

The Complete Cold Mountain: Poems of the Legendary Hermit Hanshan

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PART ONE

ORIGINAL POEMS

Circa Late Sixth to Early Seventh Century

1

You ask the way to Cold Mountain,
but the road does not go through.
In summer, the ice is not yet melted,
the morning sun remains hidden in mist.
How can you get here, like I did?
Our minds are not the same.
When your mind becomes like mine,
you will get here, too.

2

No matter how high you climb Cold Mountain road,
the way to Cold Mountain never ends.
The long valley is stacked with boulders,
its shoreline wet with lush grass.
Slippery moss, regardless of rain,
pine trees singing, even without wind.
Who can go beyond the entangled world
to sit with me in the midst of white clouds?

3

Amidst cliffs I have made my home.
The paths of birds are beyond human tracing.
What is there beside my garden?
White clouds embracing dark stone.
How many years have I lived in this place,
watching the many changes of winter and spring?
Let me say to those with cauldrons and chimes—
there's no merit in your worthless reputation!

4

If you want to attain a peaceful life,
settle down at Cold Mountain.
Subtle breezes blow through mysterious pine.
Listen closely, the sound is really good.
Beneath it, someone with graying hair
reads the Yellow Emperor and Laozi without ceasing.
After ten years, I can never return—
I've even forgotten the way I came.

5

Go ahead! Make fun of the way to Cold Mountain,
where there's not a trace of horse or cart.
It's hard to remember valley switchbacks
below layer upon layer of so many peaks.
Dew weeps on a thousand kinds of grasses,
winds sing through the pine.
Lost now on my path,
Shadow, tell me, which way should I go?

6

Lute and books should fill your life,
what can fame and money provide?

Abandon your carriage and follow the wisdom of your wife.

A humble cart is pulled by devoted children.

Wind blows over barley drying on the ground,
water floods from the pond stocked with fish.

I often think of wrens
that live peacefully on just one branch.

7

My mind is like an autumn moon
glowing purely in a clear blue abyss.

Nothing compares to it.

What could I possibly say?

8

Once I moved to Cold Mountain, everything was at rest.

No more useless, mixed-up thinking.

In idleness, I write my poems on stone walls,
accepting whatever happens like an untied boat.

9

A parrot who lived in the western country
was captured by a net in Wu and brought here.

A beautiful woman plays with it from morning to night,
going in and out of the courtyard of the women's quarters.

She keeps it in a royal golden cage,
with a bar to the door that injured its wing.

Unlike a swan or a crane, it can't
drift with the wind or soar away into the clouds.

10

A city woman with delicate eyebrows
and a white agate-studded sash
teases a parrot surrounded by flowers.
When she plays her lute beneath the moon,
the melody resounds for three months.
Countless people admire her short dance,
but none of this can last.
A lotus cannot withstand the winter cold.

11

A handsome young man on a horse
swings his whip and points to the pleasure quarter,
saying, "I will never die."
He has not yet taken a journey.
As the four seasons change, he enjoys flowers,
but one day they all will wither and yellow.
He can't taste the finest cream and honey
until the day he dies.

12

In a jeweled hall with hanging pearl screens,
there's a lovely and graceful young woman.
Looking more beautiful than a goddess,
her blossoming figure is like a young peach.
Her house in the east merges with spring mist,
but in her western house, autumn winds rise.
In thirty years, she too will become
like the remains of sugar cane.

13

Much has been inherited from their parents,
rice and vegetable fields—there's no need to envy others.

The wife rocks the loom, *cr-ack cr-ack*.

The children make baby sounds, *gaa gaa*.

They clap their hands at dancing flowers,
or prop up their chins to listen to bird songs.

Who will come around to appreciate this?

Woodcutters often pass right by.

14

I am a woman who lives in Handan.

I sing in low and high pitches.

Happily, in this place where you peacefully hide,
this music has been played for ages.

Already drunk, don't say a word about leaving,
the sun is not yet in the middle of the sky.

In my house, you sleep

beneath a quilt embroidered with silver.

15

A country person lives in a thatched-roof hut.

In front of his gate, a horse or cart is rarely seen.

Birds gather in the dark forest,
the broad streams teem with fish.

He takes his child to collect nuts and berries,
and together, he and his wife plow the hilly field.

Inside their hut, what do they possess?

Only books on a single shelf.

16

People are a country's foundation,
just like a tree depends on the ground.
If the soil is deep, it supports the spreading branches.
If the soil is poor, the tree will decline.
Do not expose its roots,
or the branches will wither and the fruit will fall.
To get fish by destroying a dam
benefits you just one time.

17

In the third month, when silk worms are small,
women come to pick flowers in a field.
Then they play with butterflies by the fence
and toss toads into the pond.
One gathers plums in her soft sleeves,
another digs up bamboo shoots with a golden hairpin.
If I was forced to compare them,
this village is better than my home.

18

On a legendary horse, with a coral whip,
he dashes down the Luoyang road.
Such a proud, handsome boy
doesn't believe in aging and decline,
though his hair is sure to turn white.
How long can his rosy cheeks remain?
Just look north to the mountain of tombs—
that is the Island of the Immortals.

19

In Luoyang there are many women
who display their charms on a spring day.
They pick roadside blossoms
so each can ornament her topknot.
Their flowery hairdos entice those around,
though others look down on them and glare.
Why seek out troublesome lovers?
Go home to see your husbands.

20

Girls call to each other while gathering lotus blossoms—
what a lovely pure river village!
They play and play, not noticing the dusk,
or the crazy winds that often come up.
Rising waves lift the ducklings,
large ducks sway in the eddies.
Paddling idly here in a boat,
this vast gentle feeling may never end.

21

In spring, a woman dresses up
to stroll with other women down a southern road.
She enjoys the flowers, but dreads day's turn into night,
and shelters behind a tree, afraid of the blowing wind.
A young man from nearby approaches
on a white horse with a golden bridle.
Why do they dally together so long?
At home, her husband knows.

22

The wife is too lazy to weave at the loom,
the husband too slothful to plow for rice.
He enjoys hunting with his arrows and bow,
while she shuffles around, strumming her lute.
When freezing to the bone, get covered up fast,
to have a full belly, eat some food first.
Who would care about you now
if you suffer and wail to the heavens?

23

When I think back on my young days,
I used to hunt at the imperial field.
Not wanting to be a national envoy,
and saying that being an immortal wasn't good enough,
I'd gallop astride my white horse,
shouting at rabbits and letting my green hawk fly.
Without realizing it, I took a great plunge.
Could anyone see my white hair now and feel pity?

24

As a youth, I carried scriptures and a hoe,
while living with my brother's family.
But others made accusations
and even my own wife turned her back.
So I left the dusty world
to live idly, reading books.
Who can offer a bucketful of water
to rescue this fish from its cart track puddle?

25

When Dong was young,
he used to visit the imperial palace
in a jacket made of yellow duckling feathers,
so he resembled a painting.
He always rode on a horse with white hooves
that kicked up the red dust.
Onlookers packed the roadside,
wondering whose child he could be.

26

Your writing and judgment are not at all poor,
so I wonder why you didn't pass the official exam.
The examiners may have been twisted or perverse
to rinse off your dirt, seeking sores and scars.
This must be your destiny.
Try again this winter.
Even if a blind person shoots at a sparrow's eye,
an accidental hit is not impossible!

27

In the village where I live,
people flatter me as incomparable.
Yesterday, I went to the city
and was glared at by dogs.
People either hated my narrow pants
or said my jacket was too long.
While the sparrow hawk's eyes are crossed,
sparrows dance with confidence.

28

Wandering, I arrive at Above the Sky Pavilion,
where I climb the hundred-foot tower in vain.
Even if we nurture life, our lives are short,
how will making myself study turn me into a lord?
It's useless to follow the advice of immature people.
Why should I be ashamed of my white hair?
Not yet as straight as an arrow,
I won't be bent like a hook.

29

Raising girls brings up many fears.
Those already born should be trained well.
Push at their heads to make them attentive,
whip their backs to keep their mouths shut.
If they can't operate a shuttle and loom,
how can they use brooms and dustpans?
Old woman Zhang tells her donkey foal,
"When you grow up, don't be like your mother."

30

Last spring, when birds were warbling,
I thought of my brothers, young and old.
Now, in autumn, as chrysanthemums decline,
I think of my own birth.
Deep green rivers make me weep,
the dust of battles covers the land.
What a pity! Within a hundred years
the capital city of Xian was destroyed.

31

A cuckoo atop a flower
chirps in a lovely voice.
A beautiful woman whose face is like a jewel
looks toward it and strums her harp.
Playing like this is not enough.
We long for love when we are young,
but flowers and birds both fly away.
I shed tears facing the autumn wind.

32

Young women play at dusk
as the breeze fills the road with fragrance.
With golden butterflies sewn on their skirts,
jeweled duck hairpins adorn them.
Even their maids wear fine red silk,
and their eunuchs dress in purple brocade.
But look! Those who lose the way
become frightened when their hair turns white.

33

A five-colored phoenix
lives in a paulownia, eating bamboo nuts.
It moves slowly with decorum,
there's a peaceful tone in its song.
Why did it come out yesterday?
Perhaps, to spend some time with me.
When it hears my harp and singing,
it dances, rejoicing in the day!

34

How pleasant! The body of Chaos,
that neither eats rice nor pisses,
met with the one whose pliers and chisel
made the nine holes of a human form.
Since then, people work for clothes and food,
and worry about taxes year after year.
Thousands of people fight for a penny—
battling each other, they scream for their lives.

35

Rich people meet at a tall building
decorated with shining lamps.
When a woman without even a candle
wants to draw near,
they quickly push her away,
back into the shadows.
How does adding someone diminish the light?
I wonder, can't they spare it?

36

Zou's wife, who is modest,
and Du's mother from Handan,
young and old women together,
share the same respectable appearance.
Yesterday they met at a restaurant,
but were rejected and sent to the back of the room
because their skirts were torn.
They had to eat roasted rice cakes others left behind.

37

The Shi family had two children
whose talents served the Qi and Chu courts.
Both mastered literature and the martial arts,
relying on themselves alone to acquire positions.
Mr. Mao asked about their secret, saying,
“I want to train my children in your way,”
but at Qin and Wei, neither was successful.
The timing was off, and the fit was bad.

38

In general, things have their own use,
with each use being right.
If you miss the proper usage,
things will be lacking here and there.
Trying to put a square peg in a round hole,
sadly, just won't work.
The legendary horse, Hualiu, trying to catch a mouse
isn't even as good as a lame kitten.

39

Brothers separated in five counties,
a father and his children from three different regions—
they all want to investigate flying like owls
and discover how White Rabbit swims.
In dreams, they receive sacred melons,
and keep divine tangerines.
How will they ever get home from such a distance,
packed like fish in a stream?

40

Once, a master calligrapher and swordsman
met three luminous, sacred kings.
He governed the east, but received no praise,
his western offensive gained him no rank.
He studied literature while learning martial arts,
and combined martial arts with his literary study.
Now that he is old,
his remaining years are not worth mentioning.

41

Heaven created a tree one hundred feet tall
that could be cut into long lengths for lumber.
What a pity this wood for a master carpenter
was abandoned in a dark valley.
Its heart remains strong after many years,
but gradually its bark stripped off, leaving it bald.
If there's someone who knows how to use it,
it might make a strong post for a horse-barn.

42

Zhuangzi talked about his funeral,
"Make heaven and earth my coffin."
When I depart,
just wrap a reed screen around me.
Death certainly feeds green flies—
don't bring a white crane to take me away.
If I starve on Mount Souyang
as a devoted follower, death will be a pleasure, too.

