from them."

At this, one of the disciples replied, "But Master, isn't it true that traveling to Japan is dangerous? We would be lucky to even arrive in Japan alive. It's more likely we would go down

with our ships and become food for fish."

At this challenge, Jian Zhen became even more serious. "Have you all forgotten the history of Buddhism? Do you not remember how many people have sacrificed their lives to pass down the Buddha's teachings to us? They paid with their lives so that each of us here could become monks and study the Buddha's philosophy. If those who paid the ultimate price could hear you now, they would turn over in their graves! Have their precious lives been wasted because you are so concerned for your own physical security? You should be ashamed of your cowardice! We should follow in the footsteps of our brave forefathers, to the death if need be, so the Buddha's teachings may continue to flourish. We are monks--it is our obligation to preach the Buddha's teachings so that others may benefit from them. Our friends from Japan need our help. How can you possibly refuse such a request?"

Jian Zhen then turned to Yoei and Fusho and said to them, "Since none of my disciples is brave enough, I will go with you to Japan to spread the Buddha's precepts."

Upon hearing this, Jian Zhen's disciples were moved to courage. One by one, they spoke up and indicated their desire to brave the unknown for the sake of spreading Buddhism. Within a few minutes, 21 disciples had pledged to follow their master to Japan.



Jian Zhen's first attempt

Taking a boat to travel overseas was not permitted by law at that time. If Master Jian Zhen and his disciples were to travel to Japan, they would need special assistance to arrange transportation. Fortunately, his disciple Dao Hang resided in the home of Li Lin-zong (李林宗) and received regular offerings from him. Li was a brother of Prime Minister Li Lin-fu (李林甫), and he had the necessary political connections to help Jian Zhen arrange for a ship and provisions. By 743, with the assistance of Dao Hang and Li Lin-zong, Jian Zhen was able to arrange for passage to Japan.

However, a complication developed before Jian Zhen could leave: Ru Hai, a Korean monk, formally requested passage on Jian Zhen's ship to Japan. This upset Dao Hang, who had openly criticized Ru Hai for not having good spiritual cultivation. Dao Hang believed that Ru Hai should be excluded from the trip.

Angered by such a serious public accusation, Ru Hai went to the district government and accused Dao Hang of being a member of a pirate group that was preparing to plunder the city. The Korean monk told the authorities that Dao Hang was stockpiling food in several temples to help support the pirates during and after the invasion.

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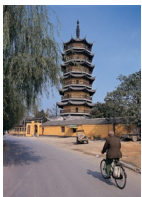
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Shocked by the accusation, the governor immediately dispatched soldiers to the temples where Ru Hai had indicated incriminating evidence could be found. The soldiers found no pirate provisions or stockpiled food, but they did catch several monks at the temples, among them Yoei, Fusho and Dao Hang. Furthermore, it appeared that the monks were outfitting a ship for a journey of some sort. The soldiers took this as evidence that the monks were in some way tied to the impending pirate attack, and they arrested and jailed them.

When Dao Hang was brought before the governor, the monk informed him of his true identity and of his important tie to the prime minister. Dao Hang explained that at the time of his arrest, he had been preparing to send gifts to Guoqing Temple on Mount Tiantai. Because delivering the gifts over land was too difficult, he had ordered officials to build a ship and deliver the gifts by sea.

It was a plausible lie told by Dao Hang in order to get the monks and himself out of trouble. The governor believed Dao Hang's account and immediately ordered the release of the imprisoned monks. Ru Hai was arrested and struck 60 times with a wooden cane for lying and falsely accusing Dao Hang. Even worse, he was stripped of his monk status and reduced to a mere commoner.

Sadly, although Dao Hang and the Japanese monks were vindicated, the boat was confiscated. The first attempt to reach Japan was over before it had even started.



Yoei and Fusho elude the authorities

The monks' second attempt at crossing to Japan failed in 743 because of bad weather. They tried yet again in 744, but a fierce typhoon destroyed their boat and left the monks clinging for their lives to debris. Luckily, they were rescued by the governor of Mingzhou, a large port city in what is now Zhejiang Province.

After the rescue, the monks traveled from temple to temple in the area. Jian Zhen gave lectures to the public, and due to his fame, many people came and listened to his sermons. They were amazed by his clear understanding of the precepts and his ability to eloquently espouse them in his lectures. As he had years before, the master became well-loved by all the people.

