

SHÔYÔROKU

(Book of Equanimity)

Introductions, Cases, Verses

Selection of 100 Cases with Verses

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(Hong-zhi Zheng-jue: 1091-1157)

with

Introductions

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CASE 1: The World-Honored One Ascends the Rostrum ¹

Introduction:

Even if you close the gates and stay asleep, you can guide those with the highest aspiration.
You dare look to and fro, and bend and stretch your body –
 only for the sake of those with the mediocre and low aspiration.
How could you bear sitting on the curved wooden chair and sport with your devil's eyes?
If there is anyone nearby who does not agree, step forward.
Never would I consider him a queer fellow.

Case:

One day, the World-Honored One ascended to the rostrum. Manjusri struck the table with the gavel and said, "Contemplate clearly the Dharma of the Dharma-King! The Dharma of the Dharma-King is like this!" Thereupon, the World-Honored One descended from the rostrum.

Verse:

The true wind of supremacy – do you see it or not?
Mother Creation² moves incessantly her loom and shuttle,
Weaving the ancient brocade, embracing all forms of spring.
How could you stop the Prince of East³ from leaking them?

CASE 2: Bodhidharma's "Vast and Void" ⁴

Introduction:

Benka presented the jewel three times, yet he did not escape punishment⁵.
When a luminous jewel is thrown to anyone in the darkness, they would certainly get ready to draw their sword⁶.
For an impromptu guest there is no impromptu host.
What is only expediently appropriate, is never truly appropriate.
If you cannot make avail of the rare and unusual treasure,
I will present you the head of a dead cat⁷. Look!

¹ See *Hekiganroku* Case 92.

² The Goddess of Creation..

³ I.e., "God of spring." When the four seasons are compared to the four directions of the world (east, west, south, north), "spring" stands for "east"; therefore, the "Prince of East."

⁴ See *Hekiganroku* Case 1.

⁵ A man named Benka found a stone in which a gorgeous gem was hidden inside. He presented it to King Rei of So, but the king considered this a malicious joke and cut off one of Benka's foot tendons as a punishment. The same thing happened with King Bu, and Benka lost the tendon of the other foot. Only in the time of King Bun did they discover that the stone did hide a wonderful gem inside.

⁶ Once a snake in the castle of Zui was saved by a man named Shukugenyô. The snake wanted to thank the savior by presenting him a radiant pearl in the darkness. Shukugenyô was terrified and wanted to draw his sword.

⁷ The expression "head of a dead cat," seemingly a symbol for something totally valueless, comes from a dialogue between Master Sôzan and a monk: A monk asked Sôzan, "What is the most precious thing in the world?" Sôzan said, "The head of a dead cat." The monk asked, "Why is that?" Sôzan, "Because no one can give it a price."

Case:

Emperor Bu¹ of Ryô asked Great Master Bodhidharma, “What is the highest meaning of the holy reality?” Bodhidharma replied, “Vast and void, no holiness.” The emperor said, “Who are you in front of me?” Bodhidharma said, “I don't know.” The emperor did not match him. Finally, Bodhidharma crossed the Yangtze River and came to the Shôrin Temple. There he sat for nine years, facing the wall.

Verse:

Vast and void, no holiness –
The practitioner comes, missing the mark by far.
One gains, when one swings one's axe without hurting the nose²,
One loses, when one drops the pot without turning back³.
In solitude he sits coolly in the Temple Shôrin,
In silence he manifests the absolute command.
In the clean pure autumn the moon rotates its frosty wheel,
In the pale Milky Way the Dipper's handle hangs low in the night.
The robe and bowl have been handed down to the descendants in succession,
Since then there have been medicine and disease for humans and heavenly beings.

CASE 3: The Indian King Invites the Patriarch

Introduction:

The activity prior to the beginning of kalpas, before any signs ever emerge –
A blind turtle goes into the fire.
The one phrase transmitted outside the scriptures –
Flowers bloom upon the beaks of a stone mill.
Just tell me, do you have the capacity to accept, maintain, read and recite sutras or not?

Case:

A king of Eastern India invited the twenty-seventh patriarch, Prajna-Tara⁴, for a meal. The king asked, “Why don't you recite sutras?” The patriarch said, “The poor way⁵ does not stay in the world of subject when breathing in, and has nothing to do with the world of objects when breathing out. He is always reciting the “Such-as-this”-sutra⁶ in millions and billions of volumes.”

Verse:

A cloud rhinoceros plays with the moon, [with its horns] bearing the radiant light:

¹ Emperor Bu ruled over the land of Ryô in the years 502-509.

² A man got a fleck of earth on the nose. An axe master swung his axe, and, lo, the fleck was gone and the nose was intact.

³ Once a man named Môshi carried a valuable cooking pot called Sô on his shoulders and let it fall on the ground. He heard the noise, but went further on without turning back.

⁴ Same as: Hannya-Tara. He was the master for Bodhidharma.

⁵ I.e., “I.”

⁶ Japanese: *Nyoze-kyô*. “Nyoze” means “(such) as this.”

A wooden horse romps in spring, unbridled and swift.
Beneath the eyebrows, a pair of blue eyes are cold:
Why should the reading of sutras pierce through the ox skin?¹
The clear mind transcends vast kalpas;
The hero's power smashes the enclosures thick and fast.
The pivot hole let the subtle round disk turn in wondrous activities:
Kanzan has forgotten the path by which he came;
Jittoku leads him back by the hand.²

CASE 4: The World-Honored One Points to the Ground

Introduction:

Once a speck of dust arises, the whole great earth is embraced in it.
On a single horse and with a single lance
You enlarge the territory and widen the boundaries – that is not impossible.
Who is the person who can be master at any place and embody the principle in any karma?

Case:

When the World-Honored One was walking with his assembly, he pointed to the ground with his hand and said, “This place is good for building a temple.” Indra³ took a stalk of grass and stuck it in the ground and said, “The temple has been built.” The World-Honored One smiled.

Verse:

The boundless spring upon a hundred plants –
Taking up whatever comes to hand, he can use it familiarly.
The golden body of sixteen feet, an assemblage of virtues⁴:
Taking casually the hands [of others], he walks into the scarlet dusts.
He is able to be master amid all the dusts,
While the guest spontaneously appears from beyond this world
[where the Buddha's preaching is due] ⁵.
Everywhere life is sufficient according to its portion;
It does not matter whether you are inferior to someone else or not.

¹ Yakusan Igen Zenji (745-828) was a very strict master, so there were never more than 20 students in his monastery. He did not allow the monks to read sutras, although he himself always read them. One day a monk asked him why Yakusan read the sutras while he did not allow the monks to read them. Yakusan answered, “I am simply letting the letters obstruct my eyes.” The monk asked him if he might imitate the master. Yakusan said, “If you do read the sutras, you must read them so intensely that the ox skin (upon which the sutras were written) is pierced through.”

² Kanzan and Jittoku are legendary monks, Kanzan representing the quality of the Bodhisattva Majusri (symbol of the world of enlightenment) and Jittoku that of the Bodhisattva Fugen (symbol of compassion). In a literary work called “Poems of Kanzan” it reads: “.... He [=Kanzan], not returning for ten years, forgot the path by which he came.”

³ Exactly: Sakra-devanam-Indra. The lord god of the Trayastrimasa Heaven.

⁴ I.e., Shakyamuni Buddha.

⁵ “This world” is the area where the Buddha's preaching is considered to be directed; the Heaven, from which Indra appears, is outside this area.

CASE 5: Seigen's "Price of Rice"

Introduction:

Shadai cut off his flesh to feed his parents, but he could not be enrolled in the list of filial children.
Devadatta pushed a mountain to crush the Buddha,
yet did he ever fear the peals of abrupt thunder?
Pass through the jungle of thorns, chop down the forest of sandalwood,
and wait till the year comes to an end;
As of old, early spring is still chilly.
Where is the Dharma body of the Buddha at all?

Case:

A monk asked Seigen, "What is the essence of Buddha's Dharma?" Seigen said, "What is the price of rice in Roryô¹?"

Verse:

The reign of great peace knows no form:
The atmosphere of the rugged old man is superbly pristine,
There are nothing but singing and drinking of the village festival;
How could they be aware of the virtues of Shun and the good will of Gyô²?

CASE 6: Master Ba's "White and Black"³

Introduction:

When it is impossible to open the mouth, a person without a tongue can speak.
When it is not possible to lift up the feet, a person without legs can walk.
If you fall within the range of your opponent's arrow and die under a phrase, how can you show the status of freedom?
When the four mountains⁴ are about to oppress you, how can you attain thorough liberation?

Case:

A monk asked Great Master Ba, "Apart from the four Phrases, beyond one hundred Negations, please tell me directly, Master, the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West." Master Ba said, "I am tired today, I can't explain it to you. Go and ask Chizô." The monk asked Chizô about it. Chizô said, "Why don't you ask our master?" The monk said, "He told me to ask you." Chizô said, "I have a headache today, I can't explain it to you. Go and ask Brother Kai⁵." The monk asked Brother Kai about it. Kai said, "I understand nothing about that question." The monk told Great Master Ba about it. Great Master said, "Chizô's head is white, Kai's head

¹ A place famous for its rice production.

² Two legendary, holy rulers of the ancient China.

³ See *Hekiganroku* Case 73.

⁴ That is: being born/living a life, getting aged, becoming ill and dying.

⁵ Hyakujô Ekai.

is black.”

Verse:

Medicine causing illness – the past sages are the mirror of this.
Illness becoming medicine – who can demonstrate this at all?
White head, black head – the children augmenting the esteem of the house.
Speech and non-speech – they are able to cut off the streams.
[While sitting] they magnificently chop off the roads of the tongue tip.
How laughable – the ancient Awl of Biya¹!

CASE 7: Yakusan Ascends the Rostrum

Introduction:

Eyes, ears, nose, tongue – each has its function,
[While] the eyebrows [just] sit above.
Warriors, farmers, craftspeople, merchants – each has their work to do,
[While] the person without fixed profession is always at leisure.
What method does a true master apply to teach the students?

Case:

Yakusan had not ascended the rostrum for a long time. The temple steward said, “All the assembly has been wishing for instruction for a long time. Please, Master, give your assembly a sermon.”

Yakusan had the bell rung. The assembly gathered. Yakusan ascended the rostrum and sat there for a while. Then he descended and returned to his room.

The temple steward followed him and asked, “You said a while ago that you would give the assembly a sermon. Why didn't you speak even a word?” Yakusan said, “For sutras, there are sutra specialists; for sastras², there are sastra specialists. Why do you have doubts about this old monk?”

Verse:

You give the foolish kids “toy money” to stop them from crying;
[Even] the four good horses³ and the “wind-chasing” steed⁴ see the shadow of the whip.
While the clouds sweep the wide open sky, the crane nests in the moon;
With the cold purity sinking into the bones, one never goes to sleep.

CASE 8: Hyakujō and the Fox⁵

¹ I.e., Vimalakirti. He is surnamed “Awl”, because he could so sharply drill through the thick leather of delusions of other people.

² Books on Buddhist doctrines, written by ancient Buddhist philosophers.

³ The four good horses which pull the cart.

⁴ An excellent horse owned by the King Shin of the ancient China.

⁵ See *Mumonkan* Case 2 with the enlarged part.

Introduction:

If you memorize the character for “One” and stick to it in your heart,
You will swiftly fall into hell like an arrow.
If you have swallowed one drop of slobber of the fox,
You can never spit it out for thirty years.
It is not that the Law in India has been too strict;
It is just that the karma of the stupid fellow has been miserably heavy.
Has there ever been anyone who has committed such a transgression?

Case:

Whenever Master Hyakujô delivered a sermon, an old man was always there listening with the monks. When they left, he left too. One day, however, he remained behind. Hyakujô asked him, “What man are you, standing there?” The old man replied, “In the past, in the time of Kashyapa Buddha, I lived on this mountain as a Zen priest. Once a monk came and asked me, ‘Does a perfectly enlightened person fall under the law of cause and effect or not?’ I said to him, ‘He does not.’ Then I fell into the state of a fox for 500 lives. Now, I beg you, Master, please say a turning word.” Hyakujô said, “The law of cause and effect cannot be obscured.” Upon hearing this, the old man became greatly enlightened.

Verse:

One foot¹ of water, one fathom² of wave.
It was impossible to do anything against the five hundred lives.
They have been arguing whether it is “not falling” or “not obscuring,”
Always being caught up in the pit of entangling vines.
Ha! ha! ha! Do you understand it or not?
If you are completely detached and at ease, you do not object to my babbling talk.
People sing and dance at the shrine festival, creating spontaneous accord;
While clapping the hands, they chant around in merry unison.

CASE 9: Nansen Kills a Cat³

Introduction:

If you kick over the blue ocean, the great earth flies away like dust;
If you bark out at the white cloud, the empty sky is smashed like powder.
Solemnly executing the absolute command is only a half of the true presentation.
If the great activity manifests itself completely, how do you express it?

Case:

Once the monks of the eastern and western Zen halls in Nansen's temple were quarrelling about a cat. As he saw this, Nansen held up the cat and said, “You monks! If one of you can say a word, I will not slay the cat.” No one could answer. Nansen cut the cat in two.

Nansen told Jôshû what had happened, and asked him for his view. Jôshû thereupon took

¹ Originally: „Shaku“, about 30cm.

² Originally: „Jô“, about 3m (a “fathom” is about 1.8m).

³ See *Mumonkan* Case 14; *Hekiganroku* Cases 63, 64.

his sandals, put them upon his head and went away. Nansen said, “If you had been there, I could have spared the cat.”

Verse:

All monks of both halls were noisily arguing;
Ô Roshî¹ was able to examine true and false.
The sharp knife cuts all images asunder, they are utterly destroyed;
Thus he is admired as a great adept for a thousand ages.
This Way has not perished;
A true connoisseur will appreciate him.
For digging the mountains and letting the river flow into the sea
Great U² was the only one who was to be honored;
To smelt stones and mend the heavenly pillar,
Joka³ was the only one who was wise enough.
Old Jôshû has a worthy life;
Putting his sandals upon his head, he matches a little bit.
Coming amidst the alien, he mirrors all the more clearly;
This genuine gold is never blended with sand.

CASE 10: An Old Woman near Taizan⁴

Introduction:

Gathering and releasing – the stick is always with him;
Able to kill and able to give life – the balance remains in his hands.
Delusive passions, devils and non-Buddhists – he controls them all at his finger tip;
The great earth, the mountains and rivers – all become his toys.
Just tell me, what sort of inner dimension is this?

Case:

There was an old woman on the way to Taizan. Whenever a monk asked her how to get to Taizan, she would answer, “Go straight on.” After the monk had gone a few steps, she would say, “This good and naïve fellow goes off that way, too.”

Later a monk told Jôshû about this. Jôshû said, “Wait a bit. I will go and see through her for you.” He went and asked the same question.

The next day, Jôshû ascended the rostrum and said, “I have seen through the old woman for you.”

Verse:

Old in age, he has become a spirit, making no mistakes in transmission;

¹ I.e., Master Nansen.

² The sacred king of the ancient China, U, spent 9 years trying to divert the flow of the flooding Yellow River.

³ Once in ancient China, a powerful clan named Kyôkô fought with the legendary sacred king Gyô and was defeated. The clan chief smashed his own head unto Mt. Fushû and killed himself. The shock of this clash destroyed the heavenly pillars and earthly foundations. At that time, a man named Joka melted “five-colored stones” to make pillars and supported the heavens with them.

⁴ See *Mumonkan* Case 31

The old buddha Jôshû succeeded to Nansen.
The old turtle loses its life because of the designs on its back¹;
Even the “excellent four horses”² and the “Wind Chaser”³ are encumbered by the bridle.
The “old woman's Zen” has been seen through:
If you preach it to people, it isn't worth a penny.

CASE 11: Unmon's “Two Diseases”

Introduction:

A person without the body suffers illness;
A person without hands fixes medicine;
A person without the mouth eats food;
A person who receives nothing at all is at peace.
Just tell me, how do you treat a disease seated in the invisible depth?

Case:

Great Master Unmon said, “When the light does not penetrate, there are two diseases. Everything is unclear and things hang before you – this is one disease. Even after you have realized the emptiness of all things, somehow you feel as if there were still something there. This shows that the light has not yet penetrated thoroughly.

Also there are two diseases concerning the Dharma-body. You have reached the Dharma-body, but you remain attached to the Dharma and cannot extinguish your own view; therefore you lead a corrupt life around the Dharma-body – this is one disease. Suppose you have truly penetrated to the end, if you give up further efforts, it will not do. You examine yourself minutely and say you have no flaw – this is nothing but a disease.”

Verse:

Letting all phenomena of the universe be as they are;
Passing through thoroughly, without any directions – yet it obstacles the eyes;
Who has the power to sweep out the garden?
Hidden in the depth of your heart, it unnoticeably creates obsession.
Laying the boat in the autumn-blue water of the ford,
With the pole resting in the bright reed flowers shining with the snow;
An old fisherman, wanting to take the beautifully skewered fish to the market,
Lets a tiny boat travel leisurely through the waves.

CASE 12: Jizô Plants the Rice Field

Introduction:

¹ In ancient China they performed augury using the designs on a turtle's back and the cracks that appeared on the back as it was burned.

² Quick four horses pulling a cart.

³ The famous horse owned by the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty.

Writers plow with the brush, speakers plow with the tongue.
We patch-robed monks are bored with watching the white ox on open ground;
We pay no heed to the auspicious grass without root.
How should we spend the days?

Case:

Jizô asked Shuzanshu, “Where have you come from?” Shuzanshu said, “I have come from the South.” Jizô said, “How is the Buddha-Dharma in the South these days?” Shuzanshu said, “There is much lively *mondô* and discussion¹.” Jizô said, “How could that match with our planting the rice field here and making rice-balls to eat?” Shuzanshu said, “How could you then save the beings of the Three Worlds?” Jizô said, “What would you call 'the Three Worlds'?”

Verse:

The principle and explanations – they are all products of forced labor.
Listening with the ears, repeating with the mouth – that is nothing but chaos.
Planting rice fields, making rice balls – the ordinary household work;
Only those who are satiated with practicing would know it —
Having had enough of practice you clearly perceive there is nothing to seek:
Shibô did not care at all to be appointed lord of a great province²;
Forgetting all intentions, one returns and becomes a friend of fish and birds³;
One washes one's feet in the muddy water of the Sôrô River⁴ in the autumn air.

CASE 13: Rinzai's "Blind Donkey"

Introduction:

Totally dedicated to helping others, one does not recognize one's own self.
One implements the Law to the full, disregarding the fact that almost all people have fled away.
One must have harsh and decisive means to twist and break the wooden pillow.
But when one faces death, what then?

Case:

When Rinzai was about to die, he entrusted Sanshô with his Dharma and said, “After my passing, do not destroy my treasury of the Eye of the true Dharma⁵.” Sanshô said, “How would I dare destroy your treasury of the Eye of the true Dharma?” Rinzai said, “If someone asks you about it, how will you answer?” Sanshô instantly shouted, “Kaatzu!” Rinzai said, “Who knows that my treasury of the Eye of the true Dharma has been destroyed by this blind donkey!”

¹ The original word is *shôryô*. It mainly refers to the questions and answers (=mondô) in the dokusan room between a master and a student.

² The emperor of the Han Dynasty, Kôso, wanted to reward Chô Shibô for the great service he had done, but the latter declined the emperor's favor.

³ Once a young man was happily playing every day with sea gulls at the sea shore. One day his father wanted him to catch a gull and bring it home. When the young man went to the shore intending to do what his father had ordered him to do, no sea gulls came to him at all.

⁴ Gyoho, a person in the 4th/3rd century BCE, warned Kutsugen not to adhere to the extreme purity of mind and to act flexibly according to the situation. Thus he composed a line: “When the water of the the Sôrô River is clear, you wash the helmet strings; when the water of the River is muddy, you wash your feet.”

⁵ Originally: *shôbôgenzô*.