43

Astride a galloping horse, I arrive at a ruined city,
where the desolation moves me deeply.
Old high and low parapets,
large or small abandoned tombs—
my mugwort shadow shakes all alone,
I freeze at the sound of the cemetery trees.
How sad the bones of worldly people are!
In the history of the immortals, they bear no name.

44

The seasons never cease.
Years come and go
and all things are renewed.
The nine heavens are not destroyed,
east glows bright, the west turns dark,
flowers fall and open once again.
Only those in the Yellow Spring
remain in complete darkness, never to return.

45

Why are young people unhappy?
They're sad to see old people's white hair.
Why does white hair make them sad?
They worry when they feel the pressure of time.
But if they went to live on the Eastern Mountain of Death,
or were appointed to guard the Northern Cemetery—
I can't bear to say these words.
It would hurt old people to hear them.

46

Two turtles riding in an oxcart
that dashes down the street are having fun.
A poisonous scorpion approaches
and begs for a ride.
Not to give it isn't kind,
but as soon as they do, the scorpion kills them both.
I can't even say how fast—a finger snap!
Their kindness is met with a sting!

47

An old woman in a house to the east
has been rich for just three to five years.
In the past she was poorer than I,
but laughs now that I have no money.
So, she laughs at me later,
just as I laughed at her before.
Although we don't quit laughing at each other,
east and west are not so far apart.

48

Rich people have many burdens on their hands,
concerning matters they just won't accept.
A warehouse of poor rice that's turned red,
yet they won't lend it to others who struggle.
Always ready with a trick, when buying thick brocade,
they pick up the damask first.
When their lives are over,
only green flies will mourn.

49

In the past, I saw a brilliant man
whose broad knowledge and sterling spirit
were beyond compare. Once he passed
the national exam, his name was celebrated everywhere.
His five-ideograph poems surpassed all others,
as an official, his governing excelled even his superiors.
No one could follow in his tracks.
Then, he suddenly turned greedy for wealth, property, and love.
Things crashed down like melting ice, beyond what words can say.

50

A white crane bore a bitter peach
and flew a thousand miles in one breath.
Wanting to reach the Mountain of Immortals,
he began to consume it,
but before finishing, his feathers fell out—
he dropped out of the flock with a heart full of misery.
Upon returning to his nest, his wife
and children didn't recognize him.

51

How glorious is the lady of the Lu family,
always known as "Free of Sorrow."
Greedily, she gathers flowers on horseback,
and loves paddling out to harvest lotuses from a boat.
Kneeling on a green bear seat,
draped in a blue phoenix robe,
how sad that in less than a hundred years
she won't avoid returning to the hill of tombs.

52

Who can live forever without dying?

Death comes for everyone.

I used to think he was eight feet tall,

but, all of a sudden, he's a scoop of dust.

The underground world has neither dawn nor day,

though grass is always green in spring.

When I become sad,

a mournful wind in the pines kills me.

53

Like someone who's always drunk,

the years stream by without ceasing.

Concealed behind the mugwort,

how dim the moon is at dawn.

Flesh and bone will completely vanish,

spirit can wither and fade.

If you are bound to get an iron bit in your mouth,

there's no point in reading Laozi.

54

The hanging willow dark as mist,

flower petals whirling like sleet in the air,

the husband lives far from his wife—

in another province, his wife longs for him.

Each has a life under heaven,

but when will they see each other again?

She writes to a woman beneath a glowing moon,

“Don't keep a swallow nest at your house.”

55

If you have wine, invite each other for a drink.
If you have meat, share the meal.
You will die sooner or later,
so make an effort while you're young and strong.
A jeweled belt is just a passing glory,
a golden hairpin won't always adorn.
Old man Zhang and old woman Zheng
both departed; not a word about them has arrived.

56

Peach blossoms try to make it through summer,
but wind and moons don't wait.
Look for people from the Han,
not a single one can be found.
Every morning flowers fall,
year after year, people change.
Even this land, where dust scatters like ash,
used to be a great ocean.

57

Look at a flower among leaves.
How long will it be appealing?
Today it fears someone will pluck it,
tomorrow it will wait to be swept away.
We should pity those who are seductive,
after some years they will turn old.
Just compare the world to this flower—
how long can youthful beauty last?

58

I see a hundred or so dogs,
each one with grungy hair.
Some lie down as they like.
Some walk around, if they like.
When they're thrown a bone
they gnaw at each other and fight.
There's just too little bone
for so many to have an equal share.

59

Far in the distance, I see
white clouds spread out in all directions.
Horned owls and crows are well fed and fat,
while the mythical phoenixes starve and wander nearby.
An excellent horse gets sent to the gravel pit,
while a lame donkey is kept at a fine hall.
The heavens are too high for me to question—
cuckoos and wrens fly over the ocean waves.

60

If you remain silent and don't speak,
what will your descendants say?
If you hide in a forest or bamboo grove,
how will your wisdom shine through?
A withered tree is not protected,
wind and frost cause disease.
If you plow a gravel field with an ox,
how will you ever harvest rice?

61

Fulfilling means fulfilling the spirit,
this is called being fulfilled.

Transforming means transforming the form,
this is called being transformed.

If we fulfill the spirit and transform the form,
we can reach the stage of an immortal.

Not fulfilling the spirit means no transformation,
no escaping death and suffering in the end.

62

How shallow worldly people are,
though human minds are not the same.

Old man Yin laughs at old man Liu.

Old man Liu laughs at old man Yin.

How come they laugh at each other?

Both of their minds are one-sided.

If you compete, piling up loads on a cart,
the loads will whoosh down on you.

63

Gifted people have sharp minds—
they hear something once and understand the wondrous.

Ordinary people have pure minds—
they think thoroughly and speak the essence.

Slow people are ignorant and dull,
with a stubbornness that's hard to crack through.

They wait for blood to drip from their heads
to realize they're injured and could die.

See with your eyes open that a thief

is executed in a crowded marketplace,
his body tossed away like trash.
In that moment, to whom can he plead his case?
A strong man who's been split in half by a sword
has a human face, but an animal mind.
How can we prevent such a thing?

64

How many types of people are there under heaven?
If we talk it over, there are many.
Empress Jiapo had a husband,
Laozi had no wife.
Wei's child was lovely,
Zhong's daughter was extremely ugly.
If the trend keeps going west,
I'm heading east.

65

Wobbly, poor scholars,
hungry and extremely cold,
love to sit alone, composing poems,
squeak squeaking with all their power.
But, who would read such lowly people?
My advice to you is stop sighing.
If you write your poems on rice cakes,
even begging dogs won't eat them.

66

Someone boasts about his practice,
saying he's even better than Lords Zhou and Confucius.
But when looked at closely, he's hardheaded,
with a big lumbering body.
Pulled by a rope, he doesn't progress,
pierced by an awl, he still won't budge.
He's just like ancient Yang's crane—
pitifully dull-witted since birth.

67

A poor donkey lacks one foot of food,
while a rich dog can leave three inches behind.
If the extra is shared, it's not fair to the poor,
so rich and poor should split the food in half.
But, if the donkey takes more than its fill,
it makes the dog starve right away.
If I think too much about what you should get,
I could get anxious and depressed.

68

The man called Liu is eighty-two.
The woman, Lan, just eighteen.
Together, husband and wife come to one hundred years,
but their love for each other is crafty and cunning.
Their son, Wutu, toys with a jade ball.
Their daughter, Wanna, flips an earthen spool.
They're like buds that sprout from a decayed willow,
bound to be killed by the goddess of frost.

69

A wretchedly hungry and frozen man,
clearly born different from animals or fish,
lived a long time beneath a polished stone tomb.
Sometimes he'd weep on the street corner
after dreaming for days about hot, cooked rice.
But he got through winter without even a jacket,
carrying his bundle of thatch
and five scoops of bran.

70

How brightly lit this wine shop is!
Strong wine,
and a high lovely banner.
They make sure their servings are exact,
so everyone wonders why their wine doesn't sell.
That family keeps many fierce dogs.
When children are sent to buy wine,
the dogs nip and drive them away.

71

If you're rich and noble, those near and far gather around—
it's just that you have so much money and rice.
If you're poor and lowly, even family members go away—
it's not that your siblings are few.
Hurry up, go back to your home,
the pavilion where the wise are invited is not yet open.
Recklessly, you wander Red Sparrow Avenue,
wearing out your leather sandals.

72

I see a foolish man
who keeps two or three wives
and has raised eight or nine children.
Still, overall, he follows a sensible hand.
His grown children have new households,
though he hasn't passed down his resources.
But he lives like someone who uses
yellow bark for a donkey strap—
soon he will know that bitterness comes later on.

73

With the new grain not ripe,
and the old grain already gone,
I wanted to borrow a bushel or so.
I stood outside my neighbor's gate, but wavered.
When the husband came out, he had me ask his wife,
when the wife came out, she sent me back to her husband.
Their stinginess will never help those who are starving,
their wealth has made them rich in stupidity.

74

We can laugh about a lot about things,
so let me mention a few.
Mr. Zhou was wealthy and prospering,
while Maozi was poor and kept getting stuck.
A dwarf entertainer was taken to an excessive meal,
though faithful but starving Fangshuo was not invited.
Many people sing popular songs,
but few can sing the peaceful tune "White Snow."

75

An old man marries a young woman,
when his hair turns white, his wife can't stand it.

An old woman marries a young man,
when her complexion yellows, her husband isn't pleased.

An old man marries an old woman,
neither of them rejects the other.

A young woman marries a young man,
together they show their love.

76

A good-looking young man
has widely read scriptures and history.

People address him as "master,"
and everyone says he's a scholar.

But he hasn't yet acquired an official position
and doesn't know how to use a plow.

In winter, he goes around in a torn cloth jacket.

Is his scholarship to blame?

77

A good person shouldn't stay poor.

If you have no money, manage your affairs.

Get and keep a cow
who will give birth to five calves.

These will have more calves
that multiply without end.

Let me offer a word: Lord Tao Zhu's
wealth and yours can be the same.

78

Why are you so indecisive?

Make up your mind and settle down.

The south has many diseases,
in the north, winds are bitter and cold.

The wilderness isn't suitable for living—
poisonous river water can't be drunk.

Let your spirit return home,
enjoy the mulberries from my garden.

79

In last night's dream I returned home
and saw my wife weaving at the loom.

She rested her shuttle, and seemed lost in thought,
with no strength to lift it again.

When I called, she turned to look,
but didn't recognize me.

So many years have passed—
the color of my hair has changed.

80

Humans live barely one hundred years,
but worry weighs you down for a thousand.

As soon as your own illness improves,
you become anxious for your children and grandchildren.

You inspect the root of the rice plant,
and squint at the top of the mulberry.

Only when your counterweight plunges to the bottom
of the eastern sea, will you get to know some rest.

81

North of the city, old man Zhong
kept a houseful of wine and meat.
When his wife died,
mourning guests filled his home.
When Zhong himself died,
no one wept for him at all.
Those who had eaten the meat and drunk his wine—
how cold their hearts and stomachs!

82

As I walked around an ancient burial site,
my tears dried up, but my sighs would not die down.
A tomb had been broken into, crushing the outer box.
The pierced coffin exposed whitened bones
and ash jars leaning at strange angles—
the courtier's hairpin and scepter had been stolen.
When the winds struck, they'd taken over the inside,
scattering dust and ashes all around.

83

Since growing up, I've been disturbed
by the chaos of worldly affairs,
but I can't just abandon ordinary people,
so I visit from time to time.
Yesterday I went to a funeral for the fifth son of Xu.
Today we send off Liu's third child.
There's not a moment of peace
for my sorrowful heart.