When people heard that Master Jian Zhen was planning yet another attempt to travel to Japan, they were upset. They did not want to lose their celebrated dharma master. To thwart his plans, some people reported to the governing authorities that Yoei and Fusho were attempting to abduct the master to Japan. Reacting to this falsehood as other authorities had reacted to Ru Hai's accusation in 743, the provincial governor immediately had Yoei and Fusho arrested on the charge of attempted kidnapping. Without even a trial to determine their innocence, the two Japanese monks were soon marched to Changan, the national capital, for punishment.

On the way to Changan, Yoei became very sick. He was so ill that continued travel was impossible, so the soldiers arranged for him to rest in a local temple. Fusho asked the accompanying soldiers if he could also be allowed to stay in the temple to look after Yoei until he recovered. Since neither of them had actually committed a serious crime, the request was granted. Fusho was allowed to stay in the temple and care for Yoei.

After some time, Yoei recovered from his illness. However, seeing a chance at freedom, Fusho reported to the soldiers that Yoei had died. The soldiers, no longer concerned with keeping a close eye on Yoei, relaxed their vigilance. The two monks took advantage of the situation, escaped from the temple, and fled secretly back to Jian Zhen.

When Yoei and Fusho appeared unexpectedly before Jian Zhen, he was surprised and delighted to see them again. They excitedly told him of their ordeals, and then they prostrated themselves before him. They exclaimed, "Master, although many things have happened that have prevented us from returning to Japan, we are still as determined as ever to ask you to come to Japan with us. Buddhists in our country need someone like you to elevate them to a higher, nobler status."

Their words moved Jian Zhen deeply. Despite all the setbacks they had experienced, their resolve was just as strong as ever. Encouraged by their strong wills, Jian Zhen ordered some of his disciples to go to the city of Fuzhou in southeastern China to purchase a boat and prepare all the supplies for their fourth attempt to sail to Japan.



The fourth attempt is sabotaged

Unfortunately, even this attempt met with failure. When Jian Zhen and others arrived in Wenzhou, located in today's Zhejiang Province on China's east coast, they were met by a group of soldiers. The soldiers informed Jian Zhen that they had been ordered to "escort" him back to Yangzhou. This occurred because one of the disciples, Ling You (凌有), was very worried about his master's frail health. Ling You sabotaged the trip by reporting Jian Zhen's intentions to the local government.

Confounded yet again in their attempt to travel to Japan, Jian Zhen and his group of faithful disciples were escorted back to Yangzhou. Along the way, people from all walks of life were excited to see the famous monk; they ran to greet him and presented him with many offerings. But Jian Zhen, thwarted in his fourth attempt, was not at all pleased with the public attention.

When Jian Zhen finally arrived back in Yangzhou, Ling You ran to greet him. He was delighted to see his master again, and secretly pleased that he had "protected" him from the dangerous journey. But Jian Zhen had nothing but harsh words for him. He scolded him by saying, "Are you ignorant of the vitally important mission of promoting the Buddhist precepts in Japan? Why are you so concerned about my health? If I had been so concerned about my own health, I

would not have agreed to go to Japan with Yoei and Fusho in the first place. And I would not have spent so much time and energy on the road! I have given my promise to Yoei and Fusho; my own physical condition is not important. If I break my promise to go to Japan to promote the Buddhist precepts, my life here will be wasted. I might as well be dead! You claim to be my disciple, and yet you do not understand this? You should not be my disciple at all!"

At his master's stern rebuke, Ling You understood how much trouble he had caused. He regretted deeply that he had meddled in Jian Zhen's plans. He was terrified that his master would not forgive him or, even worse, might expel him. He stood for 60 nights before his master's bedroom to show his sincere regret and ask for his master's forgiveness. Finally, sensing Ling You's sincerity, Jian Zhen agreed to forgive him.

The attempts grow more costly

On the fifth attempt in 748, the monks underestimated the amount of food and drinking water they would need for their voyage. After a month at sea, their drinking water was gone and their rice supplies were low. With no water to boil the rice, they were forced to eat it raw.

With morale and supplies low, the monks wondered if this voyage was to be their last. Then, just as they were about to give up hope, they saw huge fish swimming alongside the boat. None of them had ever seen such large fish. They took the appearance of the fish as a good omen and pressed on into the unknown with renewed hope.