Verse:

At midnight, the robe of faith is granted to Ronô¹;
The seven hundred monks on Mt Ôbai² were thrown into an uproar.
A branch of the Eye of true Dharma of Rinzai³ –
The blind donkey destroyed it, which provoked hatred of all people.
Heart to heart they seal each other;
Ancestor to ancestor they transmit the lamp.
One flattens the seas and mountains, letting the giant birds come out.
The splendid phrase is beyond comparison;
One knows the method to turn things over and let them soar.

CASE 14: Attendant Kaku Offers Tea

Introduction:

An examining cane in hand, with a duckweed cover around him;
Sometimes wrapping a cotton ball in iron, sometimes a hard stone in brocade.
To overwhelm the soft by hard means is a matter of course;
How is it if you are weak when meeting a strong one?

Case:

Attendant Kaku asked Tokusan, “Where have all the past saints gone?” Tokusan said, “What? What?” Kaku said, “I gave the command for an excellent horse like a flying dragon to spring forth, but there came out only a lame tortoise.” Tokusan was silent.

The next day, when Tokusan came out of the bath, Kaku served him tea. Tokusan passed his hand gently over Kaku's back. Kaku said, “This old fellow has gotten a glimpse for the first time.” Again, Tokusan was silent.

Verse:

When an opponent comes up face to face, the adept sees through;
The action is even quicker than sparks and lightning.
The plotter loses – but with a deep intent;
The warrior who deceives the enemy possesses no deep thinking.
He shoots and hits the mark without fail – who could ever mock him?
If you see jowls from behind his head, you know you can hardly fool the man⁴.
The man with his eyes behind the eyebrows⁵ – he has gained the advantage⁶.

¹ I.e., the 6th Patriarch Enô.

² This is where the 5th Patriarch lived. Under him there were 700 monks.

³ There was a well-known phrase “Rinzai, the great tree.”

⁴ This is based upon a popular belief that a person with wide jowls was ill-natured so that you might as well avoid any company with such a person.

⁵ Such a person was believed to have a penetrating eyesight.

⁶ “Gain the advantage” [*toku-bengi*], expression in the commercial world, meant “to make a great profit”; whereas the expression “lose the advantage” [*raku-bengi*] indicated “to make a great loss.” These expressions were used in the Zen world with metaphoric meanings: the former phrase meant to attain great enlightenment, the latter to lose all traces of enlightenment.

CASE 15: Kyôzan Thrusts His Hoe into the Ground

Introduction:

Knowing before it is spoken – this is called silent speech;

Manifesting oneself before anything is revealed – it is called a dark activity.

Making gassho in front of the main gate, walking down the hallway

– it is a spontaneous communication.

Dancing in the inner garden, wagging the head at the back gate – what is this?

Case:

Isan asked Kyôzan, “Where have you come from?” Kyôzan said, “From the rice field.” Isan said, “How many people are there in the rice field?” Kyôzan thrust his hoe into the ground and stood with his hands folded on his chest. Isan said, “There are a great number of people cutting thatch on the South Mountain.” Kyôzan took up his hoe and left immediately.

Verse:

The old enlightened one affectionately thinks of his descendants.

Now [the descendant] repents and thus erects a household.

Remember well the saying about South Mountain:

Engrave it on your bones, inscribe it on your skin,

And return the kindness you all have received.

CASE 16: Mayoku Shook the Ring-Staff¹

Introduction:

Pointing to a deer, you make it a horse,

Grabbing some soil, you turn it to gold;

Creating wind and thunder upon the tongue,

Hiding a bloody blade between the eyebrows,

You observe defeat and victory while sitting,

You examine death and life while standing.

Just tell me, what samadhi is this?

Case:

Mayoku, with his ring-staff in hand, came to Shôkei². He circled Shôkei's dais three times, shook the ring-staff and stood there bolt upright. Shôkei said, “Right, right!” Mayoku then came to Nansen. He circled Nansen's dais three times, shook the ring-staff and stood there bolt upright. Nansen said, “Not right, not right!” Then, Mayoku said, “Master Shôkei said, 'Right, right!' Why, Master, do you say, 'Not right, not right!'?” Nansen said, “With Shôkei it is right, but with you it is not right. This is nothing but a whirling of the wind. In the end, it will

¹ See *Hekiganroku* Case 31.

² Mayoku, Shôkei and Nansen (who later appears) are all disciples of Baso. Mayoku, the youngest of the three, has recently attained his great enlightenment.

perish¹.”

Verse:

“Right” and “not right” – be clever enough to see the trap.
Seemingly suppressing, seemingly upholding –
Difficult to say, which is the elder brother and which the younger:
This one acknowledged him, simply acting according to the occasion,
That one denied him, performing nothing special.
With one shake of the golden staff, he stood all alone,
Circling around the seat three times, he played with no ulterior thoughts.
But Zen monasteries are agitated, “good” and “bad” are created,
As if they saw ghosts in front of a skull.

CASE 17: Hôgen's "Hairsbreadth"

Introduction:

A couple of lone geese flap upon the earth and soar up high;
A pair of mandarin ducks stand alone at the pond.
Let us put aside for a moment the meeting of two arrow heads in the air;
What if a saw cuts a scale weight?

Case:

Hôgen asked Shuzanshu², “If there is only a hairsbreadth of difference, it is the distance between heaven and earth.³ How do you understand that?” Shuzanshu said, “If there is only a hairsbreadth of difference, it is the distance between heaven and earth.” Hôgen said, “If that's your understanding, how could you ever attain It?” Shuzanshu said, “My view is just that. How about you, Master?” Hôgen said, “If there only is a hairsbreadth of difference, it is the distance between heaven and earth.” Shuzanshu made a deep bow.

Verse:

The beam scale tilts when a fly sits upon it;
The balance of myriad generations illuminates inequalities.
Even if you clearly see pounds and ounces, or drams and grams,
All is overcome by the point “zero.”

CASE 18: Jôshû's Dog⁴

Introduction:

Touch a gourd floating on the water, and it turns;

¹ It is also possible to translate: “It has already perished.”

² Hôgen and Shuzanshu were both disciples of Jizô Keishin Zenji. Hôgen was obviously older.

³ Cited from the *Shinjinmei* (A Hymn of Sincere Mind), a work by the Third Patriarch Sôsan. See also Miscellaneous Koans 21-2.

⁴ See *Mumonkan* Case 1. The *Shôyôroku* case presents a fuller text of the dialogue.

Hold a jewel in the sunlight, and its colors show no fixed forms.
It cannot be attained by the mind of Mu [= there is not],
Nor can it be known by the mind of U [= there is].
Even surpassingly great people are turned over in the flow of words.
Is there anyone who can escape from it?

Case:

A monk asked Jôshû, “Does the dog have buddha-nature, or not?” Jôshû said, “It does [U].” The monk said, “If it does, why did it creep into that skin bag?” Jôshû said, “Because it does so knowingly.”

Another monk asked, “Does the dog have buddha-nature, or not?” Jôshû said, “It does not [Mu].” The monk said, “All living beings have buddha-nature¹. Why doesn't the dog have any?” Jôshû said, “Because its karma-consciousness is in it.”

Verse:

The dog – buddha-nature – U [= there is]!
The dog – buddha-nature – Mu [= there is not]!
A straight hook intrinsically seeks a fish who would disregard life².
[Yet] practicing monks are chasing the air and running after fragrance,
Making noisy and confused excuses.
He [, however,] presents it evenly, throwing the shop completely open;
Don't consider it strange that he wasn't mindful enough at the beginning.
Pointing out the flaw, Rinshôjo took back the jewel;
The emperor of Shin didn't know him³.

CASE 19: Unmon's “Mt. Sumeru”

Introduction:

“I cherish the activities of Shôyô and Shinjô:
All through their lives they pulled out nails and wedges from the people.”⁴
Why did they sometimes open the door and present a bowl of glue,
Or dig a pitfall on the road?
Try to examine and see!

Case:

A monk asked Unmon. “Not a single thought arises: is there any fault or not?” Unmon

¹ Quotation from the *Nirvana Sutra* 7, 25.

² Once a man named Shiga was fishing in a valley with a straight hook. King Bun of Shû saw it and asked him, “How could you get any fish with a straight hook?” Shiga answered, “I am looking for a fish who would disregard life” (i.e., be courageous enough to swallow the entire hook at once).

³ Once, the king of the land of Chô obtained a marvelous jewel. King Shô of the great empire Shin wanted to give the king of Chô 15 castles in exchange of the jewel. So, Rinsôjo as ambassador of Chô took the jewel to King Shô. But having seen that King Shô had no intention to grant 15 castles, Rinsôjo said to King Shô, “The jewel has a flaw. I will show you where it is.” After getting the jewel back, Rinsôjo fled out of the palace with the jewel and came back to the land of Chô.

⁴ Words by Setchô Zenji, the author of the *Hekiganroku* (cf. the commentary by Engo Zenji on Case 6 of the *Hekiganroku*).

said, “Mt. Sumeru¹.”

Verse:

Not-a-single-thought-arising – Mt. Sumeru:
The way Shôyô² presents the Dharma is not stingy at all.
If you can accept it, he gives it to you with both hands;
If you have a doubt, it’s so steep you can never climb it.
The blue ocean is wide, the white clouds are calm;
Do not put even a single hair in there.
A fake cock crow can hardly deceive me;
I will never let you cheat around and pass through the gate³.

CASE 20: Jizô’s “That’s it”

Introduction:

The profound speech leading into the ultimate principle despises “three” and tears up “four.”
The great way to the Capital Chôan runs in all directions.
If you suddenly open up your mouth and preach to the full, or move your legs and take steps, Then
you can hang up your meal bowl with the bag and break off your wandering staff.
Now just tell me, who is like this?

Case:

Jizô asked Hôgen, “Where are you going, senior monk⁴?” Hôgen said, “I am on pilgrimage⁵,
wandering with the wind.” Jizô said, “What is pilgrimage?” Hôgen said, “I don’t know.” Jizô
said, “Not knowing – that’s it.” Hôgen suddenly attained great enlightenment.

Verse:

Now, having practiced to the end, it is just like as it was at the beginning –
Having rid yourself of all intricacies you reach the non-knowing.
Let it be short, or let it be long – you cease pruning and patching;
Follow the high, or follow the low – it levels by itself.
Richness of the family or its scarcity – you use it according to the occasion;
You walk leisurely around in your land, you go where your feet lead you.
That you set out on pilgrimage thirty years ago –
How clearly it ran counter to the fact of your two eyebrows!

CASE 21: Ungan Sweeps the Ground

¹ The highest and most massive mountain in the world according to the Indian cosmology.

² I.e., Master Unmon.

³ Môshôkun of Sei was fleeing out the Kingdom of Shin with his men, arriving at the checking gate Kankokukan at midnight. When he let his men make fake cock crows, the watchers of the gate thought it was already morning, and they opened the gate and let Môshôkun and his men pass through the gate.

⁴ “Senior monk” (*jôza*) is an honorific for a monk who has practiced more than 10 years.

⁵ Originally: *angya*.

Introduction:

Having come out of delusion and enlightenment, and annihilated holy and ordinary – you find there is nothing special.

And yet establishing host and guest and distinguishing noble and mean is a requisite of a Zen house.

It is natural to evaluate the material and give an assignment,

But how do you understand those who are born of the same tree trunk and are of the same spirit?

Case:

When Ungan was sweeping the ground, Dôgo said, “You are having a hard time!” Ungan said, “You should know there is one who doesn't have a hard time.” Dôgo said, “If that's true, you mean there is a second moon?” Ungan held up his broom and said, “What number of moon is this?” Dôgo was silent.

Gensha said, “That is precisely the second moon.”

Unmon said, “The servant greets the maid politely.”

Verse:

Taking up the subject, they easily have swept off the gates;

They have used it properly and now they rest.

The one that handled the Snake in front of the Elephant-Bone Rock¹ –

Are you ashamed of your action of childhood when you are old?

CASE 22: Gantô's Bow to the Kaatzu

Introduction:

Human beings are examined with words, water is checked with a stick.

Sweeping grasses and witnessing the wind – this is what is normally applied.

What if all of a sudden a tiger with a burned tail springs out?

Case:

Gantô came to Tokusan. He straddled the threshold of the gate and asked, “Is this ordinary or is this holy?” Tokusan shouted, “Kaatzu!” Gantô made a deep bow.

Hearing of this, Tôzan said, “Hardly anyone but Gantô could have accepted it that way.”

Gantô said, “Old Tôzan can't tell between good and bad. At that time, I raised up with one hand and suppressed with the other.”

Verse:

Foiling the attempt of the on-comer, holding the gripe of authority;

Things have rules after which they must be performed;

Nations have laws that must not be violated.

The guest reverently brings his gift, and the host becomes proud;

The lord dislikes admonition, and the subordinate flatters.

What is the meaning of Gantô's questioning Tokusan?

¹ Cf. Case 24.

One raising, one suppressing – observe well his mind and action!

CASE 23: *Roso Faces the Wall*

Introduction:

Bodhidharma's nine years – it is called “the gazing wall.”
Shinkô's three bows – it divulges the mysterious activities of heaven.
[Yet] how could you sweep away the traces and annihilate the tracks?

Case:

Whenever Roso saw a monk coming, he immediately sat facing the wall.

Hearing of this, Nansen said, “I usually tell my people to realize what has existed before the kalpa of emptiness¹, or to understand what has been before Buddhas appeared in the world. Still, I haven't acknowledged one disciple or even a half. If he continues that way, he will go on even until the year of the donkey².”

Verse:

Flavor in plainness –
It wonderfully transcends thought and speech.
Seemingly continuing endlessly, yet it is beyond all phenomena.
Rugged, as if an idiot, yet his way is lofty.
A gem loses its integrity when patterns are carved;
A pearl in a gulf remains attractive by itself.
A fresh air, thoroughly pure, quenches the heat of autumn;
A piece of leisurely cloud afar separates sky from water.

CASE 24: *Seppô's “Look at the Snake”*³

Introduction:

The carp of the Eastern Sea, the turtle-nosed snake of the South Mountain, Fuke's donkey brays,
Shiko's dog bays –
They do not fall into to the ordinary tracks, and do not wander into the beast kind.
Just tell me, whose way is this?

Case:

Seppô, instructing the assembly, said, “There's a poisonous snake on the South Mountain⁴. All of you should look at it carefully!” Chôkei said, “Today in the Zen hall there are many people. They have lost their body and life.”

¹ One of the “four kalpas” or periods of cosmic changes: the kalpa of creation, the kalpa of existence, the kalpa of destruction, and the kalpa of emptiness.

² Since there is no “year of the donkey” in the Chinese zodiac, the expression “until the year of donkey” means endlessly.

³ See *Hekiganroku* Case 22.

⁴ The “South Mountain” [*Nanzan*] was the place where Seppô resided.

A monk told this to Gensha, who said, “Only Elder Brother Ryô¹ could say something like that. However, I wouldn't talk like that.” The monk asked, “What then would you say, Master?” Gensha replied, “Why does it have to be 'the South Mountain'?”

Unmon threw his staff in front of Seppô and acted frightened.

Verse:

Gensha's excessive strength, Chôkei's tiny courage:
The turtle-nose snake in the South Mountain is dead and useless.
When wind and clouds meet, a horny head emerges.
You now observe how Shôyô² plays with it.
He plays with it – see the change in a flash of lightning.
On one hand he superbly sends back and summons;
On the other he grips and releases.
Whom shall I impart this matter now?
The cold mouth bites the people, and they do not feel any pain.

CASE 25: Enkan's “Rhinoceros Fan”³

Introduction:

The dharma oceans⁴ are boundless, and yet they are not apart from here;
The entire matter before the countless kalpas exists in the present moment.
If you try to make him present it in front of his face, he cannot bring it out smoothly.
Tell me, where is his fault?

Case:

One day, Enkan called to his attendant, “Bring me the rhinoceros fan⁵.” The attendant said, “It is broken.” Enkan said, “If the fan is already broken, bring me *that* rhinoceros⁶.” The attendant gave no answer.

Shifuku⁷ drew a circle and wrote the ideograph “ox (牛)⁸” in it.

Verse:

As the fan is broken, he demands the rhinoceros;
There is a reason for the character in the circle.
Who would know that the thousand-year darkness of the dead moon
Subtly turns into the autumn with singular radiance?

¹ I.e., Chôkei.

² The place where Unmon lived. Here it stands for Unmon himself.

³ See *Hekiganroku* Case 91.

⁴ *Sekkai*, i.e., the entire phenomenal world.

⁵ A fan made of rhinoceros bones and paper (or a fan with a picture of rhinoceros on it).

⁶ If the fan is made of rhinoceros bones and paper, the “rhinoceros himself” seems to mean the remaining rhinoceros bones/skeleton of the fan.

⁷ To this episode Shifuku gives his answer on behalf of the attendant.

⁸ The Chinese character for “ox” (*gyû*, 牛) is one of the two characters for “rhinoceros” (*saigyû* = sai + gyû).

CASE 26: Kyôzan Points to Snow

Introduction:

Ice and frost are one color; snow and moon mingle their light.
It freezes the Dharma-body to death, and ruins Gyoho¹ through purity.
Is there anyone who wants to extol such a thing or not?

Case:

Kyôzan pointed to the snow lion² and said, “Is there any³ that goes beyond this color⁴?”
Unmon said⁵, “I would have pushed it over for him at once.”
Setchô said⁶, “He⁷ only knows how to push it over, but he doesn't know how to help it up.”

Verse:

A pushing-over, a helping-up: the snow lion in the garden.
Mindful about trespasses, he⁸ embraces kindness;
Brave in actions, they⁹ see righteousness.
The pure light shining into the eyes, one gets lost from home;
Turning into clarity, one falls into the [fixed] state.
Patch-robed monks never have anything to rely upon after all;
Born together, dying together – how can one say what is here and what is there?
The warm tide opening the plum buds, the spring comes to cold branches;
The chilly wind felling the leaves, the autumn purifies the river water.

CASE 27: Hôgen Points to the Bamboo Blinds¹⁰

Introduction:

When teachers are numerous, the course is disturbed;
When laws are issued, evil deeds spring up.
Although it is excessive compassion to cure illness when there is no illness,
An ordinance should be mentioned if there *is* an ordinance.
Why not quote such a story?

Case:

Hôgen pointed to the bamboo blinds with his hand. At that moment, two monks who were

¹ A fisherman in the land of So Kingdom (4th /3rd Century BCE) is said to have admonished the extremely pure Kutsugen for realistic flexibility. Cf. Verse to Case 12. Some take the word “fisherman” (*gyoho*) rather as a personal name *Gyoho*.

² Probably a lion made of snow or a stone lion covered with snow.

³ I.e., “anything” or “anyone.”

⁴ The white color.

⁵ I.e., later.

⁶ Hearing of this response by Unmon, Setchô, the compiler of the *Hekiganroku*, comments.

⁷ Unmon.

⁸ Kyôzan.

⁹ Unmon and Setchô.

¹⁰ See *Mumonkan* Case 26.

there went over to the blinds together and rolled them up. Hôgen said, “One has gained, one has lost.”

Verse:

Pines are straight, briars are crooked;
Cranes are tall, ducks are short.
In the ancient days of Emperor Fugi¹, all people forgot about reign and rebellion.
It was so peaceful as if a dragon were hiding in the abyss;
It was so free as if a bird shed the tether and soared to heaven.
Nothing could be done about it: the Patriarch came from the West,
And gain and loss are half and half.
The tansies turn in the empty sky with the wind,
The boat cuts off the stream and reaches the shore.
[You] sharp-minded patch-robed monks here,
Observe well Seiryô's² method!

CASE 28: Gokoku's "Three Disgraces"

Introduction:

A person wearing not even an inch of thread is nothing but a naked non-Buddhist;
A person chewing no grain of rice is definitively reduced to the red-faced king of devils.
Even if you are born in a holy place,
You cannot escape from the danger of falling down from a pole top.
Is there anywhere you can hide your disgrace?

Case:

A monk asked Gokoku, “How about when a crane perches on a withered pine tree?”
Gokoku said, “It is a disgrace when seen from the ground.”

The monk asked, “What about when every drop of water is frozen at once?” Gokoku said,
“It's a disgrace after the sun has risen.”

The monk asked, “At the time of the Eshô Persecution³, where did the good Guardian Deities⁴ of the Dharma go?” Gokoku said, “It is a disgrace for the two of them on both sides of the temple gate.”

