







CLASSICS OF BUDDHISM AND ZEN

# The Collected Translations of Thomas Cleary

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## CLASSICS OF BUDDHISM AND ZEN

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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TRANSMISSION  
OF LIGHT

*[Denkoroku]*

*Zen in the Art of Enlightenment*

ZEN MASTER KEIZAN



## INTRODUCTION

*Transmission of Light* is one of the major classics of Japanese Zen Buddhism. Ostensibly a collection of stories about fifty-three Buddhist illuminates from India, China, and Japan, in reality it is a book of instruction in the art of satori—Zen enlightenment. Satori is the essential initiatory experience of Zen Buddhism, the beginning of true Zen realization, and *Transmission of Light* is the most thorough guide to satori in the entire Japanese Zen canon. Using its format of tales about the awakenings of fifty-three successive generations of masters, *Transmission of Light* illustrates quintessential techniques for realization of satori, showing how this experience transcends time, history, culture, race, gender, personality, and social status.

Zen writings commonly refer to satori as realization of the “original mind” as it is in itself, the universal ground of consciousness, concealed beneath the temporal conditioning that forces people to experience life through outlooks arbitrarily limited by their cultural, social, and personal histories. This realization is considered the essential initiatory experience of Zen in that it allows the individual access to a range of mental potential beyond the limitations of outlook defined by ordinary processes of acculturation, socialization, and education. In classical Taoism, the Chinese forerunner of Zen, this is known as “the use of the unused.”

Satori is therefore said to be the key to inner freedom and independence, the door to higher knowledge, realized by all enlightened people: in the words of Dogen, one of the founders of Zen in Japan, “As each of them attained escape from the shell, they were unencumbered by previous views and understandings, and what had long been unclear suddenly became apparent.” Thus while satori, as radical liberation from needless constraints of inculcated worldviews, is often spoken of in dramatic terms as a shattering experience, in Zen it is understood not as destructive but essentially constructive—in the

sense that it is the threshold of conscious access to the inherent potential for greater completeness and fuller life that lies fallow in the ordinary mind.

Many of the metaphors traditionally used for satori revolve around images of death, for it frees the individual from the identification of personality with self: "Let go over a sheer cliff," the Zen proverb says. "Die completely and then come back to life—after that no one can deceive you." The new life after satori is richer for having let go of circumstantially ingrained attachments, biases, and blind spots that close minds into tunnel visions of life and make individuals, groups, and masses vulnerable to manipulation. "See the playing of the puppets on the stage," wrote an ancient Zen master. "All along there is someone inside pulling the strings." Without satori, people are like puppets on the stage; on awakening, they realize who is pulling the strings.

There are, nevertheless, definite drawbacks associated with specific reactions to the Zen teaching of satori. Most of these drawbacks, well documented throughout Zen literature, are related in some way to responses people manifest to the emphasis traditionally placed on satori in Zen teaching. One such problem is neglect of adequate preparation due to eagerness for quick results: "No one knows the sweating horses of the past; they only want to talk over the achievement that crowns the age." This attitude may prevent satori altogether, may induce the person in this state to mistake exciting states for satori, or make the enthusiast unable to sustain an occasional intimation or glimpse of the experience: "Everything gained in battle is ruined by celebrating."

This last quotation, from the sayings of a Chinese Zen master, also alludes to another typical shortcoming: failure to consummate satori by carelessness in its aftermath. Satori is not the end of Zen; it is more properly the true beginning. Those who stop here are traditionally said to have "gained a little and considered it enough." Another Zen proverb refers to this defect: "The level ground is littered with skulls; the experts are those who pass through the forest of thorns."

A classical master explains this point in more detail: "Though beginners may have conditionally attained an instantaneous realization of inherent noumenon, there are still the habit energies of time immemorial that they cannot clear away all at once. It is necessary to teach them to clean out their present conditioned stream of con-

sciousness." A later Zen master notes that immature satori can itself be made an object of attachment (one of the notorious dangers of cultic emphasis on peak experience and celebration of its attainment), a process which then blocks the aspirant from deeper realization: "Lesser enlightenment after all turns out to be a hindrance to greater enlightenment. If you give up lesser enlightenments and don't cling to them, greater enlightenment will surely be realized. If you grasp little enlightenment and don't relinquish it, great enlightenment will surely be ignored. This is like someone so greedy for a little profit that he doesn't get a big profit. If he doesn't cling greedily to a little profit, great profit will eventually be realized; if he accumulates small profits, eventually it will amount to great profit."