84

If there's pleasure, enjoy it—

don't miss the chance!

Although human life is said to last one hundred years,

how will you use up thirty thousand days?

We pass through this world in an instant—

don't argue about money or complain.

The last chapter of the *Book of Filial Piety*

speaks about this in detail.

85

I was pretty poor in the past,

but this morning I'm the poorest and freezing.

Whatever I do doesn't go smoothly,

and the paths I travel only lead to trouble.

When I walk on mud, I sprain my leg,

when I sit at a village meeting, it gives me an ulcer.

Having lost my calico cat,

old rats surround my rice jar.

86

In the days when I had money,

I always lent you some.

Now you're warm with a full belly,

but you don't share anything with me.

Think about it: your desire to gain

was like my hoping to receive.

Having and not having switch back and forth.

I beg you to turn this over in your mind.

87

Let me advise you about a few things.

Consider them and you'll know I'm wise.

If you're very poor, go ahead and sell your house.

If you get a bit of wealth, buy a rice field.

When your stomach's empty, you can't run around,
or sleep with your head on a pillow.

So that others can read this advice,

hang it on the eastern wall where the sun first shines.

88

"If others are wise, accept it.

If they're not wise, don't get together."

"If you are wise, others will accept you.

If you're not wise, others will reject you."

If you admire the good, and sympathize with those less able,
you have a place among compassionate people.

I encourage you to follow the latter saying of Zizhang,
and throw away the former words of Zijia.

89

A good-looking man

who had mastered all six arts

went to see the south, but was driven back to the north.

He went to see the west, and was chased toward the east,

so he wandered a long time, drifting like water weed,

and flying about like mugwort without taking a rest.

I ask what kind of thing he is—

his family name is poverty; suffering is his given name.

90

Yesterday, I saw trees beside a river
damaged beyond description,
with two or three left standing
that had countless gouges from an ax.
Frost had withered their sparse leaves,
waves had battered their decaying roots.
Our lives are just like this—
what's the use of holding a grudge against the universe?

91

“Life and death are destined.
Wealth and nobility are determined by heaven.”
These are the words of an ancient,
I'm not misquoting.
Wise people tend to have a short life,
while fools live long.
Good-for-nothings have great wealth,
awakened ones have none.

92

Since heaven and earth began,
humans have lived between them.
You get lost, then are spat out into the mist,
you awaken, but are quickly blown about by the wind.
When you are favored, you have wealth and nobility,
when you are robbed, you suffer and are poor.
People are like a bunch of pebbles—
all things are due to the lord of heaven.

93

Raising a child without a teacher
is worse than keeping a mouse at a roadhouse inn.
How would they ever meet a good person,
or hear what they have to say?
Cloth can be dyed with sweet or stinky grass.
Waste no time choosing friends and companions,
like peddling fresh fish under the scorching sun—
don't let others laugh at you.

94

Several foolish youths
go about their tasks carelessly.
They haven't even read ten books
but stubbornly make editorial corrections.
They got hold of the Confucius chapter on Conduct
and called it a guideline for robbers and thieves.
They're no different from book worms
that gnaw through their covers.

95

A scholar named Wang
laughed and said my poems have many faults:
"You don't know about hunch back.
You don't understand skinny legs.
These flat and slanted tones don't rhyme,
and there's one cliché after another."
I laughed. "The poems you make
are like a blind person describing the sun."

96

Though he's not truly a hermit,
he calls himself a mountain sage.
He's just an official of Lu who wears a conical silk hat,
but also loves a turban of twining vines.
He says he's as pure as Chaofu and Xuyou,
and would be ashamed to serve Emperor Yao or Shun.
He's like a monkey who puts a fish basket on his head,
mimicking seekers who try to avoid the dusty world.

97

Wise people aren't greedy,
but the ignorant are keen to stoke the furnace.
They take over someone's barley field,
then try to get his entire bamboo grove.
Those of you who shoulder in, seeking riches,
gnashing your teeth, driving your servants and mares,
take a look outside your gate—
tombstones scatter beneath the oaks and pines.

98

I've often heard that Emperor Wu of Han
and Emperor Shi of Qin
favored the arts of sorcery,
but neither extended his life.
Already, Wu's golden terrace has been shattered,
and Shi's town of Shaqiu destroyed.
By now, their mounded tombs in Moulang and Liqiu
are overtaken by weeds.

99

Greedy people are good at accumulating wealth,
like owls who love their young,
though when the children grow large, they devour their mothers.

Possessions are just like this.

When you give them away, you grow happy,
when you hoard them, it brings misfortune.

Owning nothing causes no harm,
like a bird flapping its wings in the great blue sky.

100

The water of the Yellow River is vast—

it flows eastward without ceasing.

Drifting slowly on, without ever clearing up,
everyone's life comes to an end.

Even if you wish to ride a white cloud,
how can you grow wings?

During the years when your hair is black,
in motion or stillness, give yourself completely.

101

I've wanted to move to East Rock
for so many years.

Yesterday I climbed the ivy-covered path,
but got stopped halfway up by mist and wind.

It was hard to press on, the narrow path grasping my robe,
the moss sticking to my sandals.

For now, I'll stay beneath the cinnamon tree
and sleep with the white cloud as my pillow.

102

Born thirty years ago,
I've wandered thousands of miles—
from rivers that merge with the grasslands
to the frontier where red dust appears.
In vain, I tried herbal medicine and sorcery,
studying books and reciting history out loud.
Today I return to Cold Mountain,
where the stream is my pillow, cleansing my ears.

103

By divination, I chose my hidden abode.
There's nothing else to say about Tiantai.
Monkeys cry out, the valley mist is cold,
mountain colors lead to my thatched gate.
I twist off pine boughs to cover my room,
and draw valley water to make a pond.
Letting the myriad things come to rest,
I gather bracken to carry me through the year.

104

My home is under the green mossy rock.
The overgrown garden is not weeded out.
New wisteria vines entangle
the upright ancient rugged stones.
Monkeys pluck the wild fruit,
white herons scoop up fish in the pond.
With one or two Daoist books,
I read, mumbling beneath a tree.

105

The white cloud is naturally idle.

I never purchased this mountain.

When climbing down a dangerous path, I use my cane,
when climbing up a steep ravine, I grab a vine.

At the bottom of the valley, pines are always green,
in the nearby gorge, rocks are mottled.

Although friends are cut off,
when spring arrives, birds chirp gently.

106

I have only one garment,
not silk, not brocade.

If you ask the color,
it's neither purple nor red.

In summer, it's a jacket,
in winter, it's my quilt.

Winter or summer, it simply changes use.

Year after year, it's been just this way.

107

How many years have I lived on Cold Mountain?

Alone, I sing with no worries at all.

The woven mugwort door doesn't close, but here it's always serene,
the spring pouring nectar in a constant flow.

On the ground of my cave, medicine in a clay pot boils in the fire pit.

There are jars of yellow pine pollen, cypress bud tea, and fragrant gel.

When I'm hungry, I eat an *agada* pellet.

My heart is well balanced as I lean on top of a stone.

108

With a vast net of stars, the night is bright and deep.

In my cave, I light a single lamp before the moon sets.

Its full radiance is not a polished jade—

hanging in the blue sky, this is my heart.

109

The scroll is crowded with remarkable poems.

A jar overflows with a sage's wine.

When walking, he loves to watch the cow and a kid.

When sitting, he's not separate from left or right.

Frost and dew slip beneath the thatched eaves

as the moon blossom shines in the window

made from the mouth of a jar.

At this time, sipping from two small bottles of wine,

he chants a few of his poems.

110

When fools read my poems,

they don't understand, so they laugh and make fun.

When ordinary people read my poems,

they think and say, "They have a point."

When wise ones read my poems

they grasp them with big full smiles.

It's just like Yangxiu who saw the ideographs "young female,"

and immediately understood "wondrous."

111

Five hundred five-character-column verses.

Seventy-nine seven-character-column verses.

Twenty-one three-character-column verses.

The total comes to six hundred poems.

I wrote them all over my rocky cave.

I'm proud to say I'm good at it.

If you can understand my poems,

truly you are Tathagata, the mother!

112

Retreating to the deep forest,

I've been a country person since birth.

Raised to be natural and straightforward,

I don't flatter when I speak.

I take care of myself and don't think about others' fortunes,

trusting they will get the pearls.

How can I be the same as those who drift on water,

eyeing wild ducks atop the waves?

113

Do I have a body or not?

Is this a self or not?

I investigate this fully,

sitting for a long time, leaning against a rock.

Green grass starts to grow between my legs.

On top of my head, red dust falls.

Already, when worldly people look at me,

they offer wine and fruit on the platform for my coffin.

114

Holding to my aspiration, I won't be rolled around by others.

I know I'm not a mat.

After wandering, I arrived at this mountain forest

where I lay down alone on a rugged rock.

A smooth talker came by and urged me

to quickly take some gold and jewelry.

It's like chiseling a wall to plant mugwort—

such things do no good.

115

If Cold Mountain utters these words

no one will believe them.

Honey is sweet for people to enjoy,

but bitter bark keeps them away.

Going along with people's feelings brings pleasure,

opposing their ideas sparks resentment.

Just look at wooden puppets

acting out their tragic scenes.

116

Wise ones threw me out.

Fools, I hurl you away.

I'm neither foolish nor wise,

so from now on, I'll have nothing to do with you.

Going into night, I sing to the bright moon.

Immersed in dawn, I dance with the white cloud.

How can I rest my mouth and hands,

sitting up straight as my shaggy hair grows?

117

There is a mist eater
whose abode is closed to worldly people.
When he speaks, he is stern yet clear,
summer and autumn alike.
Dark mountain streams run bright and pure,
high pines rustle in the chilly winds.
If you sit there for even half a day,
you'll abandon a hundred years of worry.

118

Water flows broadly on the plains.
The Hill of Immortals links up with Mount Siming.
The immortals' graceful city is highest
among peaks that rise up like green folding screens.
Far off, the view is endless,
with rugged forces that come face-to-face.
Mount Tiantai alone points to the remote ocean beyond,
spreading its fame everywhere.

119

Far up in the distant sky,
there's a cliff-side road high behind clouds.
A waterfall flows down a thousand yards
like a white silk ribbon.
Below is Qixin Cave.
Peacefully at its side is Dingming Bridge.
Imposing its magnificence on the world,
the name of Mount Tiantai is beyond compare.

120

The Hill of Immortals rises as high as the clouds,
while five other peaks appear low in the distance.
The height of the pagoda surpasses a row of green cliffs,
and an ancient meditation hall enters a rainbow.
As pine needles shake in the wind, Mount Chicheng is magnificent.
When mist spits inside the cave, I get lost on the sorcerer's path,
the blue sky descends, and thousands of mountains and cliffs appear.
Wisteria vines tie the valleys together.

121

When I think of this still place,
it is subtle and deep beyond description.
Without wind, vines stir by themselves,
without mist, the bamboo grove is tall and dark.
The valley stream—for whom does it weep?
Mountain clouds come together all of a sudden.
At midday I sit inside my hut—
only then do I realize the sun has risen.

122

“Cold Mountain is so strange.”
All climbers are afraid.
The moon shines on crystal waters,
winds blow, shuffling the grass.
Withered plum trees blossom with snow,
bare branches fill with leaves of clouds.
Just a touch of rain wakens the spirit—
it doesn't matter if the weather's not clear.

123

Even if you row a three-winged boat,
or gallop on a thousand-*li* horse,
you cannot reach my home.
I live deep in the countryside,
a rocky gorge far in the mountains
where thunderclouds amass all day.
Other than Lord Confucius,
there's no one here to lend me a hand.