Verse:

The vigorous man, full of dignity and power, does not yet have any grey beard;
The young man, if not indignant about himself, cannot yet be feoffed as a duke.
I reflect upon the family tradition of pure and honorable people⁵;

¹ One of the several ideal rulers of ancient China. Fugi is said to have taught people how to catch fish and to raise cattle – a legendary time of splendid peace.

² “Seiryô” stands for Master Hôgen.

³ Buddhism was suppressed by order of Emperor Bu (about 840).

⁴ *Niô*-figures, representing the two Deva kings on each side of the main gate of a Buddhist temple. They are considered to be protectors of the Dharma.

⁵ There is an episode behind the expression “a family tradition of pure and honorable people”: A man named Yôshin became governor of the Province of Kei in the Latter Han Dynasty. A province office called Ômitsu

How the ox was not watered in the river where the ears were washed¹.

CASE 29: Fuketsu's "Iron Ox"

Introduction:

A poor chess player, going all too slowly, rots the handle of the ax;
Your eyes swirling, your head going astray, you are robbed of the dipper handle.
Falling into a devil's cave and keeping hold of a dead snake's head,
Are you capable of radically transforming yourself like a leopard?

Case:

When he was staying at the government office of the Province Ei, Fuketsu entered the hall [to preach] and said, "The heart seal³ of the Patriarch⁴ resembles the activity of the iron ox⁵. When gone, it's there; when there, it's ruined⁶. If it's neither gone nor there, would it be right to give a seal [of approval] or not?"

Then Elder Rohi came up and said, "I have the activities of the iron ox. [However,] I ask you, Master, not to give me the seal." Fuketsu said, "I am accustomed to leveling the great ocean through fishing whales. But, alas, now I find instead a frog wriggling about in the mud." Rohi stood there considering. Fuketsu shouted "Kaatzu!" and said, "Why don't you say anything else, Elder?" Rohi was perplexed. Fuketsu hit him with his whisk and said, "Do you remember what you said? Say something, and I'll check it for you." Rohi tried to say something. Fuketsu hit

wanted to secretly give him a great sum of gold as bribe, but Yôshin never accepted it. Later he became governor of another province, which he ruled with absolute righteousness. He remained poor, never using any cart; his children ate always simple food. His friends and seniors would want to take care of him financially, but he always turned down the offer, saying, "If people in the future generations were to say, 'That man is a descendent of the pure and honorable governmental officer family,' it is the best asset I could ever afford to leave for my family."

¹ There was a man named Kyoyû in the time of Emperor Gyô. Since Kyoyû had a reputation as an excellent sage, Gyô wanted to make him the emperor for his stead. But Kyoyû fled and hid himself in the mountain. Later, Gyô found him and asked him to be the head of 9 provinces, if not the emperor. Thereupon, Kyoyû washed his ears in a river, saying, "I heard something terribly dirty." Just then, a man named Sôfu came with his ox; he wanted to give the animal water from the river. Sôfu asked Kyoyû, "Why are you washing your ears?" Kyoyû told him the story. To this, Sôfu said, "Precisely because you are so vain as to act as if you were a sage or a saint, a fellow like Gyô found you useful and asked you for something stupid like that. I would never let my dear ox drink from the water you soiled by washing your dirty ears." Sôfu then went further up the river to water his ox.

² See *Hekiganroku* Case 38.

³ The word "seal" [*in*] here means both the *stamp* that produces an impression and the *impression* that is produced by such a stamp. This double meaning is played upon in Fuketsu's utterance.

⁴ Bodhidharma.

⁵ In the Yellow River area in Sansei Province there was a road called Hotsu-kan. From the period of the Warring States a floating bridge was made upon the river, but every time the Yellow River flooded the bridge was washed away and had to be reconstructed. During the period of Emperor Gensô of the Tang Dynasty in 724 they constructed a floating bridge with ships, which were connected with one another through iron chains; these chains were then bound to anchors in the shape of iron oxen, iron men or iron pillars implemented in the middle of the river water. An iron ox was 1.5 meters high and 3.5 meters long, and weighed from 55 to 75 tons, according to the recent archaeological discovery.

⁶ Logically: When the *in* as the iron-ox stamp is gone, the *in* as its impression (or "seal" in the narrow sense) is there (i.e., becomes visible); when the *in* as the iron-ox stamp sits there, the *in* as its impression is ruined (, since you cannot see the impression as covered by the stamp itself).

him again with his whisk.

The Magistrate said, “Buddha's law and the King's law are of the same nature.” Fuketsu said, “What principle do you see in them?” The Magistrate said, “If you do not make a decision where a decision should be made, you are inviting disorder.”

Fuketsu descended from the rostrum.

Verse:

The activities of the iron ox:

The seal is there – the seal is ruined;

Going beyond the head of Vairocana¹,

Becoming a Nirmanakaya buddha² to sit [freely] on the tongue.

Fuketsu possesses the scale, and Rohi is defeated.

On the stick, at the shouting – a flash of lightning, a spark of flint.

All is clear, the pearl is on the table.

If you raise your eyebrows, it's already gone.

CASE 30: Daizui's “Kalpa Fire”³

Introduction:

Annihilating all oppositions, cutting off both heads through sitting:

In order to smash the lump of doubt, how would you need a full phrase?

The Capital Chôan is not even an inch away,

The mountain Tai weighs only three pounds.

Just tell me, relying on what command do you say something like that?

Case:

A monk asked Daizui, “When the great kalpa fire bursts out, the whole universe⁴ will be destroyed. I wonder if IT will also be destroyed or not.” Daizui said, “Destroyed.” The monk said, “If so, will IT be gone with the other⁵?” Daizui said, “Gone with the other.”

The monk asked Ryûsai, “When the great kalpa fire bursts out, the whole universe will be destroyed. I wonder if IT will also be destroyed or not.” Ryûsai said, “Not destroyed.” The monk said, “Why is it not destroyed?” Ryûsai said, “Because it is the same as the whole universe.”

Verse:

Destroyed – not destroyed:

The great universe – gone with the other?

In the phrases lies no activity of hook or chain.

Many legs are caught by entangling vines.

Understand? – not understand?

¹ The buddha-name for the world of absolute essence.

² The ultimate buddha that appears corresponding to the situations of the living beings.

³ See *Hekiganroku* Case 29. Compared with *Hekiganroku* Case 29, the present *Shôyôroku* version has an additional part with Ryûsai.

⁴ Literally: “triple-thousand great one-thousand worlds.”

⁵ The word “the other” means “the universe.”

It's a matter with utmost clarity – why are they being so extremely polite?
Those who know the heart need not bring up the matter to negotiate about it;
If you insist on selling or buying at my store, you are [already] a poor loser.

CASE 31: Unmon's "Pillar"¹

Introduction:

The highest activity – a crane soars into the firmament;
The road facing the sun – a falcon flying over the country of Shiragi².
Even if your eyes are like comets, you cannot help keeping your mouth shut³.
Just tell me, what sort of principle is this?

Case:

Unmon, instructing the assembly, said, “The old buddha and a pillar intersect each other. What number of activity is that?” The assembly was silent. He said on their behalf, “Clouds gather over the South Mountain; rain falls on the North Mountain.”

Verse:

The single way of godly light has never been concealed from the beginning.
It transcends ordinary views: it is “yes” and there is no “yes”;
It goes beyond ordinary emotions: it fits, and there is no fitting.
With the pollen of the flowers upon a cliff, the bees produce honey in their chambers;
With the rich wild grass, the musk deer make fragrance.
Each according to the kind: either three feet⁴ or sixteen feet⁵.
It is all clear: wherever you touch, it is superbly manifest.

CASE 32: Kyôzan's Mind and Objective World

Introduction:

The ocean is the world of the dragon – freely it appears, freely it disappears;
The sky is the home of the crane – at ease it flies, at will it calls.
Why does the foolish fish stay in a basin and the dull bird dwell among the reeds?
How should you figure gains and losses?

Case:

Kyôzan asked a monk, “Where do you come from?” The monk said, “I am from Yû Province.” Kyôzan said, “Do you think of that place?” The monk said, “Yes, always.” Kyôzan

¹ See *Hekiganroku* Case 83.

² The Korean Peninsula (or a country therein).

³ The fuller version of this sentence should go: “Even if your eyes are like comets, *you cannot see it; if you have a talent to speak as eloquently as flowing water*, you cannot help keeping your mouth shut.”

⁴ Like a small child.

⁵ Like Shakyamuni Buddha.

said, “That which thinks is the mind¹. That which is thought about is the objective world. Within that are mountains, rivers and the great earth, towers, palaces, people, animals, and other things. Reflect upon the mind that thinks. Are there a lot of things there?” The monk said, “There, I myself don't see anything at all.” Kyôzan said, “That's right for the stage of faith, but not yet for the stage of person.” The monk said, “Is there any special advice from your side, Master?” Kyôzan said, “It is not right to say that there is or there is not. Your insight shows that you have obtained only one side of the mystery. Sitting down, putting on clothes – from now on you see by yourself.”

Verse:

Embracing all, excluding nothing;
Flying high, without an obstacle.
Gates and walls erected high;
Barriers and locks installed severalfold.
The wine feast is in full swing, and the guest lies in sleep;
One is stuffed with rice, and yet the farmers are ruined.
The Suparnin², the King of birds, flaps the wind and bursts out of the empty sky;
The rambling dragon, with roaring thunder, kicks over the great blue ocean.

CASE 33: Sanshō's “Golden Scales”³

Introduction:

Meeting the strong, be weak; meeting the soft, be hard.
If both are robust and smite each other, there will surely be a wound.
Tell me, how do you meet your foe without collision?

Case:

Sanshō asked Seppō, “When a fish with golden scales has passed through the net, what should it get for food?” Seppō said, “I will tell you when you have passed through the net.” Sanshō said, “A great Zen master with 1500 disciples doesn't know how to speak.” Seppō said, “The old monk is just too busy with temple affairs.”

Verse:

When the carp first ascends the three tiers of the waterfall⁴,
the heavens send clouds and thunder to accompany him;
Bravely leaping and vigorously jumping, he shows his great function.
With his tail burnt up [and now turning into a dragon], he clearly surmounts the Gates of U:
The magnificent fish will never be thrown into a vinegar pot.
An old matured man does not startle other people;
Accustomed to meeting great foes he has no fear from the beginning.

¹ Originally: *kokoro*.

² A giant bird that eats even dragons.

³ See *Hekiganroku* Case 49.

⁴ Once the King U of ancient China made a tree-stair waterfall as part of his renovation program of the land's irrigation system (“Gates of U”). From there a legend came out that a strong and excellent carp climbs up these stairs and, turned into a dragon with its thunder-tinged tail, soars up to heaven.

Fluttering like a pinwheel of five ounces,
As a massive mountain, far more than a thousand tons.
Famed over the four oceans—who could be his peer?
He stands alone, never to be moved by the eight winds¹ blowing.

CASE 34: Fuketsu's "Speck of Dust"²

Introduction:

An empty hand, bare fist – a thousand changes, ten thousand variations.
Even if one makes *being* out of *non-being*,
What could be done when the unreal is cast into the real?
Tell me: is there a fundamental principle or not?

Case:

Fuketsu, giving instruction, said, "If one raises a speck of dust, the house and the nation prosper. If one does not raise a speck of dust, they perish."

Setchô held up his staff and said, "Is there anyone who lives and dies with this?"

Verse:

A white-headed man rises from his angling by the Isui River³;
The two brothers on Mt. Shuyô are starved for their purity⁴;
Which is what?
It is a speck of dust, with different transformations;
Fame and accomplishment: neither will perish easily⁵.

CASE 35: Rakuhô's Obeisance

Introduction:

Speedy action and swift speech shatter the assault of non-Buddhists as well as of heavenly devils.
A master of surpassing caliber, transcending even the principle of his own school, condescends to help a student of excellent aspiration and of the sharpest wisdom.
What if you meet a fellow who never turns his head even if he gets hit with a stick?

Case:

¹ They are: gaining, decaying, being slandered, being honored, being praised, defaming, suffering, and enjoying. That is, 8 factors which unsettle our mind.

² See *Hekiganroku* Case 61.

³ When Emperor Bun of the future Kingdom of Shû was about to go hunting, there was a fortune-telling that he would meet a great person who would help the emperor pacify the entire China. Sure enough, the emperor met Roshô, an old angler, along the River I-sui and made him his royal advisor.

⁴ The two brothers, Hakui and Shukusai, were persecuted by Emperor Bu of the Kingdom of Shû, who eventually conquered the entire China. The brothers fed to Mt. Shuyô, but, refusing to eat anything pertaining to the Kingdom of Shû, they starved to death in the end.

⁵ Another translation: "Fame and accomplishment – both, as difficult as they are, are perished."

Rakuho came to Kassan and without bowing stood facing him. Kassan said, “A chicken dwells in the phoenix nest. It's not of the same class. Go away.” Rakuho said, “I have come from far away, hearing much about you. Please, Master, I beg you to guide me.” Kassan said, “Before my eyes there is no you, and here there is no old monk¹.” Rakuho shouted, “Kaatzu!” Kassan said, “Stop it, stop it. Don't be so careless and hasty. Clouds and the moon are the same; valleys and mountains are different from each other. It is not difficult to cut off the tongues of the people under heaven. But how can you make a tongueless person speak?” Rakuho said nothing. Kassan hit him. With this, Rakuho started to obey Kassan.

Verse:

The red-tailed carp shakes its head and wags its tail;
Totally independent, he knows how to act in complete agility.
Even if he possesses the art to cut off tongues,
He is pulled by the nose and led to real mystery.
Outside the window screen, wind and moon are like day in the luminous night;
In front of the withered tree, blossoms and grass are in eternal spring.
O, a tongueless person, tongueless person!
How fitting is the one phrase – a full manifestation of the absolute command.
As one walks alone in one's sovereign realm, all is perfectly clear.
Well then, – let people under heaven stay merry and enjoy themselves!

CASE 36: Master Ba Is III ²

Introduction:

Practicing Zen apart from mind and consciousness – still there is *this*;
Learning beyond the paths of the ordinary and the holy – it is already too lofty.
The scarlet furnace sends out barbed balls of iron;
Even someone with the sword-like tongue and spear-like lips can hardly open up his mouth.
Who does not run foul of the point of the sword?
I will cite an example, look!

Case:

Great Master Ba was seriously ill. The temple steward asked him, “Master, how are you feeling these days?” Great Master said, “Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha³.”

Verse:

Sun-face, moon-face –
Stars shoot, thunder peals.
The mirror renders images without “I”;
In a basin the ball rolls of itself.
Don't you see: in front of the hammer and the stand, gold purified a hundred times;

¹ I.e., “I.”

² See *Hekiganroku* Case 3.

³ The “Sun-face Buddha” is a buddha, who is said to have a life of 1800 years, while the “Moon-face Buddha” lives only 24 hours.

Under the scissors and the measure, a roll of silk.

CASE 37: Isan's "Karma-Consciousness"

Introduction:

Driving the plowman's ox and dragging his nose around;
Robbing the hungry man of his food and grabbing his throat fast.
Is there anyone who can wield [such] a poisonous hand?

Case:

Isan asked Kyôzan, "Suppose a man asks you, saying, 'All living beings are tossed in a vast karma-consciousness, and have no foundation to rely upon.' How would you check him?" Kyôzan said, "If such a monk appears, I call out to him, 'Mr. So-and-so!' When he turns his head, instantly I say, 'What is this?' If he hesitates, then I say to him, 'Not only is there a vast karma-consciousness, but also there exists no foundation to rely upon.'" Isan said, "Good."

Verse:

One calls you, and you turn your head around—do you know your self or not?
The full moon, shining vaguely through ivy, even becomes a crescent.
The child of great riches is ruined a bit;
Endlessly destitute, how sorrowful the person is!

CASE 38: Rinzai's "True Person"

Introduction:

Taking a robber for your own child, taking a servant for the master:
Could a broken ladle of wood ever be your ancestor's skull?
The saddle bone for a donkey could never be your father's jawbone.
When bestowing land with a new branch temple, how would you discern the master?

Case:

Rinzai instructed his assembly and said, "There is one true person of no rank, always coming out and going in through the gates of your face¹. Beginners who have not yet witnessed that, look! look!"

Then a monk came out and asked, "What is the one true person of no rank?" Rinzai descended from the rostrum and grabbed him. The monk hesitated. Rinzai pushed him away and said, "The true person of no rank – what a shit-stick you are!"

Verse:

Delusion and enlightenment are two sides of the same coin;
Transmission is subtle, and yet simple.
When the spring wind once breezes, hundreds of flowers open;

¹ I.e., sense organs such as eyes, nose, ears, tongue, etc.

When the powerful person yanks once, nine bulls turn back.
It cannot be helped: mud and sand are removed, yet it does not open;
The eye of the fountain is evidently blocked.
If it suddenly burst open, the water would freely flow.
The master also says, “Watch out!”¹

CASE 39: Jōshū's “Wash Your Bowls”

Introduction:

When rice comes, you open your mouth;
When sleep comes, you close your eyes.
When you wash your face, you touch your nose;
When you take up your straw sandals, you feel your feet.
At those times, if you lose the koan, take a burning light and make a special search
in the deep night.
How can you find the right correspondence [with your real self]?

Case:

A monk asked Jōshū, “I have just entered this monastery. I beg you, Master, please give me instructions.” Jōshū asked, “Have you eaten your rice gruel yet?” The monk answered, “Yes, I have.” Jōshū said, “Then wash your bowls.”

Verse:

Once the rice gruel is over, one tells to wash the bowls:
The mind-ground clearly meets itself.
And now, the practitioner of the monastery has finished learning:
Tell me, is there enlightenment in there or not?

CASE 40: Unmon's “White and Black”

Introduction:

Where the wheel of activities turns, even the wise eye is bewildered;
When the treasure mirror opens, no speck of dust ever passes.
The fist opens, [yet] nothing falls to the ground;
He knows well the time, according to the subject.
When the two sword blades meet, how do they penetrate each other?

Case:

Unmon asked Kempō, “May I ask for your answer³?” Kempō said, “Have you ever come to

¹ Or: “Danger!”

² See *Mumonkan* Case 7. However, the end of the *Mumonkan* Case goes: “The monk attained some realization.”

³ A literal translation. It is possible to understand the word *tōwa* simply as “instruction” and to translate the whole sentence as “May I ask for your instruction?”

this old monk or not?" Unmon said, "If so, I must say I was too late." Kempô said, "Is that so, is that so!"

Unmon said, "I thought I was Marquis White, but I find that there is Marquise Black¹."

Verse:

The bowstring and the arrow-notch match each other;
Pearls in the net reflect one another infinitely.
A hundred arrows shot, no arrows are wasted;
All sceneries accommodated, the lights shine without impediment.
Each utterance comprising all, one dwells in the perfect samadhi of leisureliness.
Moving freely therein in particularity and equality;
Nothing but complete freedom in all directions.

CASE 41: Rakuho at His Deathbed

Introduction:

Sometimes one is sincere and faithful, distressing oneself;
One's suffering and pain is beyond words.
Sometimes misfortune arises, people being devoid of comprehension.
At the deathbed one condescends and retails cheaply: at the very end one is most polite.
Tears welling out of painful guts, it is impossible to hide any more.
Now, is there anyone who has cold eyes?

Case:

When he was about to die, Rakuho addressed his assembly and said, "I have one matter to ask you about. If you say, '*It* is this,' you are putting another head on your own. If you say, '*It* isn't this,' you are looking for life by cutting off your head." The head monk said, "'The green mountain always lifts up its legs. You don't need to carry a lantern in the daylight.'"² Rakuho said, "What occasion is this to utter such a saying?" A senior monk named Genjô stepped forward and said, "Apart from these two ways, I beg you, Master, not to ask." Rakuho said, "That's not enough. Say some more." Genjô said, "I cannot say it fully." Rakuho said, "I don't care whether or not you can say it fully." Genjô said, "I feel just like 'an attendant who has nothing to respond to his master'³."