Perhaps the fish were good omens after all. The next day, they spotted distant mountains. The day after that, it began to rain. With land in sight and water from heaven to quench their thirst, the monks knew that this voyage would end in success. After such hardship, it appeared Japan was only a few more days away.

Unfortunately, the fifth attempt at reaching Japan was not destined for success. About three weeks after sighting the mountains, the ship of ragged monks ran aground at Chenchou, a district on what is now Hainan Island, in the South China Sea. The group had sailed too far south, away from their destination! Despite such a difficult and trying journey, Japan was even further away than it had been before.

The governor of Chenchou welcomed the arrival of Jian Zhen and his disciples. Soldiers greeted them and escorted them safely to the governor's home. The monks spent a long time in Chenchou recuperating, but they eventually said their good-byes and set sail for the return to Yangzhou.

Sadly, the trip back to Yangzhou would prove very costly to the band of monks. It was during this time that Jian Zhen lost his eyesight. However, even worse was the death of two monks. The first was Xiang Yan (向彦), one of Jian Zhen's disciples. The second was Yoei, one of the Japanese monks that had been with Jian Zhen from the beginning.

Jian Zhen was heartbroken at the death of Yoei. They had been together ever since they started their quest for Japan over a decade before. Despite the many obstacles, setbacks and hardships, Yoei had never wavered in his determination to get Jian Zhen to Japan. The two

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monks had become close friends. More than anything else, Jian Zhen grieved that Yoei had died in a foreign country before he had a chance to return to his homeland.

Like Jian Zhen, Fusho was devastated by the passing of his partner. He began to wonder if their efforts to reach Japan would ever be successful. He had been in China for over a decade, and the discouraging series of events, coupled with the death of Yoei, had seriously undermined his determination and his desire to bring Jian Zhen to Japan.

On their way back to Yangzhou, the group of grieving monks stopped in Shouzhou, located in what is now Guangdong Province. It was here that Jian Zhen suddenly developed problems with his eyes. It is not clear what specifically afflicted his eyes, but cataracts seem the most likely cause. Whatever the physical reason, it was exacerbated by the long sea voyage, Yoei's death, and the hot weather. Jian Zhen's eye problems worsened until he was completely blind.

Everyone was shocked when they heard that Jian Zhen had gone blind. The great monk, however, calmly accepted his disability as though it was something normal. His blindness did not deter his desire to travel to Japan. On the contrary, it seemed to strengthen his determination.

Japanese emissaries to China

In 752, Japan dispatched another delegation to China. The team included Ambassador Fujiwaranokiyokawa and his two deputies, Otomonokomaro and Kibinomakibi. As they were preparing to leave China at the end of their mission, the three envoys visited Jian Zhen and informed him that they were still interested in having him bring the Buddhist precepts to Japan. They had four boats that were being outfitted for the return trip to Japan, and they invited Jian Zhen to return with them.

Jian Zhen and his followers were extremely excited at the invitation. They had prepared for the trip for so many years! Determined to make it this time, Jian Zhen immediately agreed.

Unfortunately, as with previous attempts, not all persons who heard this news were as happy as Jian Zhen. Many in China knew of Master Jian Zhen's desire to travel to Japan, but they did not want him to go. They were concerned he might never return. They began watching the master very carefully, eagerly waiting for just the right moment to step in and derail his plans.

But Master Jian Zhen was not as naive as many people suspected. He was blind, but he could see that many persons were interested in sabotaging his latest opportunity to make the trip. He knew that he might have to slip out of China secretly if he were to get out at all. He arranged for one of his disciples, Ren Kan (任侃), to prepare a small boat on a nearby river. When the time was right, Ren Kan would use the boat to secretly ferry his master to the ambassador's ship.

Granting precepts by the river

One evening near the end of 753, Jian Zhen and several others left the temple in which they were staying. Just as the master was ready to depart, a group of novices ran towards him, knelt down before him, and said, "Great Master, please grant us our wish to receive the bhikshu precepts and become monks." They were so sincere that Jian Zhen agreed. He conferred the

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precepts to the novices on the spot by simply patting their heads. Afterwards, he and his small band climbed into the boat and shoved off into the river.