124

Far, far, the road to Cold Mountain.
Falling, scattering, the chilled mountain stream.
Quietly, sadly, the birds keep whispering.
Lonely, lonely, nobody here.
Roaring, roaring, wind lashes my face.
Bit by bit, snow covers me up.
Morning after morning, the sun isn't seen.
Year after year, I don't know the spring.

125

Sitting alone, I often feel anxious.
How long will this yearning last?
Clouds move slowly across the mountain's waistline,
at the mouth of the valley, winds blow chilly and wild.
Monkeys arrive in the swaying trees,
birds fly into the forest and wail.
At this time, melancholy presses against the hair on my temples—
the year draws to an end for this sad old man.

126

Six sufferings always hang around your neck—
exploring the nine ways to govern is in vain.
Whatever talent I had was lost in a swamp,
having no skills, I close my wormwood door.
The sun is up, though the cliff is dark,
the mist is gone, the valley still in shadow.
This child from a wealthy family possesses nothing,
not even a loincloth.

127

Ah, I am poor and sick.
From the start, I've been cut off from family and friends.
There's been no rice in the jar for so long,
only dust fills up my steamer.
My grass-roofed hut cannot help leaking,
the wet bedding is bad for my body.
Don't wonder why I'm this worn down—
a lot of worry can destroy anyone.

128

Today I sat in front of a cliff,
until the foggy clouds disappeared.
The single road through the valley was cool.
On the thousand-yard blue peak,
the shadow of morning clouds was still.
A bright moon shines through the night.
On my body there is no dust or filth—
in my heart, why would there be any worry?

129

In vain, I preached the Three Histories
and indulged myself reading the Five Scriptures.
Until I was old, I examined the landowners' records,
though I have always lived as an ordinary person.
Divination pointed to double unhappiness,
a life under the stars of danger and loss.
This is not as good as a tree beside the river
that turns green once a year.

130

White clouds stack steep and high,
in the gorge, green waters flow gently.
From this spot, I can hear fishermen,
sometimes drumming on the oars and singing songs.
The sound of their voices is too painful to hear,
it just fills me with sorrow.
Who says a sparrow has no horn?
It can gouge a hole in a house.

131

A mountain dweller with a wilting heart
often sighs as the years move on.
He looks hard for a miraculous mushroom,
but even if he finds it, how can he become an immortal?
His grounds are spacious, the clouds start to swirl,
over the forest the bright moon is round.
Why doesn't he leave?
The fragrant cassia keeps him where he is.

132

The sound of birds chirping is too sad to bear—
I lie down in my grass-thatched hut.
Crimson cherries sparkle and shine,
willow branches hang so softly.
Morning sun embraces the blue peaks,
clouds clear off, washing in the lake's green water.
Who would think I could leave the dusty world,
just charging up Cold Mountain from the south?

133

Why is the mountain so chilly?
It's been this way since ancient times, not just this year.
Snow always remains on the peaks of the range,
the dark forest spewing up mist.
Weeds flourish after midsummer,
leaves fall before autumn begins.
It is here that a man has lost his way—
he looks and looks but cannot see the sky.

134

The setting sun glows behind western mountains,
grass and trees are luminous,
but there are dark, misty areas
where pine trees link up with creeping vines.
Within those places are many crouching tigers
who might spot me and charge.
Not having even an inch-long blade in my hand,
how should I not be afraid?

135

I heard sadness cannot be driven away.
I didn't think it was true,
so yesterday morning I pushed it back.
Today it returned, and tangled me up.
Months end, but sadness doesn't.
Years are renewed, and so is sadness.
Who would guess that under my wisteria hat
there is a sadness this old?

136

Cold Mountain is cold,
ice locks up the stones.
The mountain's green is hidden,
only white snow appears.
The sun rises and shines,
briefly melting the snow.
From now on, the warmth
will nurture this old guest.

137

After a sorrowful year,
spring arrives in the bright color of things.
Mountain flowers smile at green rivers,
blue mist dances in front of cliffs and caves,
while bees and butterflies sing their joy.
I feel so close to the fish and birds,
their company brings no end of happiness—
I cannot sleep past the dawn.

138

Alone, I lie down below the cliffs—
even in daytime, steaming clouds don't drift away.
Although my chamber is gloomy beneath a hazy sun,
my mind has cut off its clamor.
In a dream, I play inside the immortals' golden gate,
before my spirit returns across a bridge of stone.
I have hurled away all past quarrels
that banged like a noisy gourd against a tree.

139

Someone dwells on a mountainside
where clouds swirl and mist wraps around.
He wants to make a gift of fragrant herbs,
but the road is far off and difficult to pass.
A heart could grow sad and doubtful
that old age will come with nothing achieved.
People crow and laugh at such a stubborn man,
but he stands alone, faithful and pure.

140

Cold Mountain is deep,
it fits my heart.
The stones are pure white,
not gold.
Water from the spring resounds
as I strum Bo's lute.
If Ziqi hears it,
he'll recognize the tune.

141

Only white clouds on Cold Mountain,
so still beyond the dusty world.
My mountain home has a grass seat,
the solitary lamp is the moon's bright disk.
My stone bed overlooks the jade pond,
tiger and deer are often my neighbors.
I covet the joy of my secluded dwelling,
where I can always be a person beyond form.

142

A hand moves a brush freely,
the body as remarkable as rare jade.
But life comes to an end
and death makes one a nameless spirit.
From ancient times it has been like this,
so here's what you can do:
Come inside the white cloud,
I will teach you the purple mushroom song.

143

Taking my time, I climb to the top of Huading Peak.
A bright sun illuminates the middle of the day.
When I look around in the clear sky,
white clouds fly together with cranes.

144

Since arriving at Tiantai,
so many winters and springs have flown past.
Mountains and waters don't change, but I have grown old—
most of the people I see are from the next generation.

145

Amidst these cliffs,
there's enough clear wind.
No need to flap the fan,
the cool air passes through.
A bright moon shines,
the white cloud remains.
I sit here alone,
one old man.

PART TWO

EARLY ADDITIONS

Circa Seventh to Eighth Century

146

You who read my poems,
protect the purity of your heart—
be more modest with your grasping and greed.
Then, what is crooked will straighten out,
driving away unwholesome deeds.
Just take refuge in your true nature
and you'll attain a buddha body today
like a fast-running demon!

147

This tree was growing before the forest was born.
If you guess its age, it's twice as old.
Its roots met the changes of hills and ravines,
its leaves were altered by wind and frost.
Everyone laughs at its outer decay,
failing to appreciate the colorful patterns within.
Its bark may have peeled away,
but there is only truth inside.

148

I prefer to live in obscurity,
my home beyond the noise and dust of the world.
Treading on weeds, I have made three paths,
seeing clouds as my neighbors in the four directions.
The birds help me to sing,
but when I ask about the dharma, no one replies.
Among these trees of the *saha* world,
how many years make up just one spring!

149

I usually live in a quiet secluded place,
but there are times I go to Guoqing Monastery
to drop in on Fenggan,
or pay a visit to Shide.
Then, I return alone to my wintry cave,
where there is no one to talk to.
When I look for a limitless source of water,
the source may be limited, but the water is not.

150

Longing for pleasure in the mountains,
I wander about without depending on anything.
Day after day I take care of what remains of my body,
quietly not thinking of things to be done.
Sometimes I unroll an ancient buddha's writings.
Often I climb atop stone pavilions
to peer down the thousand-foot cliff below.
Above me a trail of clouds is moored,
the moon is cold, chilly winds howl.
My body is like a lone flying crane.

151

My original home is on Tiantai.
The way is cloudy, the mist deep, cutting off visitors.
A thousand-*ren* mountain range is the right place to retreat,
my stone lookout above countless layers of valleys and streams.
Wearing a birch-bark hat and wooden sandals, I stroll beside rivers.
In a leather-and-cloth robe, holding a bramble stick,
I circle the mountain.
I realize this floating life is a constantly changing illusion,
but joyous rambling is just so good!

152

I sit quietly at the edge of the precipice,
the full moon illuminating the heavens.
In its light, countless images appear,
but the disk itself does not actually shine.
Clearly, the spirit is pure,
embodying the subtle and mysterious void.

Because the finger points, I see the moon—
the moon is the essence of mind.

153

Being greatly foolish in the past
will not make you enlightened today.
Today's poverty
comes from your former life.
If you don't practice in this one,
your future life will be just the same.
If you have no boat between shores,
the vast water is impossible to cross.

154

I've sat steadily on Cold Mountain,
absorbed just here for thirty years.
Yesterday, I went to visit close companions,
though most are already in the underground spring.
Gradually, their lives burned out like candles,
they drifted off like water in a stream.
This morning I faced my solitary shadow—
before I knew it, two threads of tears came streaming down.

155

We should admire this good strong man
whose figure inspires real awe.
Not even thirty springs and autumns have passed,
yet he's talented in a hundred different arts.
Wearing a golden breast plate, he competes with other warriors,
then gathers friends together for a feast.

There is only one thing lacking—
he does not transmit the inexhaustible lamp.

156

If you encounter a demon,
first of all, don't be startled.
Be firm, don't let it in.
If you call out its name, it will go away.
Offer incense to ask for the Buddha's help,
bow deeply to request the sangha's support.
A mosquito biting an iron ox
cannot penetrate with its sting.

157

Sailing in a boat of rotten wood
you search for *nimba* fruit.
You journey across the great ocean,
where high surging waves never stop.
With only enough food for one night,
you travel three thousand miles from shore.
Where does such delusion come from?
How sad so much suffering comes to pass.

158

You leave home to travel countless miles,
carrying a sword to attack the northern barbarians.
If you're victorious, they die.
If you're not, you fall.
Though their lives may not matter to you,
why risk your life?
Let me tell you how to win one hundred battles:

Don't be greedy, that's the best plan.

159

You who greedily seek pleasure don't realize

the calamity of your one hundred years.

What you see is just a mirage or bubbles in water,

soon you will know the body's impermanence and decay.

If your aspiration is as strong as iron,

your heart of the way is genuine.

Just practice intimately, like frost gathering beneath bamboo—

then you'll know how not to bend your spirit.

160

Boars eat dead human flesh,

humans eat the guts of a boar.

The boars don't mind a dead human's odor,

and humans say that boar meat is delicious.

But if we cast dead boars into water,

and dig holes to bury human beings,

they can't eat each other.

A lotus could bloom in boiling water.

161

Why do you weep so hard,

your tears dropping like pearls?

Have you just separated,

or lost someone you love?

You suffer so much because you haven't realized

the principle of cause and effect.

You look at the dead body in the cemetery,

but the six paths may not trouble you.

162

Not practicing the genuine path,
she follows a mistaken one, but calls herself an old woman of the way.
With her shameful mouth, she has little to say to gods and buddhas,
her mind overflowing with jealousy.
Behind people's backs, she eats fish and meat,
while chanting Buddha's name before them.
If she carries on like this,
she can't avoid the river of hell.

163

A group of fools,
completely mindless like donkeys,
understand what others say,
but are as greedy and randy as young boars.
It's hard to hazard a guess about them,
since truth turns false when they speak.
Who can even talk with them?
It's better just to stay away.

164

A man whose family name is Arrogance
was first called Greed, and later on, Dishonest.
He understands nothing,
and whatever he does is despised.
He hates the bitter taste of death,
and only loves the sweetness of living.
Yet he won't stop eating fish,
and never gets tired of meat.

165

Anger is fire in the mind,
it can burn down the forest of merit.
If you want to practice the bodhisattva way,
protect the true mind with patience.