When stress is placed on satori (and stress is the word) to the extent that seekers lose sight of these traditional caveats, it also may happen that extreme methods acting upon eagerly unprepared minds result in exhaustion, nervous breakdown, or even derangement. Such problems are said to occur because of imbalance—failure to understand all aspects of Zen practice and experience in context as part of a coherent whole. And this is ordinarily due to greed disguised as spirituality, not to any failure of genuine Zen technical literature to warn practitioners about inexperienced or improper manipulation of mind. While physical and mental problems resulting from fragmentary and misapplied Zen techniques are said to heal if the practices are abandoned, there is continuing danger to unwary seekers when mental exhaustion, nervous overload, and other altered states of consciousness are mistaken for spiritual progress, or for satori itself.

The present work, *Transmission of Light*, one of the most prestigious texts of Japanese Zen, is perhaps unparalleled in its emphasis on the need for real satori. Zen history shows that this essential gnosis is easily lost in the course of tradition, and there has never been, according to overall Buddhist teaching, a standard formula for enlightenment. Therefore a very direct teaching of satori appears throughout the Zen teaching, but projected in the context of certain basic understandings.

There are many schools of Buddhism, each appealing to people of certain mentalities. Within the Zen tradition there are different schools as well, each with its characteristic mood. *Transmission of Light* is an early classic of the Japanese Soto school of Zen, which is characterized by the disguises it uses to clothe the teaching of satori.



Sometimes it is so heavily veiled that whole sects of Soto Zen followers have at times come to believe that there is no satori in their teaching. Nevertheless, satori teaching is part of the original teaching of Soto Zen, and in this it is no different from Rinzai Zen, the other major Japanese school.

Changlu Lin, an eleventh-generation master of one of the Chinese Soto schools, gives a talk on satori in terms similar to those encountered in *Transmission of Light*: "The source of the school is apart from conscious thought and perception; the message transcends past, future, and present. Being apart from conscious thought and perception, in classifying myriad species no difference is seen; transcending time, nothing anywhere afflicts you anymore. Immediately not transgressing, ultimately not depending, awakening is before the appearance of signs, function is where training doesn't reach. In daily life one shouldn't hesitate—in the interval of hesitation one loses contact."

Similar instructions are given by Fawei, another Chinese Soto master, who also emphasizes the importance of the aftermath: "The spiritual body has no characteristics—it cannot be sought through sound. The marvelous path has no words—it cannot be understood through writings. Even if you transcend Buddhas and Zen masters, you still fall into gradation; even if you speak of the marvelous and mysterious, in the end it sticks to your teeth. You should be unaffected by training, not leaving a trace of form, a withered tree on a frigid cliff, without any moisture left, a phantom, a wooden horse, all emotional consciousness empty—only then can you enter the marketplace with open hands, operating freely in the midst of all kinds of people and situations. As it is said, 'Don't linger in the land of detachment; come back to the misty bank and lie on the cold sand.' "

Zen lore abounds with allusions to the transcendental nature of satori, but this also means transcending the inner silence used as means of access to satori and consummating the experience by "return" to the ordinary world. This is particularly true of the Chinese Soto schools and the original Japanese Soto school under the tutelage of Zen master Dogen. In the words of Touzi, a seventh-generation Chinese Soto master, "Where you don't fall into vacant stillness, the way back is more marvelous."

Hongzhi, a tenth-generation Chinese Soto master often quoted in Dogen's sayings, similarly stressed the equal importance of both

phases—transcendence and reintegration: “If the host does not know there is a guest, there is no way to respond to the world; if a guest does not know there is a host, there is no vision beyond material sense.” When asked how to achieve thoroughgoing penetration, Hongzhi said: “When you are open and clean, undefiled, ‘the clear sky is cloudless, there is no breeze on the autumn waters.’ When you are pure and plain, master of yourself, ‘the jade vase is free of dust, there is no dirt on the ice mirror.’ But when you reach such a state, you should go on to ‘borrow light to set up facilities, borrow a road to pass through.’ Merge your mind with cosmic space, integrate your actions with myriad forms.”

As one of the founders of Zen in Japan, the thirteenth-century master Dogen naturally placed emphasis on *satori*: “Explanation of the teaching must be appropriate to the time and situation. If it is not appropriate to the time, it is all untimely talk. Is there any in accord with the time? (Silence.) Expounding Zen in Japan must be before the prehistoric Buddhas, on the other side of the King of Emptiness—not in the neighborhood of ancient Chinese teachers.” In the language of Zen, “before the prehistoric Buddhas” and “on the other side of the King of Emptiness” are both expressions for *satori*. In plain terms, therefore, Dogen’s statement means that the authentic founding of Zen teaching calls for direct experience of *satori*, not mere imitation of past formulations in a different culture milieu.