That evening, Rakuho called Genjô to him and said, "Your response today had something quite reasonable. You have to realize what our late master⁴ said, 'There are no dharmas before the eyes; the consciousness is before the eyes. *It* is not the Dharma before the eyes; *It* cannot be reached by eyes and ears.' Which phrase is the guest? Which phrase is the host? If you can sort them out, I will transmit the bowl and robe to you." Genjô said, "I don't understand." Rakuho said, "You must understand." Genjô said, "I really don't understand." Rakuho shouted

¹ Marquis White and Marquise Black are noted thieves in Chinese folklore. Marquise Black, a female thief, seems to have been the cleverer of the two.

² The phrase obviously comes from a saying by Rakuho himself: "Once a monk asked Rakuho, 'What is the mysterious thing about the practice?' Rakuho said, 'The green mountain always lifts up its legs; you don't remove the wheels in the daylight.'"

³ Apparently an idiomatic expression meaning, "I can't describe it in words."

⁴ Rinzaï or Kassan.

and said, “Miserable, miserable!”

[Another] monk asked, “What would you like to say, Master?” Rakuho said, “The boat of compassion is not to be rowed¹ over pure waves; it’s wasted labor releasing wooden geese down the precipitous strait².”

Verse:

With the clouds as bait, with the moon as a hook, one fishes in the pure water;
Old with age, solitary-hearted, one hasn’t caught a fish yet.
After returning [to the common world, completing] the poem “Forsaking the Clamor”³:
[Lo,] the only sober one upon the Bekira River⁴.

CASE 42: Nanyô and the Water Jug

Introduction:

Washing the meal bowls, pouring water into the jug:
These are all Dharma teaching and Buddha-work.
Carrying firewood and transporting water:
These are nothing but supernatural deeds and miraculous functions.
Why don't you understand the actions that emanate light and shake the earth?

Case:

A monk asked National Teacher Chû of Nanyô, “What is the essential body⁵ of Vairocana Buddha⁶?” National Teacher said, “Pass me that water jug.” The monk passed him the water jug. National Teacher said, “Put it back where it was.” The monk asked again, “What is the essential body of Vairocana Buddha?” National Teacher said, “The old Buddha is long gone.”

Verse:

Birds fly in the sky,
Fish stay in the water:
They have forgotten rivers and lakes,
Have acquired their will in clouds and sky.
If you have a single thread of doubting mind,
You are already a thousand miles away from what you are facing.
How many can appreciate the benevolence received and requite it?

¹ “To row a boat of compassion” a metaphor expressing the teaching activities of a Zen master.

² It was a custom that the boat rushing down the stream through a gorge released pieces of wood ahead as a warning so that a possible crash with the boat coming upstream could be avoided. These wooden chips were called “wooden geese.”

As for a historical fact, Master Rakuho had 11 formal successors in the Dharma, according to an ancient record (*Dentôroku/Transmission of the Lamp*).

³ A poem which Kutsugen (4th-to 3rd Century BCE; cf. Verse to Case 12) composed after he was dismissed from his royal office through a slander and returned to the common world. In despair Kutsugen eventually committed suicide in the Bekira River.

⁴ Here in the Verse Rakuho is depicted with the image of Kutsugen.

⁵ The so-called “Dharma-body” or *dharmakaya*.

⁶ The principal Buddha.

CASE 43: Razan's "Appearing and Disappearing"

Introduction:

One speck of a holy hermit's medicine changes iron into gold;
One word at logic's end renders an ordinary person to a sage.
If you learn that gold and iron are not two,
And that ordinary and sage are intrinsically the same,
Then you don't need that "one" after all.
Just tell me, what is that "one" point?

Case:

Razan asked Gantô, "What if things appear and disappear without ceasing?" Gantô scolded him saying, "Who appears and disappears?"

Verse:

Cutting the old entangling vines,
Smashing the fox's den –
A leopard clothes himself with fog and changes its spots [as a tiger]¹,
A [serpent] alters his bones and, as a dragon, rides the thunder.
Ha! Appearing and disappearing in abundance – what is it?

CASE 44: Kôyô's "Suparnin"

Introduction:

A lion strikes an elephant, Suparnin² knocks down a dragon.
Even flying creatures and running animals distinguish between lord and subject;
Patch-robed monks should learn to tell between guest and host.
But how could you judge a person who dares to defy the heavenly authority?

Case:

A monk asked Master Hô of Kôyô, "The great dragon has emerged from the ocean, calming heaven and earth. How will you treat him when he suddenly appears before you?" Master Hô said, "Suparnin, the king of birds, absorbs the entire universe. Who can stick his head within him?" The monk said, "But how about when he does appear?" Hô said, "It is like a falcon catching a pigeon. If you don't realize it, you will learn the truth through the 'inspection before the balcony.'³" The monk said, "If so, then I'll fold my hands on my chest¹ and retreat three

¹ According to a Chinese legend, a leopard hides himself in the deep fog of a southern mountain and fasts for a week, in order to change his spots to become a tiger.

² A giant bird that eats even dragons.

³ A reference to a story in which Heigenkun Chôshô, the brother of the king of Chô and a wealthy landlord with 3,000 dependents, built a grand palace with a balcony that overlooked the main road. One day a crippled person was passing by and one of the concubines saw him and laughed. The crippled person was angered and demanded Heigenkun her head. Heigenkun presented the head of an executed convict as the head of the concubine. His dependents knew of his deception, lost faith in their master and gradually all left him. His

steps.” Hô said, “You black tortoise under the Sumeru altar.² Don't wait to be struck on the forehead again and get hurt.”

Verse:

The imperial edict comes down, the command is released:
The heartland is for the emperor, the border lands are for the generals.
The roaring thunder does not wait for the dormant insects to wake up;
How could one perceive that the wind stops the streaming clouds?
Continuously looming and weaving:
Golden lines and jasper stripes naturally follow.
Before [anything is] stamped, it's vast and empty;
Intrinsically there are no letters and characters at all.

CASE 45: Four Phrases from the Engaku Sutra

Introduction:

That which exists now – manifestation of the essence³:
This all relies on the “right now.”
The family tradition of the essential nature never plans to go beyond itself.
If you forcibly creates burls and joints, and dare to resort to devices,
You do nothing but draw eyebrows on Mr. Chaos and put handles to your meal bowls.
How could you attain peace at all?

Case:

The Engaku⁴ Sutra says:
“At all times, you do not raise the delusive mind.
When there are all kinds of illusory thoughts, you do not extinguish them.
Dwelling in the delusory state of mind, you do not add understanding.
Where there is no understanding, you do not distinguish the truth.”

Verse:

Stately and dignified, carefree and at ease.
Stick your head amid the clamorous place, lower your feet amid the peaceful place.
The binding strings around the lower legs have disappeared: I am free;
The mud upon the nose tip is gone – stop trying to chop it off⁵.
Don't be troubled: Medicine fixed according to a scrap of paper a thousand years ago⁶.

fortunes declined, so at last he cut off the head of the concubine and presented it for the crippled person to inspect. After that the dependents returned and his fortunes were restored. -- The story is an allusion to the fact that you can never hide away the real truth.

¹ The position of the hands during the *kinhin*.

² A reference to one of the four carved figures, representing black tortoises, underneath the Sumeru altar (with the Buddha statue). It is used here as a symbol of someone who has lost the freedom of movement.

³ Literally: “Genjô – kôan.”

⁴ “Engaku” means the perfect awakening of Buddha.

⁵ A story lies behind this expression: Once a carpenter, who could masterfully handle the ax, chopped off the speck of mud on his friend’s nose tip with his ax, without hurting the latter at all.

⁶ I.e., the Engaku-Sutra itself.

CASE 46: Tokusan's "Study Accomplished"

Introduction:

The pure ground without an inch of grass for ten thousand miles still deludes people;
The clear sky without a speck of cloud in eight directions still deceives you.
Even if one removes a wedge by [driving in] another wedge,
It does not avoid sustaining emptiness by using emptiness.
Observe well a special method – a hammer upon the back of the head!

Case:

Great Master Tokusan Emmyô¹ instructed his assembly and said, "If you have exhausted to the end, you will realize right away that all buddhas in the three worlds have stuck their mouths to the wall². Yet there is still one person, who is giving a great laugh. If you can recognize that person, your Zen study has been accomplished."

Verse:

Gathering in – holding fast the throat:
Winds polish, clouds wipe; the water is cool, the sky is autumn.
Never say the brocade-scaled fish has no good taste:
One hook of the moon fishes out [the waters of] the Sôrô River.³

CASE 47: Jôshû's "Oak Tree in the Garden"⁴

Introduction:

The oak tree there in the garden, the flag on the pole blown in the wind –
It is like one flower preaching the boundless spring,
Like one drop of water revealing the waters of the great ocean.
The ancient buddha, born once in 500 years, goes way beyond the ordinary currents.
Not falling into words and thoughts, how could you understand the speech?

Case:

A monk asked Jôshû, "What is the meaning of the patriarch's coming from the West?"
Jôshû said, "The oak tree there in the garden."

¹ He was also called Tokusan Emmitsu Zenji, a Dharma descendant in the line of Unmon. He is different from the more famous Tokusan Senkan Zenji.

² I.e., they are unable to open their mouths.

³ Another translations would be: "One hook of the moon on the Sôrô River fishes out [everything]." The Sôrô River is famous for its connection with the righteous statesman Kutsugen (343-278 BCE), who committed suicide in the Bekira River, lamenting over the corruption of the world: A man named Gyoho once spoke to the frustrated Kutsugen, "If the water of the Sôrô River is pure, I will wash my helmet strings; if the water of the Sôrô River is muddy, I will wash the legs of my horses."

⁴ See *Mumonkan* Case 37.

Verse:

The banks [are his] eyebrows
 Holding snow;
The river [is his] eyes
 Containing autumn;
The ocean [is his] mouth
 Drumming the waves;
The ship [is his] tongue
 Beaming with the streams.
The hand that weeps out disorders,
The staff that brings peace.
Old Jôshû, old Jôshû!
Monasteries are disturbed, never coming to rest;
In vain you expend devices, making carts and fitting them to the grooves;
Without art it intrinsically covers the valleys and fills the trenches.

CASE 48: Vimalakirti's "Not-Two"¹

Introduction:

Even if one's action is so free in all directions,
There's a spot where one cannot start a thing at all;
Even if one's eloquence knows no hindrance,
There is a time one cannot even open up the mouth.
Just as Ryûge, a man of no hand, hit with a hand,
So did Kasan make a tongueless person speak.
Who is the one who can place oneself in the Middle Way?

Case:

Vimalakirti² asked Manjusri, "What does it mean that the Bodhisattva enters the Dharma-gate of Not-Two?" Manjusri said, "I see it like this: In all phenomena, there are neither words nor explanations, neither presentations nor knowledge; it is beyond all questions and answers. That is what I understand with 'to enter the Dharma-gate of Not-Two'."

Then Manjusri asked Vimalakirti, "All of us have finished giving our explanations. Now you should give your explanation. What does it mean that the Bodhisattva enters the Dharma-gate of Not-Two?"

Vimalakirti remained silent.

Verse:

¹ See *Hekiganroku* Case 84.

² An excellent lay disciple of Shakyamuni. He is said to have had the same degree of enlightenment as Shakyamuni himself. Once he became very ill, and Shakyamuni wanted to send someone out of his disciples to go and pay a visit to Vimalakirti in bed. But no one wanted to go, because they knew they would be severely checked in their Dharma eye by Vimalakirti. At last, Shakyamuni sent Manjusri. Then, unexpectedly, a big group of Shakyamuni's disciples wanted to accompany Manjusri, so they all came to Vimalakirti. The koan starts from there.

Manjusri asks about the illness of the Old Bina¹;
The gate of Not-Two opens, and one sees the adepts.
A rugged stone on the surface, a pure stone inside—who could appreciate it?
Forgetting and losing what is before and after oneself—do not lament.
Humbly presenting the gem that looked like a stone,
The man had his foot tendons cut off in the court yard of So²;
The snake, once wounded, gives thanks with a shining gem in the castle of Zui
[–, only to arouse antagonism]³.
Stop checking, it has no flaws whatsoever:
When the vulgar mind is all gone, it can be the real thing a little.

CASE 49: Tôzan and the Memorial Service

Introduction:

However hard one may try,
It can never be depicted, it can never be drawn.
Fuke made a somersault⁴, Ryûge exposed only half his body⁵.
After all, what is the appearance of that One?

Case:

When Tôzan held a memorial service for Ungan before his portrait, he told the episode related to the portrait⁶. Then a monk asked, “When Ungan said, ‘Just this!’ what did that mean?” Tôzan said, “At that time, I almost misunderstood my master's intention.” The monk said, “I wonder whether or not Ungan really knew that *it* is.” Tôzan said, “If he did not know that *it* is, how could he say like that? If he knew that *it* is, how did he dare say like that?”

Verse:

“How could he say like that?”
In the fifth watch the cocks crow among the homes before dawn –
“How did he dare say like that?”
The thousand-year crane grows old with the pine tree in the clouds.
The jewel mirror is clear and bright,

¹ “Bina” designates the “Castle Binari (Vaisalian)” where Vimalakirti resided.

² Cf. the “Introduction” for Case 2: A man named Benka found a stone with a gorgeous gem inside; he presented it to the kings of So, but the kings, thinking that it was just an ordinary stone, became furious about Benka and had the latter’s foot tendons cut off as a punishment.

³ Once a wounded snake was saved by a lord in the Kingdom of Zui. Later the snake appeared to the lord to thank him with a shining gem in its mouth. But the lord, frightened by the light in the snake’s mouth, tried to kill it with a sword.

⁴ Master Banzan, shortly before his death, made his disciples to come to him and told them to depict the Greatest Matter. Fuke made a somersault and went out.

⁵ There is a portrait of Ryûge Zenji, on which only the half of his body is painted. On the back side of the portrait stand the following verses: “The sun comes out and lines itself with the mountains; the moon is round and shines upon each house. This is not no-body; I do not want to expose all.”

⁶ Tôzan was still a young monk under Ungan. One day, when he was leaving his master, he asked Ungan, “After your passing, if I am asked by someone whether I have your portrait, what should I answer?” Ungan remained silent for a while and then said, “Just this.” When Tôzan was about to go, Ungan called to Tôzan, “Dear Kai (Tôzan’s real name)!” and said, “If you want to attain this Great Matter, go straight to it and be utmost precise!”

It examines both essence (*shô*) and phenomena (*hen*).
The jade loom operates back and forth,
It sees the completion amid essence and phenomena (*kenchûtô*).
The wind of the School is superbly cruising, the regular footsteps continue forever.
Father and son change and pass through¹; their fame and radiance prevail all over.

CASE 50: Seppô's "What Is This?"

Introduction:

The last word finally breaks the toughest barrier.
Gantô is so confident of himself that, above, he even defies his own teacher,
And, below, he never concedes to his younger Dharma-brother.
Does he forcibly make the knurs grow, or does it have any special functions?

Case:

When Seppô was living in a hermitage, two monks came to pay their respects. When he saw them coming, Seppô thrust open the gate of his hermitage with his hands, jumped out, and said, "What is this?" [One of]the monks also said, "What is this?" Seppô hung his head and retired into his hermitage.

Later, the monk came to Gantô. Gantô asked him, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From Reinan." Gantô said, "Did you ever visit Seppô?" The monk said, "Yes, I visited him." Gantô said, "What did he say?" The monk related what had happened. Gantô said, "What else did he say?" The monk said, "Not a word; he hung his head and retired into his hermitage." Gantô said, "Oh, how I regret now that in those days I did not tell him the last word³! If I had told it to him, no one under heaven could do anything against him."

At the end of the summer practice period the monk came back to this conversation and asked him about its meaning. Gantô said, "Why didn't you ask me about it sooner?" The monk said, "I could not dare to ask you about it." Gantô said, "Seppô was born on the same stem as I, but he will not die on the same stem. If you want to know the last word, it is just this."

Verse:

Cut, grind, strike, and polish⁴;
Change attitudes, and apply dialects – :
In the Pond Kappi the staff turned into a dragon⁵;
The shuttle stayed hidden in the house of Tô⁶.

¹ "Change and pass through" is a shortened form of a longer idiom: "When you are stuck, you change; when you change, you pass through; when you pass through, it stays forever."

² See *Hekiganroku* Case 51.

³ "Matsugo-no-ku" literally means the word/phrase one utters before one dies.

⁴ These 4 verbs represent the idiomatic word "Sessastakuma", which means the competitive efforts in rivalrous relationship in a particular field.

⁵ In olden China, a man named Hichôbô met a hermit and practiced under him. But the result was not promising. When he wanted to leave him, the hermit gave Hichôbô a bamboo staff, saying, "You should mount on it on your way back, and throw it into a pond named Kappi." When Hichôbô did so, the staff turned into a dragon.

⁶ Once a boy named Tôkan caught a shuttle with a fish net. He took it back home and hung it on the wall. Some time later there was a thunder, and the shuttle turned into a dragon and soared toward heaven.

There are many who are born of the same line;
[Yet] not many are those who die of the same line.
The last word: just *this*.
A boat in the wind, carrying the moon, floats on the autumn water.

CASE 51: Hôgen's "Boat or Land"

Introduction:

Amid the worldly dharmas how many people have been brought to enlightenment;
Amid the Buddhist dharma how many people have been deluded!
If you suddenly become completely one, can you articulate delusion and enlightenment or not?

Case:

Hôgen asked Senior Monk Kaku, "Did you come by boat or by land?" Kaku said, "By boat." Hôgen said, "Where is the boat?" Kaku said, "On the river."

After Kaku had withdrawn, Hôgen asked a monk nearby, "You tell me, did that monk who was here just now have the eye or not?"

Verse:

Water cannot wash water,
Gold cannot be changed into gold.
One obtains a horse without knowing the color of its hair¹,
One enjoys the lute without resorting to the strings².
[In the olden times] people made knots in a rope³; then started trigrams⁴ –
[in the end] it [degenerated] to this *thing*;
The true genuine mind of Banko⁵ has completely been lost.

CASE 52: Sôzan's "Dharma-body"

Introduction:

Those who have intelligence can understand through metaphors.
If you reach a point where no comparisons or analogies work,
How do you explain to other people?

¹ Once Hakuraku found an excellent horse. He reported it was a yellow male horse. But when the horse arrived, it was a black female horse. When people mocked Hakuraku for his inability even to describe a horse, Hakuraku answered, "I capture the essence and forget rough parts, see the inside and forget the outside." It surely was a horse of exceptional quality.

² The great poet Tôenmei (365-427) is said to have had no ear for music, but he profoundly loved lute, saying, "If you know the heart of the lute, why do you have to bother about the particularities of the strings?"

³ This means was enough to secure a contract in the olden times when peace and trust prevailed among all people.

⁴ Then, people became cleverer and started making sophisticated trigrams.

⁵ The sage founder of the Old China.

Case:

Sôzan asked Elder Toku, “The true Dharma-body of Buddha is like the empty sky. It manifests its form corresponding to things – just like the moon on the water.”¹ How do you explain the principle of this corresponding?” Toku said, “It is like a donkey looking into a well.” Sôzan said, “You put it in a nice way, but you were able to say only eighty percent.” Toku said, “How about you, Master?” Sôzan said, “It is like a well looking at a donkey.”

Verse:

The donkey looks into the well, the well looks at the donkey.
Wisdom embraces all, without anything outside it;
Purity prevails, with excessive abundance.
Who can deliver the seal behind the elbow?²
No books are stocked in the entire house³.
With no thread in the loom the shuttle does the work,
Beautiful patterns, vertical and horizontal,
With exquisite designs, appearing of themselves.

CASE 53: Ôbaku's “Devourers of Dregs”⁴

Introduction:

When one meets the student, one does not see Buddha;
For great enlightenment there is not teacher.
The sword that fixes heaven and earth knows no sympathy;
The activity to capture tigers and rhinoceroses forgets holy understanding.
Now tell me, whose strategy is this?

Case:

Ôbaku instructed the assembly saying, “You are all devourers of dregs! If you keep roaming around like this⁵, when will you be able to have your ‘today’? Do you know that in this great empire of Tang there is not a single Zen master?”

Then a monk came forward and said, “What would you say to those who direct their assemblies and lead their followers in various places?” Ôbaku said, “I do not say that there is no Zen; I only say that there is no master.”