166

You bury your head deeply in idiocy,
and rush into the demon cave of ignorance.
Again and again, I urge you to practice right away,
but you're stubborn, with a dreamy, stupid mind.
Rejecting what Cold Mountain says,
your karma keeps doubling like rushing water.
When your head finally splits in two,
you'll know you're the slave of a thief.

167

The unwholesome realms are vast,
completely dark without sunlight.
Even if you live for eight hundred years,
you won't experience even half a night.
When I think of all the ignorant people,
my heart hurts deeply.
I urge you to set yourself apart
and recognize the king of dharma.

168

Heaven is high without limit.
Earth is deep with no end.
Animals live there,

relying on the power of the natural world.

They fight to stuff their bellies, and for warmth,
devouring each other if they can.

Cause and effect are beyond our understanding—
we're like blind children asking the color of milk.

169

Humming, a man buys fish and meat
to carry home and feed his family.

Why do you kill others
so that you can live?

This isn't the way to paradise,
but will clearly lead you to the depths of hell.

It's just like a commoner who speaks to a broken pestle—
from the beginning it makes no sense.

170

If you buy meat, the blood keeps dripping.

If you buy fish, it keeps flipping.

You wear yourself out, piling up unwholesome deeds,
while your wife and children are so happy and alive.

As soon as you die, she will marry again.

Who would dare to stop it?

One morning, like a broken bed,
the two of you will just come apart.

171

Someone grabbed hold of a plain sandalwood tree
and called it white sandalwood.

Students of the way are as many as grains of sand,
yet how many of them attain nirvana?

They put down gold to pick up weeds,
though blinding others blinds the self.

Like mounding sand in one place
to make a ball, it's a mess.

172

Monks who don't keep the precepts,
Daoists who don't take the medicine of immortality—
since ancient times some wise people
have been buried at the foot of green mountains.

173

If you want an analogy for birth and death,
compare them with ice and water.
Water freezes and turns into ice,
ice melts and returns to water.
Death never fails to become birth,
being born, you return to death as well.
Ice and water don't cause each other harm.
Together, birth and death are beautiful.

174

There's a bright person in the world
who struggles to speak profoundly.
His three talents are unique,
his six arts surpass all others.
His spirit is outstanding,
and his appearance goes beyond the crowd's.
But without knowing the essence within,
he chases outer objects and remains confused.

175

The plan changes without limit,
birth and death never cease.
At the river of hell, you're a sparrow,
at the Five Mountains of the Immortals, a dragon fish.
In this muddy world, you become a barbarian's sheep,
in a purer age, the legendary steed Luer.
During a previous era, you were a child of wealth,
but this time, you are simply poor.

176

Ah, this confused, muddy world,
demons and wise ones live together.
If you say they're of equal kind,
how can we tell them apart?
A fox could pretend to have a lion's power,
be reckless and deceitful while talked about with praise.
But if you temper lead in a furnace,
you'll know for certain it's not gold.

177

What kind of scholar is this
who occasionally drops in at the Southern Court?
Thirty or so years old,
with four or five national exams behind him,
there's not a coin in his bag,
just some yellow scrolls in his carrying box.
When he arrives at a shop where people eat,
he doesn't turn his face away for a second.

178

Layers of cloudy mountains lead to heaven's blue.
The path is remote, the forest deep, no visitors come around.
Viewed from afar, the toad-in-the-moon glows brightly,
close by, birds chirp and sing.
An old man sits on a green cliff
in a small room, letting his hair grow white.
He can't help lamenting both past and present days,
his heartbreak flows like water to the east.

179

My house is not an ornate building,
the pine forest is my home.
Life passes in an instant,
don't say the myriad things are far away.
If you don't make a raft to cross over,
you'll drift and sink just plucking flowers.
If you don't plant wholesome roots now,
when will you ever see them sprout?

180

The world includes a steady stream of people
who are dull, like wooden-headed dolls.
With no understanding, they say,
"I don't worry about anything."
When asked about the way, they don't know it.
When asked about the Buddha, they don't seek the Buddha.
If pushed for any details, they are dumbfounded.
They're only concerned with their own little place.

181

Whose child is this,
so hated by people?
His mind is stupid and always in a rage,
his drunken eyes covered by his hair.
When he sees the Buddha, he doesn't bow.
When he meets a monk, he doesn't offer a coin.
All he knows is how to slice up a flank of meat.
Other than that, he's completely useless.

182

People think the body is our foundation
with the mind in charge.
If your mind is at its source, it won't be crooked,
if your mind is crooked, the source of life is lost.
There's no escaping this disaster.
How can you say you're too lazy to reflect in the mirror?
If you don't keep the *Diamond Sutra* in mind,
you make bodhisattvas sick.

183

There are people with a stingy nature,
but I'm not one of them.
Though a single-layer robe is all I wear for dancing,
I finish up my wine as I sing.
I just try to have a bellyful
without my legs turning numb.
When mugwort grows out of their skulls,
they will certainly feel regret.

184

Human life lasts a hundred years,
the Buddha's teaching has twelve parts.
Compassion is like a wild deer,
anger is like a dog in the house.
No matter how hard you chase it, the dog won't go away,
while the deer runs with grace.
If you want to subdue your monkey mind,
listen to the lion's roar.

185

On Cold Mountain, there's a naked insect
with a white body and black head.
Its hands hold two scrolls,
the scriptures of Dao and De.
With neither a pot nor stove,
and going about without wearing clothes,
it always carries the sword of wisdom
to cut down that robber: delusion.

186

A man who fears his white hair,
and won't abandon his red braided cord,
picks herbs, and tries to become an immortal in vain.
At random, he digs up sprouts from the roots,
but it has no effect for years,
and foolishly he becomes angry and depressed.
It's like a hunter who wears a monk's robe—
from the beginning, it's just not his.

187

I see worldly people
scurrying all over the dusty road,
not knowing what's essential.
Why do they rush to the ferry?
Their prosperity lasts just a matter of days,
while time with their loved ones goes quickly.
Even if they have a thousand pounds of gold,
it would be better to be poor in the forest.

188

When I think back on places I came across in the past,
as I wandered in search of beautiful spots,
I enjoyed climbing immeasurably high mountains,
and loved drifting in a thousand boats.
I sent off my guest to Lute Valley,
and brought my lute to Parrot Island.
How could I know I would end up beneath a pine tree,
grasping my knees against a howling wind?

189

Don't laugh at this country bumpkin
whose head and cheeks are gawky.
My kerchief is not high enough,
my belt is too long and tight.
It's not that I avoid keeping up with fashion,
but I haven't come up with enough money.
Someday, when I have it,
I'll build a stupa on top of a mountain.

190

One thousand births and ten thousand deaths—when will they stop?

Transmigration confuses the heart.

Not knowing the priceless treasure in the mind,

we travel along like blind donkeys trusting their legs.

191

What is the saddest thing in the world?

Everything is a raft to cross the Three Rapid River.

Don't you know someone's in a cave beneath the white cloud

whose thin cloth robe is his life?

Even when autumn arrives and leaves fall in the forest,

or when spring comes and trees open their blossoms,

I lie down to sleep without a care in the three realms.

The bright moon and pure wind are my home.

192

“Since birth, I haven't come and gone,

until death, I owe neither kindness nor duty.”

Words that branch out this far

harbor danger and bias.

If you accept them even a little,

it will lead to great deceit.

It's like speaking of building a ladder to the clouds—

pared down, it makes prickly thorns.

193

One jar is made of cast metal,

another from kneading clay.

It's up to you to see them,

so you know which is solid and true.

If you know there are two types of jars,
you should know there's not just one kind of karma.

Examine what brought about your birth,
and realize your practice today.

194

How pitiable, the disease of sentient beings!

You never grow tired of savoring your feast.

Steaming pork rubbed with garlic and soy paste,

roasting duck sprinkled with pepper and salt,

removing the bones from raw fish,

while grilling the skin on meat—

you ignore the suffering of other beings

to enjoy the sweetness of your life.

195

How can you avoid death by reading?

How can you escape poverty by reading?

What's the good of knowing letters?

Does it make you better than other people?

Those who don't know letters

have nowhere to take shelter.

When you soak pungent herbs in garlic and soy paste,

if you leave out the amounts, it can taste bitter and hot.

196

I see someone who deceives others,

just like pouring water in a basket and running away.

In a single breath he heads for home,

but what is left in the basket?

I see someone else who's deceived by others.

He's like a leek in the garden,

day after day cut by a knife,

yet its original nature remains.

197

Above Cold Mountain's peak, the moon's lone disk

illuminates the clear sky; nothing else appears.

Honor this priceless natural treasure,

hidden in the five *skandhas* of your drowning body.

198

My original home is Cold Mountain,

where I dwell in a stone cave, free from trouble.

When I perish, the ten thousand phenomena will leave no trace.

When I stretch out, I flow everywhere into one billion worlds.

Light rises, illuminating the mind ground,

not a single thing appears before me.

I know the wish-granting jewel—

once you learn how to use it, everywhere is whole.

199

What do worldly people grieve?

Pain and pleasure entwine without end,

birth and death come and go for many eons.

East, west, south, and north—whose house is it?

Zhang, Wang, Li, and Zhao are temporary names.

The six paths and the river of hell are as crooked as flax—

because the hosts within fail to cut them off,

in the end, they run astray and invite transmigration.

200

Don't you see, the dew that drips in the morning
disappears by itself in the shining sun?

Human life is like this.

The Southern Continent is where we live,
don't let this chance pass you by.

Right now, let the three poisons disperse.

Enlightenment is not separate from delusion—
let everything disappear, leaving nothing behind.

201

You're high spirited
with a brave appearance.

You can shoot through seven layers of armor,
and read five columns of characters at a glance.

In the past, you slept on a tiger-head pillow.

Long ago, you sat on an ivory couch.

But if you don't have that one thing,
you are as frozen as frost.

202

I live in a village
with no father or mother,
no given name, family name, or number.

People call me Zhou or Wang,
and no one teaches me.

Being poor and lowly is ordinary,
but I love having my true mind,
solid as a diamond.

203

The water is crystal clear,
the bottom visible just as it is.
When there's not a thing in your mind,
things won't turn you around.
If your mind doesn't arouse delusion,
this will never change.
When you understand this,
you'll know there is no other side.

204

Talking about food never fills you up,
discussing clothing won't keep away the cold.
To be full, you must eat food,
wearing clothes, you will avoid the cold.
If you don't investigate thoroughly,
seeking the Buddha is impossible.
Returning to your original mind is itself Buddha—
don't try other than this.

205

Aimlessly, I close the mugwort door and sit.
Time flies quickly like sparks off flint.
I have only heard that people turn into ghosts,
but have never seen cranes become immortals.
Thinking of this, what can I say?
Follow your karma and pity yourself.
When I look outside the city walls,
ancient cemeteries are plowed into rice fields.

206

Sentient beings are hard to speak about.

Why are they so confused?

Their two heads are evil birds.

In their minds are three poisonous snakes.

These create obstacles,

and cause lots of trouble.

Just lift up your hand and snap your fingers:

Homage to the Buddha!

207

I enjoy an ordinary way of living

amongst mist, vines, and rocky caves,

where the feeling of the wild moves freely through the vastness.

For a long time, I've accompanied the white cloud.

There is a path, but it does not go through to worldly realms.

With no mind, what is there to climb?

I spend the night sitting alone on the stone floor,

while the full moon rises over Cold Mountain.

208

With so many rare treasures aboard,

they journey on a large broken boat.

The bow has lost its mast,

the stern is without a tiller.