In his most popular work on meditation, Dogen gives instructions for realization of *satori* through what he calls “the essential art of *zazen*.” Dogen’s masterwork *Shobogenzo* explicitly shows that *zazen*, which may be provisionally if imprecisely translated as “sitting meditation,” was a highly fluid and complex affair in Dogen’s school. But his description of the “essential art” refers to a basic technique common not only to all Zen schools but to all of the five major schools of Buddhism in China: “You should stop the intellectual practice of pursuing words, and learn the stepping back of ‘turning the light around and looking inward.’ Mind and body will naturally drop off, and the ‘original face’ will appear.” In characteristic Zen fashion, Dogen also used an ancient story for an abstract model of the exercise, calling it “thinking of what does not think.”

While he gave out a number of such basic exercises in his popular teaching, in his masterwork Dogen generally veiled references to initiatory *satori* experience. One reason for this caution was that he was

particularly adamant in his emphasis on the need to transcend consciousness of the experience and attend to the aftermath. Thus the risk of arousing emotional enthusiasm about satori was no doubt too great, considering the obstacles it could put in the way of the task of his teaching style.

Without satori and knowledge of the other schools Dogen mastered, it is not always easy to see this element precisely in much of his work. But Dogen is very explicit on the matter of his cycle of emphasis in the popular treatise on zazen quoted above: "Even if one can boast of understanding, is rich in enlightenment, gains a glimpse of penetrating knowledge, attains the Way, clarifies the mind, and becomes very high spirited, nevertheless even though one roams freely within the bounds of initiatory experience, one may lack the living road of manifestation in being." Similarly, in another popular essay he wrote: "There is ceasing the traces of enlightenment, which causes one to forever leave the traces of enlightenment which is cessation."

Dogen's great emphasis on post-satori maturation is completely in accord with Zen tradition, but the historical circumstances of his teaching no doubt contributed to the abundance of references to this theme found in his works. He lived in a time when many outstanding Buddhists were breaking away from the old schools, sensing that something was missing in their teaching and practice. Almost all of Dogen's original students had been followers of a native Japanese Zen school that had restored the teaching of satori to Buddhism, and the dramatic effect this teaching produced naturally resulted in enormous enthusiasm for this experience as the magic key or missing link.

Unfortunately, as has been documented throughout most of the history of Zen, practitioners of this and other new Zen schools were evidently tempted to regard satori as the end rather than a beginning of Zen practice, thus lapsing into the complacency suggested by the proverb cited earlier: "the level ground is littered with skulls." When Dogen's work is seen through this eye, his repeated references to this problem and its resolution, often concealed within the structure of what seem to be philosophical disquisitions, become clearly apparent for what they are: abstract representations of this central issue of Zen praxis.

This critical point in the Zen mental revolution is illustrated ele-

gantly in Dogen's essay "The Dragon Howl," which is based on an ancient meditation story. A student asked a Zen master, "Is there a dragon howl in a dead tree?" The master said, "I say there is a lion roar in a skull." Here the "dead tree" and the "skull" represent the "great death" of Zen, the liberation of mind from the mesmeric grip of its creations, the opening of satori; whereas the "dragon howl" and the "lion roar" stand for the "great function," the expanded access of potential that the Zen "death" makes possible.

In this essay, Dogen takes great pains to distinguish the "great death" from hypnosis-induced apathy, suppression, quietism, or attachment to detachment: "Talk about the dead tree and dead ashes is originally a deviant teaching, but the dead tree spoken of by deviants and the dead tree spoken of by the enlightened are very different. Although deviants talk about the dead tree, they do not know the dead tree, much less hear the dragon howl. Deviants think the dead tree is dead wood, and practice as if there is no more spring for it."

Insisting on the interdependence of Zen "death" and renewal, Dogen goes on to say: "The leaves spread based on the root—this is called the enlightened ones; root and branch must return to the source—this is penetrating study." While he notes that the greater potential is inherent and never really lost even when unrealized—"If it is not a dead tree, it does not lose the dragon howl"—nevertheless he affirms that satori is necessary for the actualization of this potential—"As long as it is not a dead tree, it does not make the dragon howl."

The most outstanding characteristic of Dogen's masterwork *Shobogenzo* is his emphasis on the dangers of confusing satori with altered states of mind, or with simple detachment from states of mind, and the dangers of overemphasizing the peak experience of satori at the expense of aftermath development. In contrast to this, the most outstanding characteristic of *Transmission of Light*, which ranks with Dogen's work as a major classic of Soto Zen, is its extremely penetrating analysis of the process of satori. There is, to be sure, a great deal more to be found in *Transmission of Light*, but insistence on the necessity of genuine satori and the thoroughly transcendent nature of the experience emerges in so many guises, chapter after chapter, that it becomes the overriding theme of the whole work, making *Transmission of Light* the classic statement of satori practice.