Verse:

The way is divided, the threads are dyed: too much labor.
Binding the leaves, tying the flowers: it mars the ancestors.
One takes skillfully the active handle of creation;

¹ A quotation from the *Golden Light Sutra* (Kon-kômyô-kyô).

² It is said that with “the seal behind the elbow” you can work wonders.

³ The episode behind this line: Once Ungan instructed the assembly, saying, “There was a boy who could answer any questions.” Tôzan asked, “Are there many books in his house?” Ungan said, “Not one book.” Tôzan said, “How could he know so many things?” Ungan, “Day and night, he never slept.” Tôzan, “Could one ask him about the most important Matter?” Ungan, “He could have answered such questions, but he would never do that.”

⁴ See *Hekiganroku* Case 11.

⁵ I.e., keep visiting temples and masters here and there in a lukewarm manner.

Vessels designed with waters and clouds are on the lathe.
Clearing the tangles, smashing the tile chips, shaving off the fluff;
The balance, the mirror, the scale and the scissors:
Old Ôbaku perceives even an autumn hair;
Cutting off the spring wind through sitting, he never allows haughtiness.

CASE 54: Ungan's "Great Mercy"¹

Introduction:

Transparent on eight sides, totally open in ten directions;
Emitting light and shaking the earth in all places,
Exercising supernatural deeds and subtle functions at all times:
Tell me, how could this be manifested?

Case:

Ungan asked Dôgo, "What does the Bodhisattva of the Great Mercy use so many hands and eyes for?" Dôgo answered, "It is like a person in the middle of the night reaching with his hand behind his head groping for his pillow." Ungan said, "I get it." Dôgo said, "How do you get it?" Ungan said, "The whole body is hands and eyes." Dôgo said, "You said it very well. But you expressed only eight-tenths of it." Ungan said, "How would you say it, Elder Brother?" Dôgo said, "The entire body is hands and eyes."

Verse:

One hole, void and open;
Transparent on all sides.
Without form, without "I", spring takes its shape;
Unobstructed and unhindered, the moon travels through the empty sky.
Pure treasure eyes, arms of virtue;
"The whole body" and "the entire body" – how do they compare with each other?
The present hands and eyes manifest the entire activities:
The great functions, vertical and horizontal – how could they detest anything at all?

CASE 55: Seppô in Charge of Cooking²

Introduction:

Ice is chillier than water, blue comes out of indigo:
Only when one's view excels that of one's master, it is qualified to be transmitted;
If the child is brought up and cannot match the father, the family declines in one generation.
Tell me, who is it that snatches away the activities of one's father?

¹ See *Hekiganroku* Case 89.

² See *Mumonkan* Case 13.

Case:

Seppô came to Tokusan and became in charge of cooking food. One day, the lunch was late. Tokusan came down to the hall carrying his bowls. Seppô said, “Old Master, the bell has not yet rung nor the drum sounded. Where are you going with your bowls?” Thereupon Tokusan went back to his room. Seppô told this to Gantô. Gantô said, “Great Tokusan though he is, he has not yet realized the last word.”

Hearing of this, Tokusan sent his attendant to summon Gantô and then asked him, “Don't you approve of this old monk?” Gantô whispered his intention. Tokusan remained silent.

Sure enough, the next day, when Tokusan ascended the rostrum, his talk was quite different from usual. Gantô, rubbing his hands together, laughed and said, “Wonderful! How happy I am that our Old Man has realized the last word. From now on he'll be subject to no one on earth.”

Verse:

The last word – did you understand it or not?
Father Tokusan and his son are terribly unclear.
In the assembly there is a guest from south of the River [Yangtze]:
Don't sing the song of partridges in front of him¹.

CASE 56: Misshi and the White Rabbit

Introduction:

Even if one sank forever in hell, one would not look for the Liberation of the saints;
Daibadatta [=Devadatta] enjoyed the bliss of the three-Dhyana-Heaven amid uninterrupted hell.
Uzuranbotsu [=Uddaka-Ramaputta] fell from the zenith of heaven
down into the body of a flying raccoon.
Just tell me, where is the gain or loss?

Case:

When Uncle Misshi² and Tôzan were walking together, they saw a white rabbit run by in front of them. Misshi said, “How swift!” Tôzan said, “In what way?” Misshi said, “It is just like a person in white clothes³ being venerated as a prime minister.” Tôzan said, “You are such an elderly and respectable man, and still you say something like that?” Misshi said, “Then how about you?” Tôzan said, “A noble of an ancient house is temporarily fallen into poverty.”

Verse:

Comparing the strength with snow and frost⁴;
Walking smoothly upon elevated clouds¹.

¹ A partridge is a bird representing the region south of the Yangtze River [Kônan Region]. The people from that area were said to become awfully homesick whenever they heard the song of their home birds. Seppô originally comes from the Province of Sen, south of the River.

² Shinzan Sômitsu Zenji, a disciple of Ungan Zenji, as Tôzan Zenji himself. Since Sômitsu Zenji was elder to Tôzan Zenji, he is called “Uncle.” “Misshi” literally means “Master Mitsu.”

³ I.e., a commoner, or a person without any social status.

⁴ The line depicts how “a noble of an ancient house is fallen into poverty”, facing difficulties and hardships.

Kakei left his country²; Shôjo passed the bridge³.
Shôga and Sôzan's strategy established the Han Dynasty⁴;
The body and mind of Sôfu and Kyoyû wanted to evade Emperor Gyô⁵.
People are disturbed by favor and disgrace – find deep faith in yourself.
The traces of the true heart get mingled and mixed with those of fishermen and woodcutters.

CASE 57: Gon'yô's One "Thing"

Introduction:

You play with the shadow to change the original form,
Without knowing that it is the original form that is the source of the shadow.
You raise your voice to stop an echo,
Without knowing that it is the voice that is the root of the echo.
If it's not seeking an ox while riding an ox, then it's driving out a wedge using a wedge.
How can you avoid this flaw?

Case:

Venerable Gon'yô asked Jôshû, "How is it when a person does not have a single thing?" Jôshû said, "Throw it away." Gon'yô said, "I say I don't have a single thing. What could I ever throw away?" Jôshû said, "If so, carry it with you."⁶

Verse:

If one is not being attentive enough, one cannot preempt effective attacks;
Realizing one's own recklessness, one gets shamefully checkmated:
When the game was over⁷, the handle of the axe had been rotted away at the waist⁸;
After cleansing the ordinary bones, one plays with the sacred hermits.

¹ Another way to representing how "a person in white clothes is venerated as a prime minister."

² Ryû Kakei was an honest, honorable man from childhood, but as a government official he was treated very coldly three times. Here, he is an example of "falling into poverty."

³ Shiba Sôjo became a very high official in the Han Dynasty. When he as a young man left his home in Shoku, he wrote on the pillar of the Bridge Shôsen near his home as follows: "A man of great courage would never pass through this bridge again without being on a four-horsed carriage (=a cart for a highly-elevated person)." He represents the world of a person "venerated as a prime minister."

⁴ Shôga and Sôzan aided the first emperor of the Han Dynasty and created the basis for peace for the next four hundred years. Here they represent "persons in white clothes being venerated as prime ministers."

⁵ Sôfu and Kyoyû were righteous men. When the emperor of the Kingdom of Gyô wanted to give his throne to Sôfu, the latter refused it and went into a river nearby to wash the ears. There came Kyoyû, wanting to give his cow some water from the river. He asked Sôfu why he was washing his ears. Sôfu answered, "The emperor said he would invite me to the throne, which dirtied my ears. So I want to wash away the filth." Then Kyoyû said, "Since you play like a righteous and honorable man, you received such a dirty offer. The water of the river where you washed your ears is too filthy for my cow to drink." So he went further up the river to water his cow. The story symbolizes the world of "temporarily falling into poverty."

⁶ It is said that Gon'yo thereupon attained a great enlightenment.

⁷ Literally: "When the game was destroyed".

⁸ Once there was a man named Ôshitsu. When he was on his way to cut wood in the forest, he met four boys playing Chinese chess. Since he loved chess, he was fascinated by the game and watched it till the end. When the game was over, he rose up, but, behold, his axe was completely rotten and fallen apart; his clothes were also all worn out. In great anxiety he returned home, only to find that several decades had already gone by.

CASE 58: “Getting Despised” in the Diamond Sutra¹

Introduction:

Understanding the meaning depending upon the sutras
is the enemy of the Buddhas of three realms;
Going away one word from the sutras is the same as the devil’s preaching.
The one who is not included in cause and does not go into effect –
Does that person receive karma results or not?

Case:

The Diamond Sutra says, “It is about getting despised by other people: If you are to come into hell because of your sins in your previous life, these sins will be extinguished because you are despised by the people of this world.”

Verse:

Merits and faults are continuously connected;
Causes and effects are glued together.
Away from his mirror Ennyadatta runs about crazily².
[Master] Hasôda strikes [the oven] with his staff³;
The oven is broken, [the god of the oven] is come to be congratulated;
He sees that he was [always] going against his own self.

CASE 59: Seirin's “Deadly Snake”

Introduction:

If it goes, it is retained;
If it stays, it is expelled.
Not going, not staying – *it* has no land.
Where will you meet *it*?
At every spot, at every place.
Just tell me, what is this thing that is so strange and so wonderful?

Case:

¹ See *Hekiganroku* Case 97.

² Ennyadatta was always pleased to see his face in the mirror every morning. One morning, he could not see his face in the mirror. Crazily he went out into the street, searching his own head.

³ Master Hasôda is said to have been a disciple of National Teacher Ean, but his real name is not known. Near the place where he lived there was a shrine dedicated to an oven; at every festival sacrifices were offered, so that the curse of the oven might not attack the village. Master Hasôda had sympathy with the village people and struck the oven three times, scolding the oven. Thereupon, the oven fell apart, and a noble man with a crown in blue garment appeared. He said to the master, “I am the god of this oven. I have been suffering for a long time because of the retribution of my karma. Today, because of your saving act, I could be reborn in heaven.” The master said, “This is nothing but your true nature.” Then the man worshipped him again and became invisible.

A monk asked Seirin, “How is it when a practitioner goes along a narrow path?” Seirin said, “You will meet a deadly snake on the great road. I advise you, do not run into it.” The monk said, “What if I do run into it?” Seirin said, “You will lose your life.” The monk said, “What if I don’t run into it?” Seirin said, “You have no place to escape from it.” The monk said, “Precisely at such a time, what then?” Seirin said, “It is lost.” The monk said, “I wonder where it is gone.” Seirin said, “The grass is so deep, there is no place to look for it.” The monk said, “You too, Master, must be watchful in order to get it.” Seirin clapped his hands and said, “This fellow is equally poisonous.”

Verse:

The helmsman moves the rudder in the dark;
The lone boat turns its bow in the night.
The flowers of the reed, snow upon both banks;
The cloud over the water – ’tis autumn on the river.
Wind helps the sailboat, no need to row forward;
With the sound of the flute calling the moon,
The boat descends toward the enchanted land.

CASE 60: *Tetsuma, the Cow*¹

Introduction:

The nose is high and dignified:
Each one has an appearance of a great personage.
The legs and ankles are firm and solid,
Should one study “old-woman Zen”?
If you grasp the ungraspable barrier,
For the first time you see the means of a true adept.
Tell me, who is such a person?

Case:

Ryû Tetsuma² came to Isan. Isan said, “Old Cow, you have come!” Tetsuma said, “Tomorrow there will be a great feast at Mt. Tai³. Will you go there, Master?” Isan lay down and stretched himself out. Tetsuma left immediately.

Verse:

Successfully accomplishing one hundred battles,
One grows old in peace.
Soft and gentle, who dares to fight over diplomatic alliances?
The jade whip and golden horse are useless all day;
The clear moon and pure wind make one rich all through one’s life.

¹ See *Hekiganroku* Case 24.

² A famous Zen person, a nun, once a student of Isan. Her name means “Ryû, the iron grindstone.”

³ More exactly: *Gotai*. The mountain is about 1200km to the north of the place where Isan resided.

CASE 61: Kempô's "One Line"

Introduction:

A roundabout preaching is easy to understand: it imparts to one hand;
A direct preaching is hard to understand: it opens up in all directions.
I beseech you, do not intend to speak clearly.
If you can speak clearly, it is harder to get out [of the cage].
If you don't believe it, I will try to raise the case, look!

Case

A monk asked Master Kempô, "[In a sutra it says,] 'The Bhagavat² in ten directions; one way to the gate of nirvana.' I wonder where the way is." Kempô drew a line with his stick and said, "Here it is."

The monk told Unmon about this and asked him. Unmon said, "This fan jumps up to the heaven of the thirty-three devas and adheres to the nose of the deva Taishaku. When a carp in the eastern sea is struck with a stick, it rains torrents as though a tray of water is overturned. Do you get it? Do you get it?"

Verse:

The hand [of a master veterinarian] cures even a dead horse³;
The soul-reviving incense⁴ will make you rise from the peril.
If you once sweat with your entire body,
You will believe that he has never spared the eyebrows⁵.

CASE 62: Beiko und "Enlightenment"

Introduction:

Bodhidharma's primary truth: Emperor Bu's head is bewildered;
Vimalakirti's Dharma gate of Not-Two: Manjusri's speech is too much.
Is there anyone who goes into thorough realization or not?

Case

Beiko had a monk ask Kyôzan, "Do people these days need enlightenment or not?" Kyôzan said, "It is not that there is no enlightenment. Yet how can it be helped that it falls into the secondary class?"

¹ See *Mumonkan* Case 48.

² It means "god" in Sanskrit. Here it stands for Buddha.

³ Once, in ancient China, there was a man named Chôshû, whose horse unexpectedly died. Then a man named Haku came and said, "I will bring it to life again." Haku brought an animal which looked like a monkey, and had it revive the horse's respiration.

⁴ *Hangonkô*. An imaginary incense, which was believed to call the soul of a dead person back and to let his or her figure appear in its smoke. It has its origin in the story that Emperor Bu of Han saw his beloved and deceased wife appear in the smoke of the incense.

⁵ A saying goes that, if a Zen master imparts a wrong teaching, he or she will lose the eyebrows.

The monk went back to Beiko and told him about it. Beiko deeply agreed.

Verse:

The secondary class distinguishes enlightenment, shattering delusion:
Smoothly your hands should throw away all nets and traps¹.
If your achievements are not exhausted, they turn to be all thumbs².
You cannot know Wisdom, just as you cannot bite your own navel.
The rabbit is old³, with the autumn dew weeping on the icy disk⁴;
The birds are cold, while the jade trees⁵ are chilled in the dawn wind.
With his remark, Great Kyôzan distinguishes real and false;
Without any scars at all – how precious is the white jade!

CASE 63: Jôshû Asks about “Death”⁶

Introduction:

Sanshō and Seppō are orchids in the spring, chrysanthemums in the autumn;
Jôshû and Tôsu are the gem of Benka, the gold of the land of En.
On a balance without scales, both weights are even;
In a boat without the bottom, they go across in one place.
When the two meet, what happens then?

Case:

Jôshû asked Tôsu, “What if a man who has died a great Death comes back to life?” Tôsu said, “I don't allow walking about in the night. You should come in the daylight.”

Verse:

The warehouse of poppy seeds⁷, the rock of the kalpa⁸: the beginning is subtly exhausted;
In the ring of the living eye, vast emptiness is illuminated.
Not allowing walking about in the night, [having] come in the dawn's light:
The news of the family [needs] not be entrusted to the giant goose or the fish⁹.

¹ Means to catch fish and rabbits.

² I.e., good for nothing.

³ I.e., it is full moon.

⁴ I.e., the moon.

⁵ Trees covered with snow.

⁶ See *Hekiganroku* Case 41.

⁷ One way to measure a “kalpa”: Suppose there is a huge warehouse of 160km³ filled with poppy seeds. A heavenly person comes down once in a hundred years and picks up one seed. When all seeds in the warehouse are gone, it is almost one kalpa.

⁸ Another way of measuring a kalpa: There is an enormous rock of 160km³; upon it a heavenly being lands once in a hundred years and strokes it with the heavenly robe. When all the rock disappears because of the friction of the cloth, it is just about one kalpa.

⁹ The story behind this line: Once the daughter of Saihakukai in Han was captured by the Huns and became their queen. Worried about her parents, however, she tied a letter on the neck of a giant goose and sent it in the direction of her homeland. The goose landed on its way to drink water and let the letter drop into the water. But a fish swallowed the letter and, behold, the letter came out of a fish caught by a fisherman and was brought to the parents, who now knew how and where their daughter was.

CASE 64: Shishô's "Succession"

Introduction:

Shôyô¹ intimately encountered Bokushû, yet he burnt succession incense for old Seppô;
Tôsu personally received it from Enkan², yet he succeeded in the Dharma to Daiyô³.
Jade blossoms bloom upon the coral branches;
Gold fruit ripens in the forest of sandalwood.
Just tell me, how do such creations take place?

Case:

Head Monk Shishô⁴ asked Hôgen, "You have opened a zendo, Master. But who did you succeed to?" Hôgen said, "Master Jizô." Shishô said, "You have gone a great deal against your late master Chôkei."⁵ Hôgen said, "I still don't understand a turning word of Chôkei's." Shishô said, "Why didn't you ask me?" Hôgen said, "'The one body manifests itself in myriad phenomena' – what does it mean?" Shishô stuck up his whisk. Hôgen said, "That is what you learned under Chôkei. What is your own view, Head Monk?" Shishô was silent. Hôgen said, "When it is said, 'The one body manifests itself in myriad phenomena' – are the myriad phenomena swept away or are they not?" Shishô said, "Not swept away." Hôgen said, "There are two." All the disciples on the right and the left side said, "Swept away." Hôgen said, "The one body manifests itself in myriad phenomena – *Ni!*"⁶

Verse:

Away from thoughts, you see the Buddha,
Breaking through the dust, you draw out the Sutra.
The family Dharma is right here and now:
Who should establish the [facilities] of the gate⁷ at all?
The moon follows the boat, flowing into the river of silken purity,
The spring comes with the grass, pervading the [fresh] green in the burnt field.
Swept away? Not swept away? – Listen with utmost care!
"The three paths are desolate" – yet one was able to return⁸;
The old "pines and chrysanthemums" are still balmy and fragrant.

CASE 65: Shuzan's "Bride"

Introduction:

Tut, tut! Whoop, whoop!
Crump, crump! Grumble, grumble!

¹ I.e., Unmon.

² A master in the Rinzai line.

³ A master in the Soto tradition.

⁴ Shishô was a disciple of Master Chôkei.

⁵ Hôgen once practiced under Master Chôkei.

⁶ A word used to directly point out something – "There!"

⁷ Teaching means and methods in Zen.

⁸ The last two lines are an allusion to a verse composed by Tôenmei: "The three paths are desolate, yet the pine trees and chrysanthemums are still there". There, "The three paths" are a path of pine trees, a path of chrysanthemums and a path of willows.

Puff, puff! Zing, zing!
Vast and vague,
Impossible to chew, difficult to come near.
Tell me, what is this all about?

Case:

A monk asked Shuzan, “What is Buddha?” Shuzan said, “When a bride rides the donkey, her mother-in-law leads it by the bridle.¹”

Verse:

When a bride rides the donkey, her mother-in-law leads it by the bridle:
A graceful manifestation, it is truly natural.
How laughable! The girl in the neighborhood imitates a frowning face²:
She simply adds to her ugliness for other people, it never makes her attractive.

CASE 66: Kyûhō's “Head and Tail”

Introduction:

Even a person who can apply supernatural powers cannot let a foot down;
Even a person who forgot all karma ties and extinguished all thoughts cannot raise a foot.
You should say: Sometimes you kill by running, sometimes you kill by sitting.
How can you attain the proper balance?

Case:

A monk asked Kyûhō, “What is the head?” Kyûhō said, “Opening the eyes and not perceiving the dawn.” The monk said, “What is the tail?” Kyûhō said, “Not sitting on a ten-thousand-year-old sitting place.” The monk said, “What if there is a head, but no tail?” Kyûhō said, “After all, it is not valuable.” The monk said, “What if there is a tail, but no head?” Kyûhō said, “Being self-complacent, yet having no power.” The monk said, “What if the head matches the tail?” Kyûhō said, “The descendants³ gain power, but one does not know it oneself⁴.”