Spinning whichever way the wind blows,

high and low, they follow the breaking waves.

How can they reach the shore

without trying hard to sit upright?

209

People in the three realms are sluggish,
those in the six paths are lost.
Greedy for things and following carnal desires,
their wicked minds are like jackals and wolves—
they fly to hell swift as an arrow.
How can they bear such terrible suffering?
They pass from morning to night
without discerning what is wise and virtuous,
or knowing good from bad.
They're just like pigs and sheep.
They talk to each other like wood to stone,
get crazed with jealousy and envy,
but don't see their own faults.
They're like boars crouching in a cage.
Without realizing they're repaying their debts,
they just laugh at the ox that keeps turning the mill.

210

Humans live in blinding dust,
like insects in a bowl.
All day we go around and around
and never get out of the bowl.
But, it's impossible to become an immortal,
and delusion is endless.
Time flows by like water—
in an instant we are old.

I have six brothers.

Among them, one was bad.

I couldn't beat him,

and when I yelled at him, he didn't care.

In every respect, what difference did it make?

He indulged in material wealth, easy sex, and slaughtering.

When he saw something he liked, he had to have it—

his greed was greater than a demon's.

Our father hated seeing him,

our mother disliked him and felt no joy.

Yesterday I grabbed him

and let loose my feelings without holding back.

I took him to where there was no one else

and spoke to him face-to-face.

"You should change your ways.

If the wagon overturns, get it back on track.

If you don't believe and accept what I say,

we'll hate and kill each other.

If you accept my warning,

together we'll look for a way to live."

Since then, we live in harmony.

He even surpasses a bodhisattva.

He's learned to temper iron in the furnace,

and has refined the iron of all three mountains.

Until this very day, his life is peaceful and serene—

everyone admires him.

212

Wearing rags comes from earlier karma,
don't blame your current life.

If you say it's caused by the shape of your tomb,
you are extremely foolish
and will end up a ghost.

How could you make your family poor?

This is easily understood.

Why are you so unaware?

213

Let me say to those who eat meat,
when eating, nothing can tempt you to stop.

This life is what you sowed in your last one,
your future life is what you cultivate today.

If you merely take today's delicacy
without fearing grief in your next life,
you are like an old rat who gets into a rice jar—
though he's eaten his fill, his head can't get out.

214

I see the Yellow River—
how many times has it been clear?
It flows fast as an arrow,
the human world just a floating weed.

Stupidity is rooted in karma,
the pit of ignorance and delusion.

Transmigration over eons
is created by getting lost in blindness.

215

I urge you young children
to quickly flee the burning house.
Three carts are outside the gate
to give you a ride so you don't wander about.
A crossroads awaits on the ground,
though in the heavens all things are empty.
The ten directions have no up or down,
coming and going depends on east and west.
If you understand the meaning of this,
you're free wherever you are.

216

Worldly affairs continue on and on,
but people won't stop their greed.
It's like grinding away a great stone—
when will it come to an end?
The four seasons keep changing,
the eight calendar points rush by like a stream.
Let me tell you, master of a house on fire:
Ride the white ox into an open field.

217

Where Cold Mountain lives in retreat
is cut off from strangers passing through.
At times, I meet birds in the forest
and together we sing mountain songs.
Sacred grasses spread across valleys,
old pines pillow against high rugged stone.
You may see a person of ease there,

resting in the mountain shade.

218

If you have no clothes, go look for them,

don't scheme with a fox to get its fur.

If you have no food, go out and pick some,

don't conspire with a sheep so you can have a feast.

If you take their hide and meat,

their hearts will hurt and grieve.

Such actions make you lose your decency,

you will always be short of food and clothing.

219

Sitting just here on a flat stone,

the valley stream is bitter cold.

Quietly, I appreciate its utter beauty,

my empty cave lost in the mist.

At this place, where I rest in joy,

the slanting sun makes long shadows of the trees.

When I observe my mind ground

a lotus comes out of the muddy water.

220

Naturally, I long for a way-seeking companion,

companions of the way often become very close.

At times, I meet someone who penetrates the source.

Whenever I speak with a Zen practitioner,

we discuss profound matters on a moonlit night,

searching for reality until daybreak.

By letting go of all traces,

you'll surely know the original person.

221

Let me suggest you stop running around.

Don't upset Old Man Yama.

If you fail, you will cross the Three Rapid River,
where your bones will be crushed by a thousand beatings.

For a long time, you'll be a prisoner in hell,
far from this life's path.

Strive hard, and trust what I say—
take hold of the treasure inside your own robes.

222

Far above the tallest peak,
when I look around, there is no boundary.

I sit alone, though no one understands.

A solitary moon shines on Cold Spring,
but the moon is not in it.

The moon is just free in the blue sky.

Even if I sing just one tune,
what I sing is not Zen.

223

A deer lives deep in the forest,
drinking water, eating grass,
and stretching its legs while it sleeps beneath a tree.

How lovely to have no worries.

If it was kept tied up in a luxurious room,
offered delicious and abundant meals,
it would not take a bite all day.

Soon it would look withered and frail.

224

Even if you store up rhinoceros horns,
wear a tiger's eyeball,
drive away evil with a peach branch,
or make a garlic necklace;
even if you warm your belly with dogwood wine
or drink wolfberry soup to empty your mind,
in the end you cannot avoid death,
but have sought eternal life in vain.

225

Cold Mountain cave doesn't leak,
its rock is solid and secure.
When the eight winds blow, it doesn't budge.
The ancients have passed down its wonders.
So serene, it's good for peaceful dwelling,
free from people's sneers and blame.
The solitary moon glows through the night,
the sun disk always returns to shine.
Tiger Hill merges with Tiger Valley,
there's no need to send for each other.
In the world there are king's assistants,
don't take them for Lord Zhou or Shao.
Since I escaped to Cold Rock
I've been happy, singing and laughing a long, long time.

226

Someone laughed at my poems,
but my poems match the classical standards.
I'm not bothered by Zhou's commentary,
and how can I use Mao's interpretation?
I don't regret that it's the rare person who understands.
If I let my poems follow *do* and *re*
I'd have endless problems.
If they happen to be met by clear-eyed people,
they'll certainly spread through the world.

227

There are people in the world with vast knowledge
who are foolish and suffer bitterly in vain.
Not seeking a wholesome future
they only know how to cause harm.
Their five betrayals and ten unwholesome actions
make them intimate with the three poisons.
Once they die and enter hell
what they know is as useless as silver kept in the storehouse.

228

Long ago, someone traveled the great ocean,
determined to get a wish-granting jewel.
As soon as he reached the inner chamber of the dragon palace,
he cut through the golden barrier chain,
which alarmed the dragon king, though he was safe inside.
The warrior swung his sword and searched to the stars, but he couldn't find the jewel.
Having done what he could, he returned and entered the gate,
where he realized the bright jewel was his original mind.

229

Leisurely, I went to visit an esteemed monk,
amid layers and layers of misty mountains.
The master intimately pointed to the path of my return.
The moon hangs like a disk-shaped lamp.

230

If you have a poem by Cold Mountain in your house,
it's better than reading a scroll of sutras.
Write it on a folding screen
and take a look from time to time.

PART THREE

LATER ADDITIONS

Circa Late Eighth to Ninth Century

231

I see Tiantai peak,
solitary above the entire range.
Pines sway in the wind, bamboo stalks rustle,
the moon appears, tides flow out and in.
Scanning the green slopes below,
I discuss the profound principle with the white cloud.
Though the feeling of the wild is in mountains and waters,
truly, I long for a companion of the way.

232

In the month when farmers rest, avoiding the heat,
who's around to enjoy some wine?
The rows of wild fruit in disarray,
a few of us surround the barrel.
With a reed mat for my seat,
and a banana leaf as a plate,
after drinking, I sit with my jaw on my arm.
Mount Sumeru seems as small as a pellet.

233

Since leaving home,
I finally understand how to nurture life.
Fully stretching and bending my limbs,
trying to listen to my six senses,
wearing a coarse robe from spring into winter,
eating brown rice, morning and evening—
today I practice thoroughly,
hoping to encounter the Buddha.

234

I've always heard that Shakyamuni Buddha
received Dipankara Buddha's prediction of enlightenment.
Dipankara and Shakyamuni are explained
as wisdom before and wisdom after,
though the essence of before and after is not different.
Within the difference, there is no difference.
One buddha is all buddhas—
mind is the ground of tathagata.

235

I notice that people who are sharp and wise observe,
then understand the meaning.

Without depending on texts,
they directly enter the ground of tathagata.

Because they don't chase after entangled forms,
their minds don't give rise to delusion.

When this does not appear,
inside or outside, there is nothing extra.

236

An emerald stream—pure spring water,
Cold Mountain's moonlight is luminous.
In silence I realize my spirit is clear.
Seeing the empty sky, things grow even more still.

237

Facing the valley, where I look at my reflection in the stream,
or the cliff, where I sit on a large flat stone,
my mind is like a solitary cloud, completely free.
Vast and unhindered, why would I search for worldly things?

238

In Sengyao's paintings, I see his eccentric personality—
among those born in the Liang Dynasty, he was so ingenious.
Daozi was exceptionally spontaneous.
Both of them painted well, with strong brush movement,
and though each was masterful, their true spirits differed.
High-spirited Sengyao made dragons fly and demons run,
but even if he could paint the empty sky and the common world,
there's no way he could paint Master Zhi.

239

How balmy it was yesterday!

This place is so lovely.

Up above, there's a path through peach and apricot trees,
down below, a sandbank of orchids and irises.

Also, there's a woman here who dresses in fine silk.

Inside the house, she wore a green-feathered hair ornament.

We wanted to speak to each other,

but for the longest time, we couldn't find the words.

240

Layers of mountains and rivers are exquisite,
misty clouds enclose the subtle green.

The storm brushes away a moist silk hat,
while dew soaks my straw raincoat.

My feet tread in shoes made for wandering
with an old wisteria branch in my hand.

I see beyond the dusty world—
what's the point of dreaming?

241

Since I first came to live on Cold Mountain,
so many years have passed.

Trusting fate, I escaped to forests and natural springs
where I live at ease and see things freely.

No one comes to visit Cold Cliff,
the white cloud is so often obscured.

With a bed made of thin grass
and the blue sky for my cover,

I rest my head happily on a stone pillow
and follow the changes of heaven and earth.

242

My abode is in a cave
that doesn't contain a single thing.
Clean, empty, and grand,
it shines brightly every day.
I eat vegetables to nurture my thin body,
and wrap a leather-and-cloth garment around this illusory self.
Even if one thousand sages should appear,
I am with the original buddha.

243

In the midst of a thousand clouds and countless waters
there is an idle person.
By day, he roams the green mountains,
at night, he returns to sleep beneath the cliff.
Quickly, the seasons pass
in serenity, with no worldly bonds.
How joyful! What does he depend upon?
Quiet, like a large autumn river.

244

At times, people seek the cloud path,
but it's obscure and leaves no trace.
The mountains are high and steep,
broad streams hold little light.
Green peaks overlap front to back,
white clouds gather from the west and east.
If you want to know where the cloud path is,

it's in the open sky.

245

Revere this legendary mountain—

how can the seven treasures compare?

Beneath the moon, chilly winds blow through the pines

as wisps of clouds arise.

So many mountain ridges layer into each other

for miles and miles around!

The valley stream is quiet and clear—

I'm not done with this boundless joy.

246

Since I escaped to Cold Mountain,

I eat wild fruit to stay alive.

In this ordinary life, why should I worry?

I follow the conditions of the fleeting world.

Days and months flow by like a river,

time passes like sparks off flint.