The small boat sailed quietly to Huang-si-pu, located in today's Jiangsu Province, to meet the Japanese ambassador. This was where the delegation from Japan had moored their ships, which would soon set sail for the return trip to Japan.

The group from China consisted of 25 people. After they had boarded the ships, the Japanese ambassador hurried over and informed them, "The Tang government has learned of your plans, and they wish to prevent you from leaving. They are preparing to board the ship to search for you." At this warning, Jian Zhen and his followers secretly left the ship, and decided to wait for a better time to depart.

A few weeks later, Deputy Ambassador Otomonokomaro invited Jian Zhen and the others to come back to the ships. At about the same time, Fusho heard of Jian Zhen's intention to leave China. Anxious to return to Japan, he arrived in Huang-si-pu ready for the voyage.

A few days later, four large ships left Huang-si-pu. They sailed to Okinawa and rested for 15 days before setting sail for the final leg to Japan. Finally, at the end of 753, Jian Zhen and his dedicated band of monks set foot in Japan.



Japan

Master Jian Zhen's arrival was a major event in Japan, and people from every sector of society lined the streets to greet him as he and the others left the ship and were escorted away.

They reached the capital, Nara, early in 754. A royal prince representing the Japanese emperor greeted them at the city gate. From there, Jian Zhen was escorted to Todai Temple, the center of Japanese Buddhism at that time. The Japanese emperor decreed that Jian Zhen was to be in charge of preaching Buddhism, and he bestowed upon him the title, "Grand Master of Transmitting the Light." This gave Jian Zhen official status to teach the Buddha's wisdom and compassion. Fusho and the other Chinese monks were also granted their daily necessities by the imperial court.

Jian Zhen's knowledge of the precepts was very inspiring to the Japanese monks, who had hardly understood the stipulations of these rules and regulations. Candidates who want to become monks or nuns must attend a precept-granting ceremony which can last between one and three months, according to the local temple. During the ceremony, candidates first receive the novice precepts, and they have a short time to really and seriously consider if they want to join the sangha, the Buddhist monastic community. When they are truly ready for that, they vow to enter the sangha, and they also receive the bhikshu (monk) and bhikshuni (nun) precepts. Finally, they take the Perfect Precepts, which means they can now abide by all the required

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precepts "perfectly well," and the monks or nuns are thus officially ordained and recognized. The whole process is known as the "Great Three-Precept-Granting Ceremony (三三三)" for monks and nuns. As for lay people, they can either accept the ordinary Five Precepts of no killing, stealing, fornicating, lying, and drinking; or they can take the Bodhisattva Precepts, consisting of 10 major and 48 minor precepts.

In early 754, Jian Zhen held a ceremony to grant the Buddhist precepts. He first granted the Bodhisattva Precepts to the emperor and his family, followed by the novice precepts to about 440 novice candidates. A few days later, 80 Chinese and Japanese monks renounced their own precepts because they, especially the Japanese monks, felt that the previous precepts they took were incomplete or inappropriate; so they asked Jian Zhen to grant them the proper monastic precepts one more time.

In 756, Jian Zhen was granted the title of Minister of Monastic Affairs. This meant that he was now fully in charge of the monastic community in Japan. However, despite his grand title and the official status from the imperial court, there was opposition to Jian Zhen among Japanese Buddhists. They felt that their own power and status were threatened by the great monk's presence, and they started to fight back.

In 758, the Japanese Emperor Shomu (701-758) passed away. Soon after, the imperial court revoked Jian Zhen's ministerial title and stripped him of his duties. Officially, the court stated that the administrative work was too much for the 70-year-old master. However, there were rumors that the court had been influenced by those opposed to Jian Zhen. Regardless of the reason, the master was rather pleased with the court's decision. He had never been interested in politics, and the court's decision allowed him to focus on teaching.

Although the court relieved Jian Zhen of his duties, they also gave him a mansion in Nara that had previously been owned by a royal prince. His disciples suggested that he build a temple there, a place from which he could teach the Buddhist precepts to everyone. The disciples contended that doing so would help everyone better abide by the precepts and make the whole country more harmonious. Jian Zhen agreed. In 762, his Tushoudai Temple was established.