Verse:

Round for a compass, square for a ruler:
When used, it functions; when cast away, it hides.
Always stumbling – a bird dwelling in the reeds;
Unable to go forward or backward – a sheep stuck in the hedge.
Eating rice of other people, slumbering in one's own bed.
Clouds come up and cause rain, dew forms and becomes frost.
The jade lines cross each other and go through the eyes of needles;

¹ This is how the mother-in-law introduces the bride to the village people.

² Seishi, the renowned beauty in Chinese history, was rumored to have become even more attractive when she frowned because of a headache. Then a girl in the same town imitated Seishi's frowning wanting to be as beautiful as Seishi, but – alas, in vain.

³ The practitioners of the Way.

⁴ Literally: “but it is not known in the room”.

The baldaquin threads constantly rush out of the weaving shuttles.
The stone woman's loom stops¹, and the color of the night turns to noon;
The wood person walks on the road, while the moon is gone beyond its zenith².

CASE 67: The Wisdom in the Kegon Sutra

Introduction:

One speck of dust contains myriad phenomena,
One thought embraces three thousands worlds.
Then, how about a strong person who sustains the heaven and stands upon the earth,
Or a wise and sharp fellow who understands the tail when the head is mentioned?
Won't that person turn his back against his own spirituality
And bury away the family treasure?

Case:

The Kegon Sutra says, "Now I see all living beings everywhere, and I see that each of them possesses the wisdom and virtue of Tathagata. But because of their delusions and attachments, they cannot realize it."

Verse:

Like heaven it³ covers, like earth it sustains;
It makes lumps, it forms masses.
It prevails in the dharma world⁴, which has no boundary;
It shatters the smallest particle⁵, which has no inside.
Having exhausted all subtlety and minuteness,
Who could divide between going for and going against?
Buddhas and Ancestors come and expiate for the wrong that has been said.
Ask the Old Teacher Ô⁶ of Nansen:
Each and every person just eats a piece of vegetable⁷.

CASE 68: Kassan Brandishes the Sword

Introduction:

The emperor's decree inside the land of his direct control;
The general's command outside the walled regions.

¹ I.e., at (mid)night.

² That is, the middle of the month (= full moon) according to the lunar calendar.

³ I.e., the wisdom and virtue of Tathagata.

⁴ That is, the whole universe.

⁵ Literally: "Next to zero."

⁶ "Ô" is Master Nansen's real name (one of the most common names).

⁷ Behind this line there is a dialogue between Nansen and Yôzan (both were Baso's disciples): One day Nansen showed a piece of vegetable and said, "This vegetable is so good, it should be offered to all people to eat." Thereupon Yôzan said, "I don't need not only that vegetable, but also any other kinds of nice food at all." Then Nansen said, "That's great. But only after eating it could you really know how it tastes."

Sometimes one gets power at the gate;
Sometimes one is sublime in the room.
Just tell me, who is this?

Case:

A monk asked Kassan, “What if one sweeps away the dust and sees Buddha?” Kassan said, “You must brandish your sword. If you do not brandish your sword, the fisherman dwells in a nest of reeds¹.”

The monk mentioned this to Sekisô² and asked him, “What if one sweeps away the dust and sees Buddha?” Sekisô said, “He has no land³ [to dwell in]. Where could one meet him?”

The monk reported this to Kassan. Kassan ascended the rostrum and said, “As for the facilities at the gate⁴, the old monk⁵ is superior to Sekisô, but for deep discourse expounding the true principle he is one hundred steps ahead of me.”

Verse:

The *ki*⁶ of the swords that banish the Altair⁷,
The power that washes [and invigorates] the army⁸:
To whom else belongs the merit of pacifying disorders?⁹
Although the weird-spirited dust of war was once raised,
the four oceans are now [peaceful and] clear;
With the robe hanging down, the emperors rule naturally, doing nothing¹⁰.

CASE 69: Nansen's “Cats and Oxen”

Introduction:

Becoming a buddha, becoming a patriarch:

This is nothing but wearing dirty names and is therefore to be abhorred;

¹ That is, unable to catch a single fish.

² Sekisô Keisho Zenji (807-888, disciple of Dôgo Enchi), not Sekisô Soen Zenji (986-1039, disciple of Fun'yo Zenshō).

³ I.e., “country, realm.”

⁴ Concrete teaching means and devices in Zen.

⁵ I.e., “I.”

⁶ Sharp spiritual energy.

⁷ In old China there was an astronomer named Raikan. He noticed a strange *ki* phenomenon between the Altair (=the brightest star in the constellation Aquila and the 12th brightest star in the night sky.) and the North Star and wondered what it could be. A noble man named Chōka noticed it too and invited Raikan to make further researches on the phenomenon. Raikan found out that the spirit of some treasure swords was soaring up to heaven. Thereupon Chōke appointed Raikan governor of the land of Hōjō where the *ki* seemed to originate and let him develop the area. Sure enough, Raikan found a stone box with a couple of treasure swords. The expression “The *ki* of the swords that banish the Altair” comes from there.

⁸ King Bu of Shū wanted to attack King Chū of In. All of a sudden the blue sky changed and it started to rain in torrents. Sangisei, a general to King Bu, advised the king refrain from starting the attack since the rain was a bad omen. But King Bu refused Sangisei's admonition, saying, “Behold, Heaven washes my army!” He then assaulted King Chū amid the heavy rain and defeated the opponent.

⁹ That is: Is Kassan the only one that could pacify the troubled land?

¹⁰ An old saying goes: “Emperors Kō, Gyō and Shun (=ideal emperors according to the legend) ruled the land with robes hanging down; they ruled while doing nothing, the government functioning without any orders.”

Carrying horns, wearing fur:
It is recommended that [these beings] take superior seats.
Therefore, the true light does not radiate, great wisdom is like stupidity.
Moreover, there is someone who thinks it is convenient to be deaf,
And pretends not to know any arts.
Do you know who this is?

Case:

Nansen instructed the assembly and said, “All the buddhas of the three worlds¹ do not know that there is. Only the badgers and foxes² know that there is.”

Verse:

Limping with paralyzed hands,
Ragged with dirty hair;
Good for nothing, not capable of even one thing.
In silence he knows that his own state of mind is nothing but peace.
Composed, free from care – who says that in his guts he is an idiot?
The entire universe, all phenomenal world – they have turned to be food for him.
With his big nose loosely hanging, he seems perfectly satisfied, with no need for anything else.

CASE 70: Shinsan Asks about Nature

Introduction:

The one who hears the fragrant elephant crossing the river
Has already gone according to the flow;
The one who knows that life has unborn nature
Is made to stay with life.
Furthermore: before Samadhi or after Samadhi,
If you talk about becoming a bamboo shoot and becoming a bamboo rope,
The sword is already long gone, while you are making a mark on your boat.
Kicking the wheel of activity, how do you tread on one special road?
I will bring this up, so please look!

Case:

Master Shinsan asked Master Shûsan³, “After one has clearly known the unborn nature of life, why does one adhere to life?” Shûsan said, “The bamboo shoot necessarily becomes a bamboo. But is it possible to make a bamboo rope⁴ already out of a bamboo shoot?⁵” Shinsan said, “Later you will come to realization by yourself.” Shûsan said, “My view is just as I said. What is your view?” Shinsan said, “This is the temple steward's quarters, and that is the cooks' quarters.” Shûsan made a deep bow.

¹ The past, present and future.

² The original words (*rinu-byakko*) literally mean “cats and oxen.”

³ The two masters were Dharma brothers.

⁴ A rope made out of thin bamboo tops.

⁵ That is, I am still “a bamboo shoot”; you cannot make “a bamboo rope” out of me

Verse:

Clear and void, with nothing to rely upon;
Lofty and serene, bound by nothing;
The [intrinsic] home is totally peaceful, yet few can arrive there.
A little bit of competence creates classes and ranks;
The vast body, the vast mind: it extinguishes yes and no;
Yes and no are [indeed] extinguished.
Alone in the vast universe – there are no tracks at all.

CASE 71: Suigan's "Eyebrows"¹

Introduction:

If you hold blood in the mouth and spit it at others, you defile your own mouth;
If you love sake cups, you will end up paying for the debts of others all your life.
You have been selling paper for three years,
And yet you even lack “paper money for the demons” [needed to enter the realm of the dead].
I, Banshō, preach to you all,
But does that strike a faire balance or not?

Case:

Towards the end of summer², Suigan instructed the assembly, saying, “All summer I've preached to you, my brothers. Look here, are Suigan's eyebrows still there?”³
Hofuku said, “The robber's heart is terrified!”
Chōkei said, “They are well grown!”
Unmon said, “Barrier [*Kan*!]!”

Verse:

The heart to become a robber, the guts to transcend others:
Clear and free, horizontally and vertically;
Prompt and just, according to the situation.
Hofuku and Unmon – their superb noses cover their lips⁵;
Suigan and Chōkei – their long eyebrows are reflected in their eyes⁶.
Immature Zen disciples, when would you stop your stupid deeds?
I dare say, spirit and expression⁷ are both cut off at once,
You bury your [true] self, swallowing your own spirit and gulping your own voice¹;

¹ See *Hekiganroku* Case 8.

² Summer-sesshin for 3 months.

³ According to the popular belief a great criminal should lose his eyebrows as a sign of his punishment in hell.

⁴ Literally: “barrier” (cf. *Mumonkan*). In those days this Chinese word colloquially meant also, “Watch out!” or “There!”

⁵ A sign of excellence.

⁶ Another sign of a great caliber.

⁷ They say there are 4 ways how “spirit” (*ji*) and “expression” (*ku*) can be combined: (1) The spirit is there, but the expression is not (= the spirit is grasped, but the expression is inadequate); (2) the expression is there, but the spirit is not (= a fake imitation); (3) neither spirit nor expression is there (= a catastrophe); (4) both spirit and expression are there (= the ideal state). The line “Spirit and expression are both cut off at once” is similar to the category (3) above.

You ruin your ancestors' [fame], [ignorantly] facing a walled fence²,
[one-sidedly] carrying a board³.

CASE 72: Chûyû's "Monkey"

Introduction:

Across the river a battle of wisdom: hiding the soldiers, laying an ambush.
Facing each other, they fight with the pointed spears and sharpest swords.
This is why the patch-robed monks value total activities and great functions.
Starting slowly, changing briskly – I will try to gush it all out. Look!

Case:

Kyôzan⁴ asked Chûyû⁵, "What does buddha-nature mean?" Chûyû said, "I will explain it for you by allegory. Suppose there is a room with six windows. Inside there is a monkey. Outside, someone shouts, 'Monkey! monkey!' It immediately responds. If someone calls, 'Monkey!' through any of the windows, it responds just the same. It is just like that." Kyôzan said, "How about when the monkey is asleep?" Chûyû descended from his Zen seat, grasped Kyôzan and said, "O monkey, monkey, there you are!"

Verse:

Sleeping as if frozen in a snow-covered house – the year is ending;
The quiet gate with ivy and wisteria – it does not open in the night.
Trees in the garden, withered in the winter, now perceive the change of the climate;
The spring wind blows away the ashes in the bamboo pipe⁶.

CASE 73: Sôzan's Filial Fulfillment

Introduction:

Relying on the grasses, hanging onto the trees, one becomes a ghost;
Suffering humiliation, being punished without cause, one turns into a cursing demon.
When you summon it, you burn paper money and prepare a horse [made of an egg plant];⁷
When you send it away, you bless the water and send charms out.
How could you attain [real] peace for your family?

Case:

¹ Unable to say or do anything.

² Unable to see what lies ahead of them.

³ Seeing only one side of reality.

⁴ At this time Kyôzan (807-883) was about 13 years old.

⁵ Chûyû Kôon Zenji (dates unknown) in the Province of Rôwas, a Dharma heir of Great Master Ba (709-788).

⁶ The image comes from a saying in the book of *Raiki* [*Li-chi* 5-3c BCE]: A bamboo pipe, stuffed with ash, was kept in a chamber; the warm air of the spring came and let the ash fly away from the pipe, and the pipe was restored.

⁷ This line with the following line depicts some scenes out of a local "spirit festival."

A monk asked Sôzan, “When one leaves off his mourning clothes¹, how about that?” Sôzan said, “Sôzan today has fulfilled filial piety.” The monk said, “How about after you have fulfilled filial piety?” Sôzan said, “Sôzan loves to get drunk.”

Verse:

For the pure and noble yard, all neighbors are extinct in four directions;
Through long years, it has been swept and barriered; no dust can ever come in.
When the full light turns, the tilted moon hangs in the air:
When the hexagrams change, it turns from *yin* to *yan*;
Freshly fulfilling filial piety, one encounters spring.
Walking drunk with crazy songs, losing the hat along the way,
With messy hair, staggering to and fro: who cares what?
A perfect drunkard in great peace, without any problems at all.

CASE 74: Hôgen's "Form and Name"

Introduction:

Wealth contains ten thousand virtues;
[Yet] it is swept away, without a speck of dust.
Away from all forms, [yet] one with all dharmas²;
Taking a step forward from the top of a hundred-foot pole,
One fulfills one's body in ten directions³.
Tell me, from where does one get this?

Case:

A monk asked Hôgen, “I hear that a sutra says, ‘From the basis of non-abiding all dharmas⁴ are established.’⁵ What is this basis of non-abiding?” Hôgen said, “‘Form arises from what has no substance yet; name comes from what has no name yet.’⁶”

Verse:

Gone are the traces, extinct are the tidings.
The white clouds have no roots;
What color is the pure wind?
The heavenly canopy is spread without any center;
There is a great power that sustains the earth.
The thousand ancient depths are clarified;
The models of ten thousand phenomena are manufactured.
If the way of the great land and small dust is understood,

¹ In Japanese: *Reii*. The mourning clothes that one wore when one of the parents was dead. Here it is symbolically used to designate the clothes during Zen practice.

² Here, the word “dharmas” means all phenomena.

³ To these two lines, cf. Case 46 in the *Mumonkan*.

⁴ I.e., all phenomena.

⁵ The line is in the *Kanshujôbon* in the *Yuima-Sutra*.

⁶ Quote from Monk Jô's *Hôzôron* (5th Century CE).

[Bodhisattva] Samanta-Bhadra¹ is everywhere;
If the gate of the tower is opened,
Each head is [Bodhisattva] Maitreya².

CASE 75: Zuigan's "Everlasting Truth"

Introduction:

Even if you call it "thus," it has already changed.
Where knowledge cannot reach, you should abandon talking about it.
Here, is it possible to search for it or not?

Case:

Zuigan³ asked Gantô, "What is the everlasting truth?" Gantô said, "It has moved." Zuigan said, "What if it moves?" Gantô said, "You don't see the everlasting truth." Zuigan thought for a moment. Gantô said, "If you acknowledge it, you are not yet free from the roots and their dust⁴. If you do not acknowledge it, you are immersed in endless birth and death."

Verse:

The round jewel has no holes,
The great raw gem needs no polishing.
What a person of the Way cherishes has no edges.
When the road of acknowledgement is abolished, the roots and their dust are emptied out:
A complete exposure, relying on nothing – so active, so unique.

CASE 76: Shuzan's Three Verses

Introduction:

One phrase makes three phrases clear;
Three phrases make one phrase clear.
Three and one have no relation with each other.
Very clear is the way of the highest realization.
Tell me, what phrase exists first?

Case:

Shuzan instructed his assembly and said, "If you get it all at the first verse, you will be the teacher of buddhas and ancestors. If you get it all at the second verse, you will be the teacher

¹ Jpn.: *Fugen-Bosatsu*, symbol for universal compassion and wisdom.

² Jpn.: *Miroku-Bosatsu*. The last two lines rely upon the *Nippôkaibon* in the *Kegon-Sutra* (Garland Sutra): Once Maitreya came to the gate of a tower. When he snapped his finger, the gate was opened. A young practitioner called Sudhanakumâra (*zenzai-dôji*) went inside and found that Maitreya was in each of all three thousand great worlds and of all heavens in and outside the whole universe.

³ At the time of this dialogue Zuigan was still a young boy.

⁴ The "roots" means "six roots" of sense organs: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, consciousness. "Dust", more exactly "six dust particles," means the objects of the six sense organs: form, sound, smell, taste, things to be touched, objects of mind.

of heavenly beings and humankind. If you get it all at the third verse, you cannot save even yourself.”

A monk asked, “At which verse did Your Reverence get it all?” Shuzan said, “The moon is set at midnight; one walks alone through the market place.”

Verse:

The skulls of the buddhas and ancestors are penetrated with one single skewer;
The water clock in the palace moves quietly its arrow in the deep night.
The wonderful activities for heavenly beings and humankind [are like] shooting ten catapults;
The troupes of clouds are brightly shining, emitting sudden lightning.
The person who is in here – do observe the change:
Meeting baseness, one is noble; meeting nobility, one is base.
Finding the pearl through a blind man¹, the supreme way knows no end;
The [thin] knife plays freely over the deceased ox² – there is nothing but the true heart.

CASE 77: Kyôzan: As Befits His Portion

Introduction:

It is like a person depicting the empty sky:
The moment one starts to use the brush, one is in the wrong.
How could you bear creating a model and making a pattern?
How could you bear trying to make something?
○
Bansho³ has already exposed means of fixation.
If there are rules, make avail of them;
If there are no rules, use the [following] example.

Case:

A monk asked Kyôzan, “Your Reverence, do you know letters or not?” Kyôzan said, “As befits my portion.⁴” The monk immediately turned around once clockwise and said, “What letter is this?” Kyôzan drew the ideograph for “10” [十] in the earth. The monk turned himself around once counter-clockwise and said, “What letter is that?” Kyôzan modified the sign “十” into a swastika [卍]⁵. The monk drew a circle in the air and lifted his two palms like Asura⁶ vigorously holding the sun and moon and said, “What letter is that?” Kyôzan immediately drew a circle enclosing the swastika. The monk at once represented the vigor of a Rucika⁷. Kyôzan

¹ An anecdote recorded in the *Zhuangzi*: Once Emperor Yellow, going outing to the north, lost his pearl. He had a wise man search for it, but he could not find it. Next, he sent a clairvoyant man, but he could not find it either. At last he sent a blind man, and he found the pearl.

² When you make fine cuts into a dead cow, you do not use a hatchet but a thin blade. Then you can cut the meat freely as if you were playing with it. This picture is a metaphor for *not* resorting to any forced and unreasonable means, but always going the most natural and freest way.

³ It is Bansho Zenji, who composed the Introductions; therefore, the name “Bansho” here stands for “I.”

⁴ Or: “So so.”

⁵ *Manji* in Japanese; a symbol of Buddhism.

⁶ Originally a Hindu deity, here one of the eight supernatural protectors of Buddhist Way.

⁷ The buddha Rucika wailed at his fate at first because he was the last of the thousand buddhas in this cosmic period. But then he made up his mind to be the energetic protector of the Dharma for all other buddhas. Two

said, “Good, good. Keep it with care.”

Verse:

The emptiness of the circle of the Way will not be filled;
The letters of the stamps of emptiness have not yet revealed.
Wonderfully governing the orbits of heaven und the axis of the earth;
Precisely applying the warp for the military use, the weft for literary use.
Letting go, gathering together;
Absolutely independent, freely going anywhere.
The activities turn subtle pivots; in the blue sky the thunder roars violently;
The eyes emit violet lights; one sees the stars in broad daylight.

CASE 78: Unmon's “Rice Cake”¹

Introduction:

Searching for the price in the entire heaven – remunerating it over the whole earth.
Applying a hundred devices is nothing but a disgrace.
Is there anyone who knows going and returning, or being good and bad?

Case:

A monk asked Unmon, “What is meant by the expression 'to go beyond the Buddha and the ancestors'?” Unmon said, “Rice cake².”

Verse:

“Rice cake” is said to be the “expression going beyond the Buddha and the ancestors.”
There is no taste in the phrase – how could you grasp and present it?
If a patch-robed monk one day knows how to be satiated,
He will certainly see that Unmon’s face is not ashamed³.