Even if heaven and earth were to move,

I'm at ease, sitting inside my cave.

247

I live on a mountain,

others don't know.

Inside the white cloud

it's always peaceful and serene.

248

Hanyuan is deep and fine.

No one comes this way.

The white cloud is high, the cave quiet,
on a green cliff a lone monkey howls.

Where could I feel more at one?

Free from worry, I age naturally.

My appearance changes with the advancing seasons,
but my heart jewel remains.

249

When I was young, I was too lazy to read.

By thirty, achieving anything was still to come.

After my hair turned white, I got my first official job,
though I was no more than an assistant to ten high officers.

I don't know the many types of millet

I pay for the house where I lie down.

I drink some wine, chant a poem, and go to sleep.

I expect I'll be like this till I'm one hundred.

250

My whole life I've been too lazy to do anything.

I hate weighty things, and prefer what is light.

Other people study business,
but I have only one volume of a sutra.

I don't intend to mount it on a scroll,
and avoid those who come to hold it up.

If someone is sick, I talk with them about medicine.

With skillful means, I help sentient beings.

My mind has no hindrance—

where is it not awake?

251

I see home leavers

who have not entered the study of leaving home.

If you want to truly leave home,

your mind should be pure with no binding rope.

Clear, beyond wondrous mysteries,

thusness itself does not depend on anything.

It allows freedom in the three realms

and doesn't abide in the four types of birth.

A person beyond doing, free of obstruction,

wanders with true joy.

252

The place I used to walk,

I see again after seventy years.

Those I used to know do not come and go,

but remain buried in their tombs.

Now, with my hair turned white,

I still keep watch over clouds and mountains.

Let me say to those in the future:

Why not study the words of the ancients?

253

Hermits flee from the human world,

many of them heading for the mountains to sleep.

Green vines are sparse in the foothills,

where a blue brook murmurs

leisurely at ease.

Pure and relaxed, I spend my time
free from the stain of worldly things,
my mind serene as a white lotus.

254

Cherish this Cold Mountain,
where the white cloud is always at ease.
Monkeys cry out playfully in the way,
but tigers howl, entering the human realm.
I walk alone, stepping on stones,
singing to myself and grasping wisteria vines.
The pine wind is pure, *hyooo hyooo*.
Birds twitter, *cheep cheep*.

255

I live quietly under Cold Rock,
often wondering about its magic.
I take my basket to collect mountain greens,
and bring it back with picked fruit.
To eat vegetables, I sit down on a reed mat
and peck away at purple mushrooms.
Rinsing my gourd bowl in a clean puddle,
I boil things together into a thin soup.
Then I wrap up in a leather coat, sit in the sun,
and slowly read an ancient's poems.

256

Yesterday, I climbed to the top of a peak
and looked down a thousand-foot cliff.
I approached a tree trunk standing at its edge,
rattled by the wind, with two branches torn apart.

Hurled about by rain until it decayed,
exposure to the sun had dried it into dust.
Ah, see how this once-flourishing tree
is now just a pile of ash.

257

What a shame this hundred-year-old house
leans left and right.
Broken and scattered
trees lie about in disarray,
bricks and tiles have fallen to the ground.
Its decay is hard to bear seeing.
A raging wind blows over the ruins—
it can't be rebuilt at all.

258

I see that people in the world
are born, and then they die.
Those who were sixteen just yesterday morning,
with vigorous spirits and hearts,
are now past seventy,
with waning strength and a haggard look.
We're just like flowers on a spring day
that open in the morning and in the evening decline.

259

How pitiful—people in the floating life!
How many days do they feel lighthearted?
Morning after morning they have no leisure time.
Year after year they don't reflect on getting old.

For the sake of getting food and clothing,
they let their minds grow deluded.
In chaos, year after year,
they come and go on the three unwholesome paths.

260

I see worldly people,
each competing with vigor.
One day they will suddenly die
and acquire just one plot of land,
four feet wide
and twelve feet long.
If you know how to come out
and compete with spirit,
I'll erect a tombstone
and inscribe your name.

261

Since ancient times, wise people
have not been known for their long lives.
They are born, and then they die,
all of them turning to ashes and dust.
Their bones pile up like Mount Vipula,
while those who are left shed an ocean of tears.
Only their empty names remain.
How can they avoid the cycle of birth and death?

262

I heard there was a jade tree
on Mount Tiantai.
For a long time, I wanted to climb to it,

but didn't know the stone bridge path.

This made me despair—

pretty soon the sun will set on my humble abode.

Today, as I look in the mirror,

my white hair hangs sadly down.

263

Why am I sad for so long?

Human life is like a morning mushroom.

How can this last for decades?

Both new and old wither and fall—

of course I feel sad.

It's a sorrow so hard to bear,

how will I ever endure it?

I'll take my body back to hide in the mountains.

264

Yesterday I visited Yunxiaguan Temple

where some venerable Daoist hermits suddenly appeared,

casually wearing star-shaped hats and moon-ornamented coats.

They all said they live among mountains and waters.

I asked about the magic arts of the immortals,

and they explained that if a comparison was made,

these would be unsurpassable.

"Wondrous medicine is always mysterious.

It protects against death while waiting for the white crane to arrive.

All Daoists depart on the back of a fish."

Afterward, I thought about it,

and decided it made no sense.

Just watch an arrow fly through the air—
in a moment it falls to the ground.
Even if you become a sorcerer,
it's like a spirit trying to stay with its corpse.
When the essence of the mind moon is clear,
how could the myriad things compare?
If you want to know the sorcerer's medicine for immortality,
the original spirit inside the body is it!
Don't study with those who wear yellow scarves,
clinging to your stupidity.

265

In a broken-down grass hut,
filled with fire and thick smoke,
I said to a group of young children,
“Were you just born?
Look! There are three carts outside.”
I wanted to get them out, but they kept filling their stomachs
and wouldn't budge.
They were all so foolish and stubborn.

266

There are ordinary people in the world
who are neither bad nor good.
They don't know they are hosts,
but wander as guests from place to place.
Because they merely pass the time,
they are stupid slivers of meat.
Though they have a sacred platform,
they're just like hired hands.

267

I hear in the kingdom of Liang
there were four types of wise teachers—
Masters Baozhi and Wanhui,
four sorcerers, and Layman Fu.
They all aspired to spread the Buddha's teaching.
As messengers of the Tathagatha,
they constructed temple buildings
and were devoted to the Buddha's principle.
Although this was so,
problems started to mount up—
getting far from the way,
they tried to fix east when west was broken.
This didn't work,
much damage came about, and little benefit.
There were noisy proclamations, but nothing took shape.
Having arrived at this place, where could they go?

268

Since ancient times, sages
encouraged trusting the self,
but human beings are not equal—
high and low, sharp and dull,
they don't accept the authentic Buddha.
They push for power in vain and only make trouble,
not knowing the pure, unstained mind
is the seal of the dharma king.

Let me say to those who practice the way:
 Seeking worthless things exhausts your mind.
 People have a spiritual essence,
 beyond words or description.
 When you call on it, it responds clearly,
 when it is hidden, you don't know where it is.
 Keep it well,
 don't let it be stained.

I went down the mountain for a while
 to go into the town beyond the city moat.
 I happened to see a group of women
 who looked elegant and beautiful,
 wearing brocade hair ornaments,
 lipstick, and face powder.
 Their golden bracelets were inlaid with silver flowers,
 their fine silk robes were purple and crimson.
 Their bright faces were like the immortals,
 fragrance rose from their sashes.
 People who passed by looked back,
 foolish attraction infecting their hearts.
 Saying they are beautiful beyond compare,
 they were transported by their fantasies,
 like dogs biting on dry bones,
 vainly licking their own lips and teeth.
 In the same way, not reflecting and understanding
 is no different from being animals.

Now these women have become white haired,
old and coarse like ghosts,
and those with doglike minds from the beginningless past
cannot leap to liberation.

271

His mind high as a mountain peak,
this person does not bow down to others.
He elucidates and lectures on Vedic scripture,
and can discourse on the Three Teachings,
yet, without shame,
he breaks the precepts and violates the guidelines.
He says he's above human law,
and claims he's the best.
Stupid people all praise him,
while wise ones clap their hands and laugh.
In the world of mirages and flowers of emptiness,
who can avoid life and old age?
It's better not to understand so many things,
but to sit quietly, free from worry.

272

The great ocean waters are boundless.
Innumerable fish and dragons
eat each other up.
What stupid lumps of flesh!
When we don't free the mind,
delusion keeps rising like smoke.
The moon of self-nature is clear and bright,

illuminating everywhere without end.

273

A sturdy person
does not act carelessly,
but powerfully raises up an iron rock mind
and directly takes the path of enlightenment.
Don't follow crooked ways
that only lead to hardship.
Instead of searching for the buddha fruit,
just realize the essence of mind.

274

Honor your own nature—
alone, it has no companion.
If you look for it, you can't see it,
it goes in and out without a gate.
If you shrink it, it exists in one square inch.
If you stretch it, it is everywhere.
If you don't trust and treasure it,
you cannot encounter it.

275

How many people there are at Tiantai
who don't know Cold Mountain.
Not knowing my true meaning,
they say my words make no sense.

276

I've noticed that ordinary, ignorant people
store up lots of grain and riches,
drink wine, and eat other living beings,

saying, "I deserve what's mine."

They don't know the depth of hell,

but seek only the happiness of the heavenly realm.

Their unwholesome karma is as massive as Mount Vipula.

How can they avoid its disastrous poison?

When these owners of such abundance suddenly die,

people compete to grieve beside their pillows,

and monks offer incense while chanting

empty prayers for the spirit's good fortune.

There's not a scrap of merit in it.

They're just a gang of fake baldies,

unlike those who have always known

not to fall into the prison of darkness.

A raging storm cannot move a tree.

When the mind is genuine, there is neither fault nor blessing.

I offer these words to many, many people—

please read this poem again and again.

277

I encourage those of you in the three realms

not to ignore the way.

If you lack the principle, others will deceive you.

If the principle is strong, how could you be deceived?

The murky world overflows with people

who are just like wood lice.

Can't you see that a person of no preference

alone is free beyond compare?

Immediately, return to the source,

leaving conditions in the three realms to arise.

With purity, enter the stream of thusness—

don't drink from the waters of ignorance.

278

Thinking back over twenty years,

I slowly walk to Guoqing Monastery.

Everyone at Guoqing says,

“Cold Mountain is a fool.”

Why suspect that someone's a fool?

They suspect, but don't know how to think.

They don't know themselves,

so how can they understand me?

They don't bow and ask questions,

but even if they did, what's the use?

Someone once shouted at me.

Of course, I knew what he was saying,

though I didn't reply.

That worked really well.

279

People more or less

devise countless schemes, seeking fame and gain,

greedily trying to make prosperity bloom

as they toil for privilege and wealth.

Their minds never rest,

but swirl like smoke in the air.

Their families are close-knit

and with just a word, everyone agrees.

Yet, in less than seventy years,

they melt like ice or crumble like tiles—
everyone dies and all matters come to rest.

Who can inherit
mud balls soaked in water?

We know it just makes no sense.

280

Cold Mountain says things repeatedly,
like a confused madman.

When something happens, I face it and speak up.

Many people resent me,
but my mind is true, and my words straightforward.

A true mind has no hidden side.

At the time of death, when you cross the river to hell,
who is this shifty person?

On the dark journey to the Yellow Spring
you are shackled by your karma.

281

If we look at worldly things,
overall, the details are known,
but not every matter is so readily grasped.

Everyone loves to seek the easiest way,
defending it until bad things become preferred,
slandering, even if truth is opposed.