Even though Jian Zhen was blind, he had not lost his ability to captivate and teach his disciples. He began teaching Buddhism to monks in the new temple. The disciples in turn established their own temples and passed Jian Zhen's knowledge of Buddhism and the precepts on to even more people. Gradually, the Buddhist precepts permeated the entire Japanese Buddhist community.



Important contributions

Not only was Master Jian Zhen an expert on the Buddhist precepts, but he was also a good

doctor of traditional Chinese medicine.

Jian Zhen introduced traditional Chinese medicine to Japan soon after he arrived in 753. He even offered medical treatment to the emperor and his mother for their illnesses. He taught people how to distinguish true medicinal herbs and false ones, and how to preserve, refine and mix them. Eventually, the use of traditional Chinese medicine became widespread in Japan. For this reason, Jian Zhen is seen as the founder of traditional Chinese medicine in Japan. Even today, there are devotees in Japan that cultivate Chinese herbs and promote their medicinal qualities.

Jian Zhen also heavily influenced the development of Buddhist schools in Japan. The master had studied the Tiantai School of Buddhism in China, and he had brought with him to Japan several important books on Tiantai philosophy. A Japanese monk, Sai Cho, read these books, and he subsequently traveled to China for further study in the Tiantai School. When he finally returned to Japan, he founded the Japanese Tiantai School on Mount Hiei. Thus, it can be said that Jian Zhen was the originator of the Tiantai School in Japan.

Jian Zhen had also studied Esoteric Buddhism in China. The arrangement of Buddhist figures in the main hall of Tōshōdai Temple indicates his background in this area. In the center of the main hall is a statue of the Vairocana Buddha, to the east is the Medicine Buddha, and to the west is the Great Compassion Bodhisattva. The Four Deva Kings stand in the four corners, and the rest of the space is filled with other deities. The organization of the temple reflects a mandala altar, a round or square altar on which statues of buddhas and bodhisattvas are placed for the purpose of concentrating their spiritual powers.

It is very interesting to note that the arrangement of the statues in Kanzeon Temple (in Fukuoka, southern Japan) and Yakushi Temple (in Tojiki County, north of Tokyo) is the same as that in Tōshōdai Temple. Actually, Jian Zhen requested the establishment of these temples too. The two temples, plus the Tōshōdai Temple, were once seen as the major centers for promulgating the Buddhist precepts in Japan. In fact, monks and nuns had to be ordained in one of the three temples to receive their official status.

Yet another of Jian Zhen's contributions to Japanese culture is his influence on Buddhist architecture. The main hall in Buddhist temples constructed before Jian Zhen's time incorporated a "double layer" feature: a second roof layer was built on top of the lower roof. However, the main hall of the Tōshōdai Temple broke with traditional Japanese-style architecture and featured a single-layer roof. Thereafter, many new temples in Japan would also adopt a single-layer roof style for the main hall.

The fourth and most important of Jian Zhen's contributions was the establishment of the Buddhist precepts and the official ordination ceremony. In the beginning, not all the Japanese monks and nuns favored the precept ideology and ordination system. Prior to Jian Zhen's visit, Japanese novices simply took an oath before a buddha's statue in an ordination ceremony to become monks or nuns. The candidates might receive their precepts in the ordination ceremony, but the precepts were not complete. Sometimes the precepts received were not even correct for them.

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Many monks felt that Jian Zhen's system made things too difficult. They felt that the new precepts had too many restrictions, and they were upset by the notion that they would have to re-take the precepts just to maintain the status quo.

Eventually, those opposed to the changes brought by Jian Zhen publicly debated with him. In the end, the opposing monks admitted defeat and asked the master to grant them the complete precepts. The victory further helped Jian Zhen establish the proper precepts in Japan.

Demise

In 763, Ren Ji (任几), one of Jian Zhen's disciples, dreamed that a pillar in the Toushoudai Temple suddenly broke in two. Ren Ji knew that this symbolized the death of his master in the near future. He informed all the other disciples about the sad news, and he also had someone make a sculpture of Jian Zhen. The sculpture is now an important historical artifact and is currently on display in Toushoudai Temple.

In the same year, Jian Zhen sat in the meditation posture and died peacefully at the age of 76.

In 764, a new emissary traveled to China and brought the news of Master Jian Zhen's death. All the monks in Yangzhou held memorial services for three days to commemorate the great dharma master.

Source: [Tzu chi Quarterly](#) Summer 2006