CASE 79: Chōsa and One Step

Introduction:

“The wife of the son of the family Ba” on the golden sand-bank –
indeed a special spirit [of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara]⁴.

powerful figures of this buddha are seen at the entrance gate of many temples in Japan (named *Niō*).

¹ *Hekiganroku* Case 77.

² In Japanese: *kobyō*. Cheap and unrefined rice cake, made with sesame.

³ I.e., Unmon does not have to be ashamed of his unduly kind teaching.

⁴ Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara is said to have appeared in the district of Sen'u in the ancient China in the form of an extremely beautiful girl and promised to marry a young man who would be able to read the sutras best. All young men started to learn to read the sutras, but the son of the Family Ba could read them better than anyone else, so he succeeded in marrying the girl, who, however, died right after the wedding. An old monk, who happened to come by, explained the real history behind the girl. After that, Buddhism spread all over the district, and the statue of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara was erected on the golden sand-bank of the land; the statue was eventually called “Avalokitesvara, the wife of the son of the Family Ba.”

Pounding to make chestnut rice cake in a jade pot
– who would ever dare to turn it around?
If you don't go into the terrifying billows, you can hardly get a satisfactory fish.
What about one phrase manifesting leisurely, majestic strides?

Case:

Chôsa had a monk ask Master E, “How was it when you had not yet seen Nansen?” E remained silent. The monk asked, “What about after seeing him?” E said, “Nothing special.”

The monk returned and told Chôsa about this. Chôsa said, “The man sits on the top of a hundred-foot pole. He has entered the way, but it is not yet genuine. He must take one step from the top of a hundred-foot pole. The worlds of ten directions are your entire body.”¹ The monk said, “How should you take a step from the top of a hundred-foot pole?” Sa said, “Mountains of Ro; water of Rei².” The monk said, “I don't understand.” Sa said, “Four seas and five lakes are all under the imperial reign³.”

Verse:

The pearl person's⁴ dream is destroyed – a cry of the rooster!
Looking around [he sees that] all phenomena in life are equal;
Wind and thunder, bringing the news [of spring], drive out the dormant insect.
Peach trees, silent as they are, naturally create footpaths [beneath]:
When the season is come, one labors in the paddies with a plowing ox;
Who would ever fear the knee-deep mud of the ridges of the spring fields?

CASE 80: Ryûge brings the Chin Rest ⁵

Introduction:

The great sound is seldom voiced; great talents flower late.
Amid hustle and bustle in great clamor one plays idiot;
Leisurely one lingers, waiting for one thousand years.
Just tell me, what kind of person is this one?

Case:

Ryûge asked Suibi, “What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west?” Suibi said, “Bring me a chin rest⁶.” Ryûge brought one and gave it to him. Suibi took it and hit him. Ryûge said, “You may hit me as you like. After all, the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west does not exit”

Ryûge also asked Rinzai, “What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west?” Rinzai said, “Bring me a sitting cushion.” Ryûge got one and gave it to Rinzai. Rinzai took it and hit him. Ryûge said, “You may hit me as you like. After all, the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west does not exit.”

¹ Cf. *Mumonkan* Case 46.

² Ro and Rei are the names of Provinces in the old China.

³ I.e., “you” are the emperor; everything is under your reign.

⁴ A “pearl person” [*gyokunin*] means a great person who has accomplished the Way of enlightenment.

⁵ See *Hekiganroku* Case 20. The third paragraph, however, is peculiar to the *Shôyôroku*.

⁶ Literally: “Zen board.” A narrow board used so as to let one sleep in the sitting posture.

Later Ryûge became abbot of a temple. A monk asked him, “Master, at that time, when you asked Suibi and Rinzai about the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west, did they clarify it or not?” Ryûge said, “They clarified it all right. After all, the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west does not exit.”

Verse:

The cushion and the chin rest are faced against Ryûge:
Why not become an adept at such opportunities?
He doesn't want to rob [the opponents] and draw a clear conclusion on the spot;
He is afraid of being in degradation¹ under a distant sky.
How could he hang a sword in the empty firmament?
Rather, he floats a raft in the Milky Way².
In the grass that does not sprout³ he knows how to hide a fragrant elephant;
In the basket that has no bottom he puts a living viper.
What obstacles are there at the Lake and the River⁴ today?
There are boats and wagons all over the ferry place.

CASE 81: Gensha Reaches the Province

Introduction:

Move: there appears a shadow,
Realize: there arises dust.
Raise it up – it is clear,
Throw it down – it is hidden and intimate.
When people of the true Way meet, how do they converse with each other?

Case:

Gensha came to the Province of Hoden. He was welcomed with great entertainment. The next day he asked the Elder Shôtô, “All the revelry of yesterday – where has it gone?” Shôtô held out the corner of his Buddhist garment. Gensha said, “Far from it – no relation at all.”

Verse:

Hiding the boat in the valley of night,
Placing the oar in the clearest source.
Dragons and fish don't know yet that the water is their life;
With broken chopsticks [therefore] one twirls [the water] a bit.
Master Gensha, Elder Shôtô:
The box and the lid fit together; two arrows crash right in the middle:
A searching pole, a straw mantle to disguise oneself.
Withdrawing their members the old turtles nest among the lotuses;
Joyfully swimming, the gorgeous fish play with the water grass.

¹ I.e., through being a small-scaled Zen person.

² That is, he has an entirely different dimension to show his greatness.

³ “The grass that does not sprout” means Ryûge's Zen world without any ostentatious smell of Zen.

⁴ The Lake Dôtei and the Yantze River (jpn.: *Kôko* for both), around which Zen temples flourished.

CASE 82: Unmon's: "Sound" and "Color"

Introduction:

If one does not cut off sounds and colors, one fails wherever one is;
If one seeks by sounds and sees by colors, one cannot see the Tathagata¹.
Is there anyone who is on the way to return home or not?

Case:

Unmon instructed the assembly and said, "Hearing a sound – realizing the way; seeing color – clarifying the mind² – Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara comes with some small change and buys [poor] rice cakes³. If he throws [it] away, he will get [nice] *manjû* cakes⁴."

Verse:

One goes outside the gate, lets the horse gallop and sweeps away the comets⁵.
The smoke and dust of all countries are pacified of themselves.
"The twelve sense-fields"⁶, void of any illusory shadows and echoes,
[Now] emit pure lights in three thousand worlds.

CASE 83: Dôgo's Nursing the Ill

Introduction:

The whole body is ill: Vimalakirti can hardly be healed;
This grass can cure well: Manjusri employs it well.
What could be better than consulting a person of the highest realization
And obtaining the place of great peace?

Case:

Isan asked Dôgo, "Where have you come from?" Dôgo said, "I come from nursing the ill." Isan said, "How many people are ill?" Dôgo said, "There are people who are ill, and there are people who aren't ill." Isan said, "The one who is not ill – isn't that you, dear Chi⁷?" Dôgo said, "Ill or not ill – it has nothing to do with 'that' matter. Say it quickly! Say it quickly!" Isan said, "Even if I may say it, there's no relation at all!"

¹ Cf. Case 20e of the Miscellaneous Koans.

² An idiomatic expression. A typical example of the former case is the great satori experience of Master Kyôgen as he heard the sound of a pebble hitting a bamboo; a famous example of the latter case is the episode of Master Reibun, who came to a deep realization after glimpsing peach blossoms afar.

³ Cf. Case 78.

⁴ Steamed cakes made of fine wheat, with minced meat in it; in Japan sweat beams are used inside.

⁵ A "comet" was said to be a demonic star, an omen of civil wars, disorders, famines, etc.

⁶ The "six roots" (the six sense-organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind) and the "six objects" (corresponding to the above six organs: color and shape, sound, odor, taste, tangible objects, objects of the mind) put together.

⁷ Dôgo's full name was Dôgo Enchi. "Chi" is short for Enchi.

Verse:

How could good medicine go through your mouth?
Even a genius doctor couldn't get hold of your hand.
Seemingly existent [and seemingly non-existent],
That One isn't originally non-being [nor being];
Totally empty, that One isn't originally being [nor non-being]¹.
Not perishing, it is born; not dying, it lives long.
Transcending the King-Buddha of *Ion*² to come before him,
Walking alone after the "Kalpa of Emptiness"³.
As for serenity, the firmament covers and the earth supports;
As for movement, the crow⁴ flies and the rabbit⁵ runs.

CASE 84: Gutei's One Finger⁶

Introduction:

One hearing, a thousand realizations; one understanding, a thousand follow suit.
The people with the highest spirit capture all when one has been decided;
The people with the middle and lower spirits hear much, but do not believe much.
I will try to bring up the clear and the simple matter, look!

Case:

Whenever he was asked [about Buddha's Way], Master Gutei simply stuck up one finger.

Verse:

Old Gutei – Zen on the fingertip:
He has used it for thirty years, yet it hasn't drained out at all.
Truly a man of the Way, he knows an art beyond all categories;
In the end he sees no profane things before his eyes.
What he got is extremely simple; his devices all the more broad.
The ocean of great-thousand worlds is engulfed in a hair-tip.
The dragon knows no limit; whose hands would he fall into?
How splendid that Mr. Nin⁷ takes a fishing rod with a hook!
The master⁸ too puts up a finger and says, "Look!"

¹ The parts in [] in the above three lines are implied, but left unsaid.

² *Ion-Ôbutsu*. The very first Buddha of the three thousand buddhas of the Three Worlds; that is, a very ancient buddha who existed kalpas ago.

³ According to the Buddhist cosmology, the universe repeats the four Kalpas: The Kalpa of Becoming, the Kalpa of Abiding, the Kalpa of Destruction and the Kalpa of Emptiness.

⁴ I.e., the sun.

⁵ I.e., the moon.

⁶ See *Mumonkan* Case 3 and *Hekiganroku* Case 19.

⁷ Famous for having fished a big fish.

⁸ Master Wanshi himself.

CASE 85: The National Teacher's Gravestone¹

Introduction:

Only when you have the hammer to destroy the empty firmament
And the means to split Mr. Ka open,
You can reach where there are no seams or openings, where there are no flaws or scars.
Just tell me, who is such a person?

Case:

Emperor Shukusô² asked Chû³, the national teacher, “What would you wish me to do after a hundred years⁴?” The national teacher said, “Make a seamless gravestone⁵ for this old monk.” The emperor said, “I should like to ask you, master, for a design.” The national teacher remained silent for a long time. Then he said, “Did you understand?” The emperor said, “No, I didn't.” The national teacher said, “I have a Dharma successor, my disciple Tangen, who is well versed with this matter.”

Afterwards the emperor called Tangen and asked him about the meaning of this. Tangen responded:

“The south of the river, north of the lake:
In between there's gold, which fills the whole land.
Under the shadowless tree all people are in one boat;
In the crystal palace there is no knowledge⁶.”

Verse:

Only one – wide and endless;
Completely round – full and perfect.
Where the eyes can see no more, it stands high and lofty.
The moon is set, the lake is void, the color of the night so dark and weighty;
The clouds are gone, the mountain is lean; the autumn is rich in atmosphere.
The position of the eight trigrams⁷ is correct;
The spirits of the five elements⁸ are harmonious.
The [whole] body is right in it – do you see it?
The father and the son of Nan'yô⁹ seem to know that it exists;
The Buddha and Patriarchs of India can do nothing about it.

CASE 86: Rinzai's Great Enlightenment

Introduction:

¹ See *Hekiganroku* Case 18.

² Historically speaking it was Emperor Daisô the oldest son and successor of Shukusô.

³ Master Echû.

⁴ After your death.

⁵ An egg-formed gravestone which is made out of a single piece of stone. It was often made for deceased monks.

⁶ Or: “there is no one who knows.”

⁷ *Ba Gua* [jpn.: *hakke*]– the eight diagrams in Taoist explanation of the cosmos

⁸ “Wood, fire, earth, gold, water” – the five elements of the Chinese philosophy.

⁹ I.e., National Teacher Echû and his disciple Tangen.

A bronze head, an iron forehead,
The heavenly eyes¹, a dragon's pupils,
An eagle's beak, a shark's jowls,
A bear's heart, a leopard's liver:
[Still,] under the diamond sword no reflection is allowed;
One cannot plan anything at all.
Why is it like this?

Case:

Rinzai asked Ôbaku, "What is the great meaning of the Buddha-Dharma?" Ôbaku hit him. This happened three times. Rinzai then took his leave and went to see Daigu. Daigu asked, "Where have you come from?" Rinzai said, "From Ôbaku." Daigu said, "What did Ôbaku have to say?" Rinzai said, "I asked him three times, 'What is the great meaning of the Buddha-Dharma?' and I got his stick three times. I don't know if I was in error or not." Daigu said, "Ôbaku was overly gentle like an old grandmother; he completely exhausted himself for your sake. Yet you come here and ask if you were in error or not!" With these words, Rinzai came to great enlightenment.

Verse:

A chick of the Phoenix with nine-fold virtues²;
A colt that runs a thousand miles.
The true wind goes through the pipes,
The wondrous activity turns the pivot.
When one comes suddenly, the lightning flies;
When the cloud of delusion is dispersed, the sun is all alone.
He "strokes the tiger's whiskers"³ – do you see it or not?
This is certainly a brave man of great caliber.

CASE 87: Sozan's "Being and Non-being"

Introduction:

Even if you want to shut the door, it opens with a little push.
Even if the ship is about to sink, it turns with a move of the pole.
The Shasô Valley leads into the canyon: there is no way to return;
The Senkatsu Peak soars to heaven: [only] one hole is open⁴.
Just tell me, where does it go?

Case:

¹ The eyes of a heavenly being.

² A phoenix is said to possess nine virtues or faculties.

³ An allusion to what Master Ôbaku said when Rinzai re-visited him after attaining the great enlightenment at Daigu: Rinzai told the story to Ôbaku, who said, "What? Did the dumb Daigu say such a stupid thing? I must hit him when I see him next." Thereupon Rinzai hit Ôbaku. Ôbaku said, "This vagabond came back and stroked the tiger's whiskers!"

⁴ These two lines are an allusion to a poem by Toho (712-770): *Shasô* is the name of a deep valley, and *Senkatsu* is the name of a high peak.

Sozan came to Isan¹ and asked, "I have heard that you said, 'Words of being and words of non-being are just like wisteria wound around a tree.' If suddenly the tree falls down and the wisteria withers, where will the words go?" Isan burst into great laughter. Sozan said, "I sold my clothes and other belongings, and made an arduous journey of one thousand miles to come to you. Why does Your Reverence make light of me?" Isan called his attendant and said, "Bring some money and give it to this reverend monk for his travel expenses." Finally he said, "Someday a one-eyed dragon will let you open your eyes."

Later Sozan went to Myôshô² and told him about this. Myôshô said, "I can say that Isan is completely right, but he did not meet one who could appreciate him." Sozan asked again, "If the tree falls down and the wisteria withers, where will the words go?" Myôshô said, "It would make Isan laugh again all the more." Upon hearing this, Sozan gained realization. Then he said, "From the beginning, there was a sword behind Isan's laughter."

Verse:

With the wisteria withered, the tree fallen, he asks Isan:
Great laughter! – is it something indiscreet?
There is a sword behind the laughter – he sees through it.
Words and thoughts have no path – extinguished are all deliberations.

CASE 88: "No-Seeing" in the Ryôgon Sutra ³

Introduction:

If there is a seeing or there is a no-seeing, it is lighting a lantern in the middle of the day;
If there is neither seeing nor no-seeing, it is pouring ink in the middle of the night.
If you believe that seeings and hearings are like illusory pictures,
You will know that voices and colors are like empty flowers.
Tell me, is there a [worthy] story for patch-robed monks in the teaching?

Case:

The Ryôgon Sutra says, "When I don't see, why don't you see [the fact] that I don't see? If you say you 'see' that I don't see, that is naturally not the way how I don't see. If you don't see what I don't see, it is naturally not a [n objective] *thing*. Why isn't it your [own] self?"

Verse:

The great ocean is dried up, empty space filled up.
The patch-robed monks' nostrils are long⁴, the old Buddhas' tongues are short⁵.
The string of the pearls goes through nine bent holes⁶;

¹ Isan Ran'an Zenji or Chôkei Daian Zenji (793-883), not Isan Reiyû Zenji (771-853), a founder of the Igyô School. Both were, however, Dharma heirs to Hyakujô Ekai Zenji.

² Master Myôshô Tokken (dates unknown; probably in the 9th Century) is said to have lost his left eye.

³ See *Hekiganroku* Case 94.

⁴ I.e., the monks have a high nose – an expression of the monks' high spiritual independence.

⁵ Even old Buddhas cannot explain fully.

⁶ When Confucius was in the land of Chin, he was given a difficult assignment to put a string through 9 pearls with bent holes. He then tied a string to an ant and let it go into the hole of the initial pearl, and put some honey

The beautiful loom is slightly turned once.
Meeting him right on the spot, who knows him?
You [now] believe for the first time that it's impossible to accompany this person.

CASE 89: Tôzan's "Place of No Grass"

Introduction:

If you move, you bury your body ten thousand feet deep;
If you don't move, roots grow right at your very place.
Even if you throw away both and cast off the middle,
You must buy some straw sandals and set out on a pilgrimage,
In order to truly attain it.

Case:

Tôzan instructed the assembly and said, "At the beginning of autumn and the end of summer, you, brothers, are departing east and west. Thus you go directly to the place of no grass over ten thousand miles." And again he said, "How will you go to the place of no grass over ten thousand miles?"

Sekisô¹ said, "When you go out of the gate, there is grass!"

Taiyô² said, "I would say: Even if you don't go out of the gate, grass is abundant everywhere."³

Verse:

Grass all over –
Inside the gate, outside the gate – you see it yourself.
It is easy to set your foot out of the jungle of thorns;
It is difficult to turn out of the luminous screens in the night³.
Look, look! How many are like that?
For a while you follow the old tree and become cold and thin as well;
[Now] you are about to go after the spring wind and to enter the burnt fields⁴.

CASE 90: Kyôzan Speaks Out ⁵

Introduction:

Kutsugen says, "Only I am sober" – this is nothing but intoxication.
Kyôzan speaks of a dream; yet it is like in an awakened state.

at the end of the hole of the last pearl. The ant went through all the pearl holes, thus putting the string through all the bent holes as required.

¹ Seikisô Keisho (807-888, born in the same year as Tôzan Zenji).

² Taiyô Keigen (943-1027).

³ Screens made of crystals and white jades, therefore luminous also in the moonlight. But it is hardly possible to peep inside in the night.

⁴ Fields where in the early spring the old grass is burnt and the new grass gradually sprouts.

⁵ See *Mumonkan* Case 25.

Just say: I, Banshō, preach like this, and you all hear like this:
Just tell me, is this an awakened state or is this a dream?

Case:

Master Kyōzan went to Maitreya's abode in a dream and was led to the second seat. A venerable monk said, "Today the second seat is due to speak." Kyōzan stood up, struck the wooden anvil with a gavel, and said, "The Dharma of Mahayana is beyond the four propositions and transcends the hundred negations. I beg to tell you this!"

Verse:

In a dream, wearing a patched robe, he calls on the revered elder¹;
The saints and sages are sitting as [lofty] trees to his right².
When his turn comes, he does not defer and strikes loudly the wooden anvil.
He preaches [the Dharma of] fearlessness³, roaring like a lion.
His heart is as serene as the ocean,
His liver as massive as a bushel.
Tears flow from the shark people's⁴ eyes;
Pearls come out of the clams' guts⁵.
Who knows that the idle chattering leaks the activities of our [school]?
The [people with] great eyebrows⁶ should laugh that the family disgrace was raised.
"Beyond the four propositions and transcending the hundred negations":
Master Ba and his sons have given up applying medicine altogether⁷.

CASE 91: Nansen and the Peonies ⁸

Introduction:

Kyōzan understands a dream as reality,
Nansen points to an awakened state as unreality.
If one knows that awakening and dreaming are intrinsically non-existent,
For the first time one can believe that unreality and reality transcend dualism.
Just tell me, what eye does this person possess?

Case:

Minister Rikukō said to Nansen, "Dharma-teacher Jō is wonderful. He truly knows what he is talking about: 'Heaven and earth [and I] have one and the same root; all things [and I] are one single body.'⁹" Nansen pointed at the peonies in the garden and said, "Minister, people

¹ I.e., Bodhisattva Maitreya.