Thus, know that all groundless speech
has something behind it.

Just experience hot or cold yourself,
without trusting other people's lips.

282

A visitor criticized Cold Mountain,
“Your poems make no sense!”
I told him, “But, look at the ancients,
humble and unashamed of being poor.”
He just laughed and said,
“Your words are far too careless and loose.
I hope you’ll get up to date—
money is the most pressing matter.”

283

Fear the suffering of transmigration
that comes and goes like swirling dust.
Without ceasing, you spin in the six paths
like ants in wild confusion.
Even if your head and the holes in your face change,
you can’t get away from your past self.
Understand the darkness of hell right away,
don’t let your mind-nature be obscured.

284

A pair of ducks live in their nest,
a male and female couple.
They hold a flower in their beaks and eat it together,
then smooth each other’s feathers in turn.
For fun, they fly into a trailing mist,
then return home to the shore by the water’s edge.
They love and enjoy the place they were born,
and wouldn’t invade the phoenix’s pond.

285

On Cold Mountain there's a house
with nothing inside that divides it.
The six gates lead left and right,
from the hall you can see the blue sky.
Every room is completely bare,
from the east wall to the west.
With not a thing in it,
there's nothing to withhold from others.
When cold comes, I make a small fire.
When hunger comes, I boil vegetables and eat.
Ignorant, old country people
keep large rice fields and houses.
These just create the karma of hell.
Once you enter it, how can it ever end?
Think it over.
If you do, you'll get the point.

286

Don't blame others for their faults,
or praise yourself for your merit.
Practice what you should practice,
letting go of what needs letting go.
A high income brings great worry with it.
Speak deeply, and be wary of superficial relations.
If you listen thoughtfully,
even a child can understand.

287

Steaming sand to make rice,
being thirsty, and then digging a well,
or strenuously polishing a rough tile—
how could this make it a mirror?
From the start, Buddha's teachings are universal.
The nature of all things is true thusness.
Just contemplate this thoroughly,
without a useless struggle.

288

I hear the nation's minister has a high salary.
He wears a red and purple robe,
a hairpin and a braided cord.
Having wealth and nobility in every respect,
he still covets prosperity without shame.
Servants and horses fill his property,
gold and silver pile high in his treasury.
This idiotic good fortune helps for a while,
but it just buries him in hell.
When he suddenly dies, everything stops.
His family weeps by his pillow,
not knowing that disaster is on the way.
The house will stand in ruins as the cold winds howl.
Without a grain of millet to eat,
the pain of freezing and starvation is very harsh.
All of this comes from being so out of touch.

289

The daughter in a house to the east

is about eighteen years old.

Young men from the west come by

to compete for her hand in marriage.

She fries mutton, boils animals,

is shameless with her guests, and takes part in the killing.

Enjoying herself now, she smiles and laughs,

but she'll know hardship and weeping in the end.

290

In the countryside there are many mulberry fields,

cows and calves fill the barns.

Do the people believe in cause and effect?

Sooner or later they flay their animals,

then consume the rest.

For now, these people make their living,

but they'll end up in paper pants or patched loincloths,

frozen or starving to death.

291

Humans are like black-headed insects

trying to make a thousand-year tune

like cast iron for a threshold.

When demons see this, they clap their hands and laugh.

292

Let me offer you good people some words,

so you may reconsider your thinking.

If you master the way and see true nature,

true nature is itself tathagata.

You already possess the original truth,
but practice and realization keep changing places.
If you give up the root and just chase twigs,
you remain simply hopeless.

293

Laugh at the cave of five *skandhas*
where four snakes live together.
In the pitch black, there is no illuminating lamp.
The three poisons keep switching back and forth
while a team of six thieves
steal the dharma treasure jewel.
But if you cut off this troop of demons,
your peace and tranquility will revive.

294

Crush the Five Mountains into powder,
Mount Sumeru one inch high.
Turn the great ocean into a drop of water,
inhale it into your mind field.
Plant seeds of a bodhi tree
that shelters heaven within heaven.
I speak to you who long for the way,
don't get trapped by the ten entanglements.

295

Let me tell you young nobles,
I heard that Shi Qinu
had eight hundred boy servants,
with water wheels set up in thirty places.

Below his house he kept fish and birds.

On the upper floor, various flutes were played.

When his head was placed beneath the killer's blade,
his foolish mind was on Luzhu, the flute player he adored.

296

You should fear the wheel of the three realms
that never rests for a moment.

If you try to poke your head out of it,
you will soon sink and drown.

Even if you reach the realm beyond nonthinking,
it is due to your good deeds in the past.

How can you realize the true source
that you recognize suddenly and forever?

297

In my village there is a house,
but the house has no true master.

On the ground, one inch of weeds grows,
watered by single drops of dew.

Fire burns six thieves
while the wind blows in dark clouds and rain.

When we thoroughly look for the original person,
it's a pearl sewn in the back of a robe.

298

Some people in the world like to do many things,
study broadly, and know a lot,
but they don't realize their original nature,
and are far from the way.

If you can clarify what things really are,

what's the use of wishing in vain?

Once you completely understand your own mind,
the Buddha's insight opens.

299

I see people in the world
who are dignified, with good manners and appearance,
yet they don't return the kindness of their parents.

What is the root of their thinking?

They even fail to return money borrowed from others.

Only after they're born with hooves will they feel sorry.

All people cherish their wives and children,
but these don't take care of their grandparents.

Siblings who are like enemies
are unsatisfied for a long time.

I recall when I was a young boy,
I prayed to the gods that I would grow up.

Now, I have become a unfilial man.

By and large, the world is like this.

We buy meat and eat it alone,
then wipe our mouths and say, "I feel so free!"

People brag openly of being sly,
clever beyond compare,
but when hell's jailer stares at them in anger
they realize for the first time it's too late.

They pick out a buddha, burn fine incense,
choose a monk, take refuge, and make offerings,
though when an arhat begs in front of their gates,

they drive him away as someone they can't use.

Without awakening, you can't be a true person.

No one has ever said you can.

People send letters to invite renowned monks,
offering alms and entreating in several ways.

Yunguang looked like a good dharma teacher,
but he wore horns on his head.

If you don't have everyday mind,
neither sages nor the wise will appear to you.

Ordinary people and sages are all mixed together.

I advise you to stop being led by appearances.

My dharma is wondrous and difficult to understand,
but it is revered by heavenly dragons.

300

On a thousand-year-old stone is an ancient's trace.

Before a ten-thousand-foot cliff is one speck of sky.

When the bright moon shines, it always glows purely—
don't bother asking if it's in the west or east.

301

In the past, I struggled and was poor.

Night after night I'd count other people's possessions.

Today, I deeply believe

I should take charge of my affairs.

By digging, I uncovered a hidden treasure—
a pure, fine jewel.

Then came a blue-eyed stranger
who secretly tried to buy it and take it away.

I said to him,

“This jewel is priceless.”

302

I’m speaking to those who have left home.
What kind of people are called home leavers?
You seek luxury and stoke your own livelihood.
You inherit schools of those with patched robes,
but enjoy eating delicacies, and sweetening your beaks.
Your crooked minds flatter and hook other people.
All day long you perform rites in the practice hall,
hold sutra books, and conduct services for merit.
You offer incense to the gods and buddhas,
strike the bells and chant loudly together,
but you spend your time learning how to grind up guests,
while day and night you’re not even supposed to lie down.
Since you only love money and things,
your minds are not free.
When you see virtuous people,
you hate them and put them down.
It’s like comparing donkey shit to fine incense.
You cause the Buddha so much pain!

303

When I look again at home leavers,
some are upright and others are not.
Those with the highest integrity
have their morality admired by gods.
Even the king shares his carriage seat,
and lords receive them with a bow.

They can be a field of benefaction—
worldly people should treasure them.
Those foolish people far beneath them
are deceptive and always looking for gain.
You can quickly perceive their murky goals.
They have an idiotic love of sex and property,
though they wear the monk's robe.
They rent their lands to get food and clothing,
charging interest for oxen and plows.
They're dishonest no matter what they do.
Morning after morning they commit criminal acts,
while their hips and backs make them suffer.
They're unable to think in wholesome ways,
and suffer the immeasurable pains of hell.
Once they feel a little ill,
they lie in bed for three years.
Although they, too, have buddha nature,
they are ignorant thieves.
Take refuge in Buddha,
seek Maitreya far and wide.

304

I see someone with great knowledge
who uses his mind all day long.
He stands at a fork in the road and shouts out,
deceiving everyone.
This only creates the dregs of hell,
not true practice.
When impermanence suddenly arrives,

he'll know he has squandered his life.

305

There's one group of people in the world
who truly deserve to be laughed at.

They leave home and wear themselves out
deceiving laypeople, yet calling it the way.

Although they wear robes of renunciation,
their robes are infested with fleas.

It would be better if they returned
to mind itself.

306

Whenever I see a wheel-turning king,
he is always surrounded by a thousand people.

With ten virtues he teaches in the four directions.

He is graced by many of the seven treasures
that adorn and protect him
with solemnity and goodness.

But, once his good karma wears out,
he'll be like a sick bird living in the rushes,
or an insect on an ox's neck,
receiving the karma of the six paths.

How much more so for ordinary people?

Life is impermanent and can't last long.

Birth and death are like whirling fire,
transmigration as widespread as flax or straw.

If you don't realize this right away,
you'll end up a crooked, hollow old man.

307

I see people turning sutras
who depend on others' words for understanding.
Your mouth turns, but not your mind—
mind and mouth betray each other.
If your mind is true and not crooked
you won't create entanglements.
Just for now, reflect on yourself,
don't look to others instead.
If you become the host within,
you'll know there's no inside or outside.

308

Those who are always taken advantage of by others,
stand your ground and spare yourself the misery,
or when you are old you won't have a choice—
others will have pushed you aside.
You'll go to the top of a wild mountain
and want to throw away your life for nothing.
It's like fixing the pen after the sheep are gone—
in the end you'll lose all hope.

309

Aged and sick, I feel more than a hundred years old.
Though my face is yellow, my hair white,
I still love to live in the mountains.
Wrapped in a leather-and-cloth robe,
I go along with the changing conditions.
Why should I envy people with clever looks?

Those who wear out their minds chasing fame and fortune
have a hundred types of greed driving their bodies.
Their illusory lives are like lamps burning out.
Won't their bodies already be buried in tombs?

310

No one makes it up
Cold Mountain road.
If you can get here,
call out ten names.
Cicadas chirp,
but there are no noisy crows.
Yellow leaves fall,
white clouds sweep across the sky.
There are many rock piles,
these mountains are deep.
I live alone,
known as "Good Guide."
Pay attention,
how do I look?

311

This white whisk with a sandalwood handle
is fragrant throughout the day.
Soft as swirling mist,
it floats like a drifting cloud.
When offered with a bow, it withstands the heat,
when held high, it removes the dust.
At times, in the abbot's room,
it points the way for someone who has strayed.

312

Dressed in flowers in the sky
and tortoise hair shoes,
I hold a bow made of rabbit horn
to shoot the demon of ignorance.

313

Now, I bow
to the unsurpassable king of dharma,
who offers compassion with great joy,
whose name is chanted in the ten directions.
Sentient beings depend upon
his diamond wisdom body.
Bowing, free from attachment—
our teacher, the great dharma king.

314

People nowadays who see Cold Mountain
all say I'm crazy.
They don't look at the face
above this humble robe.
They don't understand what I'm saying,
and I don't speak their language.
All I can say to those who pass by:
"Try to come to Cold Mountain."

315

Cold Mountain
is forever this way.
Living alone
beyond birth and death.