² The "left" side is more revered than the "right" side.

³ Another translation would be: "Without fear he preaches the Dharma, roaring"

⁴ "Shark people" are mysterious people in the south ocean (similar to "mermaids?"); when they weep, it is said that their tears turn into pearls.

⁵ When the clams expose their guts and swallow the spirit of the moon, pearls are said to come out.

⁶ The great personages who are present there (Maitreya etc.).

⁷ Cf. Fall 6 (Master Ba's "White and Black").

⁸ See *Hekiganroku* Case 40. A slightly different wording.

⁹ The quote is rather incomplete; substitute the [] parts.

of our time¹ see these flowers as in a dream.”

Verse:

Seeing through the roots of the creation with “subject” and “object,”²
Seeing the gates³ of ‘ins’ and ‘outs’ in abundance;
Letting the godly spirit play outside the kalpas, what questions could one have?
With the eye set before oneself, the knowing exists in subtlety.
When the tiger roars, the ghostly wind blows over the rocks;
When the dragon moans, the dark clouds fill up the caves.
Nansen, shattering the dreams of the people of his time,
Wants everyone to acknowledge the honored One who becomes the next Buddha⁴.

CASE 92: Unmon's “One Treasure”⁵

Introduction:

He has attained the great Samadhi of freely carrying out all godly deeds,
He understands the mystic utterances of all living beings [as well as how to maintain them],
He turns around Bokushû’s “giant drill of the Shin Era”⁶,
He plays with the poisonous snake of the southern mountain of Mt. Seppô⁷:
Do you know this person?

Case:

Great Master Unmon said, “Within heaven and earth, in the midst of the universe, there is one treasure hidden in a body.”⁸ You take up the lantern and go to the Buddha Hall. You take the temple gate and put it on the lantern.”

Verse:

Rolling up all the reverberations, disliking fancy things –
Returning [to oneself], where is one’s life after all?
The woodcutter with the rotten axe-handle⁹ seems to find no path [back home];
In the pot in the cassia tree, as directed by Mr. Pot, a mysterious house is found¹⁰.
The night water with gold ripples reflects the moon;
The autumn wind blowing, the snow embraces reed flowers.

¹ I.e. “you”.

² “Ri” (subject) and “Bi” (object) belong to the vocabulary of Jô-Hosshi.

³ The “gates” of the “six roots” (eyes, nose, ears, tongue, body, consciousness).

⁴ I.e., the Bodhisattva Maitreya, who will appear 5,670,000,000 years after the death of Shakyamuni and become the next Buddha.

⁵ See *Hekiganroku* Case 62.

⁶ An abusing expression meaning “good for nothing”, used by Bokushû to pull the practitioners to pieces. Unmon was once thrown out of the door by Bokushû with this word, when he broke his leg and subsequently came to his great enlightenment.

⁷ Cf. *Shoyoroku* Case 24 and *Hekiganroku* Case 22.

⁸ A sentence from the *Hôzôron* (Treatise on the Treasure Chamber of the Dharma) by Monk Jô (? -414).

⁹ Cf. the Verse of Case 57.

¹⁰ Once a man named Hichôbô was guided by a medicine seller named Mr. Pot to look into a pot in a cassia tree and found an entirely different world in it with beautiful palaces.

The cold fish are on the bottom, swallowing no baits;
Losing interest, one turns the boat homeward with a pure song.

CASE 93: Shiso Does Not Understand

Introduction:

Jewels from Mt. Kei¹ [are used to] strike down magpies, an old rat bites a gold piece.
They don't understand their own treasure, they can't make use of it.
Is there anyone who suddenly finds the gem hidden in their own clothes?²

Case:

Shiso³ asked Nansen, "People do not recognize the Mani⁴-jewel. I picked it up myself in the Tathagata treasury.⁵ What is this treasury?" Nansen said, "Old Master O⁶ exchanges questions and answers with you. That's it." Shiso said, "How about when there is no exchange of questions and answers?" Nansen said, "That's also the treasury." Shiso said, "What is the jewel?" Nansen said, "Reverend Shiso!" Shiso said, "Yes!" Nansen said, "Get out. You don't understand my words."

Verse:

Differentiating "yes" and "no," clarifying "gain" and "loss";
Responding to it in the heart, pointing everything in the palm.
Coming and going, *not* coming and *not* going – both are nothing but treasury.
King Tenrin rewarded the worthy ones with it⁷,
Emperor Yellow found it through a blind man⁸.
Turning the pivotal activities, well-versed in the art:
You clear-eyed monks, never take it carelessly!

CASE 94: Tôzan Unwell

Introduction:

¹ A mountain famous for producing precious stones. The first half of this sentence depicts children who use jewels to strike magpies down to the ground, without knowing the value of the jewels.

² A story in the Lotus-sutra goes: Once a rich man had to depart for a distant land, leaving a poor friend behind. The two had a farewell meal and drank a lot. The poor friend, getting drunk, fell deep asleep. The rich man actually wanted to give his friend costly jewels so that the friend would be better off during his absence. Since, however, the friend would not wake up, the rich man sewed the jewels into the friend's clothes and went away. The poor friend woke up later, but not having noticed that the jewels were sewn into his clothes, he continued his usual poor life.

³ Mistakenly the original text renders "Roso" (Nansen's elder brother in Dharma); in reality it should be "Shiso" (Nansen's student), as Nansen's question indicates.

⁴ "Mani" in Sanskrit means "perfect freedom" – another name for Buddha nature.

⁵ A quote from the famous *Shôdôka* by Yôka Daishi.

⁶ Nansen himself.

⁷ From the Lotus-sutra: King of Tenrin declared in front of many soldiers of his that the ones who would show worthiest deeds would be rewarded with a famous pearl.

⁸ Cf. the Verse of Case 76.

The lower do not discuss the higher; the humble do not move the dignified.
Even if one rules over oneself and follows the others,
One should not burden the heavy by the light.
When the four elements¹ are not in order, how would one attend and serve?

Case:

Tôzan was unwell. A monk asked, “Your Reverence is unwell. Is there anyone who does not become ill?” Tôzan said, “There is.” The monk said, “Does the one who does not get ill take care of Your Reverence?” Tôzan said, “The old monk’ is properly taking care of the other one.” The monk said, “How about when ‘your Reverence’ takes care of the other one?” Tôzan said, “[The old monk] does not see that there is illness.”

Verse:

Casting off the stinky skin bag², rolling over the bulk of red flesh;
Right here the nostrils are straight, right now the skull is dried up.
The old doctor³ doesn’t see the previous traits [of illness];
The young one⁴ can hardly encounter and approach him.
When the water in the field becomes meager, the autumn lake recedes;
Where the white clouds are no more, the old mountains are cold.
It must come to a complete annihilation – don’t cheat!
Fully exhausting non-accomplishments⁵, he attains his state;
Lofty and solitary, he does not share the same scales⁶ as you.

CASE 95: Rinzai Draws a Line

Introduction:

When the Buddha comes, one hits him;
When a devil comes, one hits him.
If there is logic, thirty blows;
If there is no logic, thirty blows.
Does one betray malice and hatred through misapprehension?
Or is one not able to distinguish the good [from the bad]?
Try to say it, and I’ll see!

Case:

Rinzai asked the temple steward, “Where have you come from?” The temple steward said, “From selling brown rice in the province.” Rinzai said, “Have you finished selling all of it?” The manager said, “Yes, I have finished selling all of it.” Rinzai drew a line with his staff and

¹ The four principle elements are “earth, water, fire, and wind.” That the four elements are not in order means one is ill.

² The physical body.

³ The essential self.

⁴ The phenomenal self.

⁵ Concerning the “non-accomplishments,” cf. the “Aspect of Accomplishment without Accomplishment” [*Kôkô-î*], the 5th aspect of the “Five Aspects of Endeavor and Accomplishments” [*Kunkô-goî*] by Tôzan Zenji.

⁶ I.e., measuring scales.

said, "Have you sold all of this too?" The manager shouted, "Kaatzu!" Rinzai immediately struck him.

Later, the cook monk¹ came to Rinzai, who told him about this incident. The monk said, "The steward didn't understand Your Reverence's intention." Rinzai said, "How about you?" The monk made a deep bow. Rinzai struck him likewise.

Verse:

Rinzai's whole activities – sublime are the tones;
An eye is on top of the staff, distinguishing the thinnest hair.
The lone rabbit is swept away – severe is the family tradition;
The fish is turned into a dragon – its tail is burned through lightning².
The sword that gives life, the blade that kills life;
It glitters on the snow against heaven, sharper than the hair-severing sword;
Equally commanding, yet differently to be savored.
The very spot that causes massive pain – who can meet it?

CASE 96: Kyûhô Does Not Acknowledge

Introduction:

Ungo does not rely upon spiritual relics, the pearls of Precepts³;
Kyûhô does not appreciate expiring while sitting or standing⁴,
Gyûtô does not need hundreds of birds to bring him flowers⁵,
Ôbaku does not envy gliding, as if upon a cup, across the water⁶.
Tell me, what are their special merits?

Case:

Kyûhô served Sekisô as his attendant. After Sekisô's passing, the assembly wanted to

¹ I.e. "tenzo" – a monk who prepares meals.

² Cf. the Verse of Case 33.

³ Once Ungo asked his attendant to take a garment to a hermit. The hermit did not receive it, saying that he already had a garment from his mother. Thereupon Ungo asked him, "Before your mother was born, what kind of garment did you have?" The hermit could not answer a single word. Later, the hermit died and left some "spiritual relics" after being cremated. Someone brought the relics to Ungo. To this Ungo answered, "What good would it bring even if he had produced tons of spiritual relics? It would have been far better if he had been able to answer the very question I posed him at that time."

⁴ Cf. the main Case.

⁵ Gyûtô is Hôyû Zenji on Mt. Gyûtô. He sat daily in his iron chamber, while the birds of heaven brought him lots of flowers to admire and worship him. The Fourth Patriarch smelled the fragrance of the spiritual flavor of the flowers and came to visit Hôyû. When the Fourth Patriarch arrived at the place, two tigers came out to welcome him. The Fourth Patriarch was astonished. Hôyû then greeted him, "There is still *this!*" The two met and conversed intimately with each other. During Hôyû's short absence, the Fourth Patriarch drew the character "Buddha" upon Hôyû's sitting cushion. Hôyû came back and wanted to do zazen. He saw the character "Buddha" on the cushion and was somehow perplexed. Thereupon the Fourth Patriarch said, "There is still *this!*" After this, Hôyû became a disciple of the Fourth Patriarch and began his most serious practice.

⁶ Ôbaku Zenji met a monk on his way to Mr. Tendai. The two went along friendly together, until they came to a big river, where there were no boats or bridges. The monk used his hat like a boat and crossed the river. Ôbaku was angry and cried to him, "It was a waste of time to come along with such an important guy like you. If I had known that you were such a tiny fellow so proud of your stupid 'supernatural powers', I would have hit you hard in the face for that!" Thereupon, the monk admired Ôbaku, "Here is a great man of the Mahayana Dharma!"

make their head monk the abbot of the temple. Kyûhō would not acknowledge him. He said, “Wait till I examine him. If he understands our late master's spirit and intention, I will serve him as I served our late master.”

So he asked the head monk, “Our late master said,
‘Have been totally ceased¹;
Have been completely extinguished;
[Have become a cool land of desolation;]
Have become one awareness for ten thousand years;
Have become cold ashes and a withered tree;
[Have become a fragrant censer in an ancient shrine;]
Have become a vertical stripe² of white silk.’

Tell me, what sort of matter did he clarify with this?” The head monk said, “He clarified the matter of the One Color.” Ho said, “If so, you have not yet understood our late master's spirit.” The head monk said, “Don't you acknowledge me? Pass me incense.” He lit the incense and said, “If I had not understood our late master's spirit, I would not be able to pass away while the smoke of this incense rises.” No sooner had he said this than he expired while sitting in zazen. Kyûhō caressed his back and said, “Dying while sitting or standing is not impossible. But you could not even dream of our late master's spirit.”

Verse:

The school of Sekisō was intimately transmitted to Kyûhō.
Expiring in the fragrant smoke does not lead to the authentic stream.
The crane in the moon-lit nest creates a dream of one thousand years,
While the man in the snowy hut is deluded by the merit of the One Color.
Cutting off all ten directions through sitting is still a miserable failure;
Moving intimately one step forward would witness soaring dragons³.

CASE 97: Emperor Dōkō's Helmet Hood

Introduction:

Bodhidharma met Emperor Bu of Ryō⁴, solely wishing to transmit the heart-mind.

Enkan⁵ knew [Emperor] Daichū; he certainly had the eye.

“Peace prevails under heaven, the king enjoys long life”⁶ –

he doesn't violate heavenly majesty;

“The sun and the moon rest the landscape in peace, the four seasons are all in harmony”¹ –

¹ The original text contains five out of the famous “seven Perfecta” (*shichiko*) of Sekisō. For your reference, the lacking two lines are shown in [].

² The image of a waterfall.

³ The last two lines allude to a famous legend (cf. note to the verse of Case 33) that only the carps overcoming the three grades of waterfalls could be transformed into dragons and soar up to heaven. The “poor failure” here means that some carps bump their foreheads against the rock and get carried away by the water.

⁴ Cf. Case 2 (=Case 1 of the *Hekiganroku*).

⁵ National Teacher Saian. Cf. Case 25. “Daichū” is originally the name of the era of Emperor Sensō of the T'ang Dynasty; here it means Sensō himself, who, before becoming the emperor, was a disciple of Enkan. Enkan knew that Sensō was a man of great caliber and told him to foster the Buddha-Way when the latter was to take over the throne. In fact, the Buddha-Way came to flourish during Sensō's reign.

⁶ Words of Reverend Kyō, the 10th Patriarch, when he had a Dharma combat with Memyō in front of the king.

the king's reign augments its sovereign light.
When the king of people and the king of the Dharma meet,
What should they talk about?

Case:

Emperor Dôkô² spoke to Kôke³ saying, "I have attained the treasure of the Central Plain⁴. However, no one can set a price on it." Kôke said, "Your Majesty, please lend it to me so that I may see." The emperor pulled the straps of his helmet hood with both hands. Kôke said, "Who can dare to set a price on the emperor's treasure!"

Verse:

The king's true intention is communicated to the best friend;
All people under heaven [naturally] show sincerity
with the heart of the sunflowers [inclining toward the sun].
He took out the priceless treasure of the Central Plain,
incomparable with the jewel of Chô⁵ or the gold of En⁶.
The gem of the Central Plain is manifested to Kôke;
Its excellent radiance is beyond appraisal.
The works of the emperor can well be the teacher for ten thousand generations;
The beams of the golden wheels⁷ illuminate the four directions under heaven.

CASE 98: Tôzan's "Keenly with It"

Introduction:

Kyûhô, by cutting off his tongue, followed Sekisô faithfully;⁸
Sôzan, by cutting off his head, did not go against Tôrei⁹.
The tongues of the ancients are so intimate as these.
Where is the art of doing good to people?

¹ Words which are supposed to be spoken by Fudaishi, praising the virtues of the then emperor.

² It means Emperor Shôsô, whose era was named "Dôkô."

³ Kôke Sonshô Zenji in the line of Rinzai.

⁴ The entire land of China.

⁵ Cf. the Verse (with Risôjo) of Case 18 and its footnote.

⁶ King Shô of En is said to have put a massive sum of gold on the table and invited celebrities to his palace.

⁷ In the ancient Indian mythology there were four kings around the Mt. Sumeru: the king of iron wheels reigned over the southern part of the mountain, the king of bronze wheels the southern and eastern parts, the king of silver wheels the eastern, western and southern parts; only the king of golden wheels ruled over the northern, southern, eastern and western parts of the mountain.

⁸ The first and the second line have the following stories as their background: A monk asked Sekisô, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west?" Sekisô bit his teeth (i.e., he did not speak). After Sekisô passed away, the monk asked Kyûhô, a disciple of Sekisô, "What is the meaning of Master Sekisô's biting his teeth?" Kyûhô said, "Even if my tongue were cut, I would not violate the real name of the emperor. (i.e., I would not open my mouth to say the real thing)".

– As for the second line: (As in the main Case:)A monk asked Tôzan, "Among the three bodies of the Buddha, what body does not degenerate into numbers?" Tôzan said, "I am most keenly with it." Later the monk asked Sôzan, "What is the meaning of Master Tôzan's saying, 'I am most keenly with it'?" Sôzan said, "If you want my head, cut it and take it with you."

⁹ Master Tôzan Gohon.

Case:

A monk asked Tōzan, “Among the three bodies [of the Buddha]¹, what body does not degenerate into numbers²?” Tōzan said, “I am always most keenly with it.”

Verse:

Not going into the world,
Not following the worldly bonds.
In the pot³ of the Kalpa of Emptiness lies the family tradition.
The breeze travels through the white dropworts at the dusk of the autumn river,
With the boat returning to the ancient bank enveloped in the mist.

CASE 99: Unmon's “Bowl and Pail”⁴

Introduction:

There is a special wisdom for chess, a special stomach for alcohol.
The sly rabbit makes three holes⁵, the clever monkey has luck a myriad times.
There is [yet] an obstinate fellow – just tell me, who is he?

Case:

A monk asked Unmon, “What is the only-dust samadhi⁶?” Unmon said, “Rice in the bowl, water in the pail.”

Verse:

“Rice in the bowl, water in the pail” –
He opens his mouth and shows his guts,
Seeking for someone who can really understand him.
If you try to think, you fall into the second or the third level of activities;
If you face it, you are a thousand and ten thousand miles away.
Master Shōyō⁷ hits the spot a little bit:
Who would be equal with him in the “metal-cutting”⁸ sharpness?
The heart and mind, more solid than a rock, stands alone without parallel.

¹ They are: (1) *hosshin*, Dharmakaya or Dharma-body, (2) *hōjin*, Sambhogakaya or the body of reward, (3) *ōjin* or *keshin*, Nirmanakaya or the accommodated body.

² I.e., “degenerate into numbers” means to get trapped in numbers (more concretely, the three sections of “six roots [=sense organs], six functions, six areas”, the seven elements of “earth, water, fire, wind, etc.” and so on).

³ The “pot” refers to the pot of Hichōbō, cf. the footnote to the Verse of Case 92. “The Kalpa of Emptiness” is one of the four great kalpas characterizing the entire span of the universe: the Kalpa of Becoming, that of Abiding, that of Destruction, and that of Emptiness.

⁴ See *Hekiganroku* Case 50.

⁵ So that it can escape for sure.

⁶ Literally: “dust-dust samadhi.” The word “dust” comes from the expression “six dust particles,” which means the “six objects”; that is, the objects of the six sense organs: form, sound, smell, taste, things to be touched, objects of mind (cf. note to Case 75).

⁷ I.e., Master Unmon.

⁸ An old phrase goes: “When two people are of one heart, their sharpness cuts metal asunder.”

CASE 100: Rôya's "Mountains and Rivers"

Introduction:

“One word can make a nation rise, one word can make a nation fall;”¹

“This medicine can kill people and can give people life.”²

“The benevolent person sees it and names it benevolence,

The wise person sees it and calls it wisdom.”³

Tell me, where is the profit and where is the loss?

Case:

A monk asked Master Kaku of Rôya, “The essential state is pure and clear; how are mountains, rivers and the great earth produced at once?”⁴ Kaku said, “The essential state is pure and clear; how are mountains, rivers and the great earth produced at once?”

Verse:

Seeing a being, he does not consider it to be a being;

He turns his hand over and turns it back.

The man on Mt. Rôya

Does not yield to Gautama⁵.

¹ A saying by Confucius.

² It is said to have been a remark by Bodhisattva Manjusri.

³ A quote from a Confucian book.

⁴ The words derive from an utterance in the *Heroic Valor Sutra (Shuryôgon-kyô)*: “Furuna asked [the Buddha], ‘When all roots, dusts, *yins*, realms and other things house the Tathagata and are pure and clear in its essential state, how are mountains, rivers, the great earth and other aspects of being produced at once and eventually flow away, only to be re-started once again?’”

⁵ D.h., Shakyamuni.