*Transmission of Light* is attributed to Zen master Keizan (1268–1325), a great fourth-generation master of Dogen's school. He was the first to spread Soto Zen teaching to a wide audience and is formally ranked by Japanese Soto tradition in a position of honor second only to the founder Dogen himself. Recent scholarly investigations have cast doubt on the authorship of *Transmission of Light*, but these need not concern us here—not only because of the speciousness of some of the arguments advanced against the traditional attribution, but more importantly because the first principle of universalist Buddhist hermeneutics is to “rely on the truth, not the personality.”

It seems reasonable to assume that the author was a representative of the Soto school of Zen, and it seems clear that the author was knowledgeable about the main satori methods employed in Chinese Zen of the Song dynasty (960–1278). The Soto origin of the text is important only insofar as it testifies to the falsehood of certain common distortions and myths about Soto Zen fostered by sectarian cultists. The technical expertise it displays, on the other hand, is of transhistorical importance in that it provides genuine guidance in the matter of attaining and authenticating true satori experience. If people attain real satori, sectarian cultism is not their worry and distinguishing myth from reality is not their problem.

Because of the tremendous confusion and uncertainty attending critical study of the early history of Japanese Soto Zen and the patterns of circulation of Dogen's work, it is not necessarily possible to ascertain precise historical reasons for the enormous effort made by the author of *Transmission of Light* to reestablish the prime importance of satori and debunk sectarian quirks. There is no question, however, that a schism occurred within Soto Zen shortly after Dogen's passing and that a number of disputes erupted over the abbacy of the monastery Dogen founded.

It is not certain when use of Dogen's masterwork fell into abeyance, but it is extremely difficult to find any reference to it in Soto works after the third generation, and it seems to disappear from active Soto teaching until the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Furthermore, the succession disputes and sectarian schism that took place in the third to fourth generation had already demonstrated blatant disregard for some of Dogen's most fundamental teachings—basic principles of Buddhism emphasized not only in his masterwork and regular talks but also in his early groundwork lectures.



In any case, *Transmission of Light* is very forthright in acknowledging degeneration in the Soto Zen of its time. It openly attacks monastic elitism, sectarianism, formalism, and sexism, showing how none of these tendencies is in keeping with the essence and spirit of Buddhism. This is certainly good enough reason for its overwhelming emphasis on the need for genuine satori. And here if anywhere is the paradox of Zen: to attain satori it is necessary to get over these specious discriminations, or "attachments to form," as Keizan calls them; yet it is necessary to attain satori to finally get over them. This is why Dogen stated that practice and realization are nondual but that practice and realization under the auspices of the ego are delusion—thus strictly distinguishing between confusing and enlightening practice.

Similarly, *Transmission of Light* says: "Even if you sit until your seat breaks through, even if you persevere mindless of fatigue, even if you are a person of lofty deeds and pure behavior, if you haven't reached this realm of satori you still can't get out of the prison of the world. . . . Even if you are trained for many years and your thoughts are ended and your feelings are settled, your body like a dead tree and your heart like cold ashes, your mind never stirring in the face of events, even if you finally die sitting or standing and seem to have attained freedom in life and death, still if you haven't reached this realm it is all of no use in the house of the enlightened. . . . There is nothing to be delighted about in just being a Buddhist initiate in form—if you do not understand this matter, in the end you're no different from worldly people."

The whole format of *Transmission of Light*, ever at pains to help readers transcend superficial externals, is a guidebook to a universal enlightenment beyond cultural conditions. In India alone there were considerable changes in social and cultural conditions over the centuries between the arising of Buddhism and its transmission to China—and it is hard to imagine any two cultures as different as those of India and China. Even China and Japan, despite close cultural ties, are very different in terms of the ordinary mentality as conditioned by their respective societies. The languages of these three countries—representing Indo-European, Sinic, and Altaic families, radically different in structure and logic—are an illustration of the enormous disparity between the characteristic thought processes of these cultures.

Yet Zen insists that the fundamental human mind underlying all these circumstantially conditioned differences is one. The pervading thread of *Transmission of Light* is a grand illustration of how people can realize this unity in a manner more direct and profound than cross-cultural understanding as ordinarily conceived. Even if the form of the legends and tales in this particular text may be historically "soft," the transmission of Buddhism into such diverse Asian civilizations is the larger evidence of this simple "one mind" to which the quintessential Zen of this text is pointing.

Although it uses a quasi-historical format relating to the theoretical origins of Zen and the Soto school, *Transmission of Light* makes no reference to the lineage of masters in its story line as a symbol or proof of authority. Never does it use the idea of connection to the ancients for the purpose of enhancing the prestige of the author's school; rather, it uses the prestige of the ancients to evoke a sense of shame—one of the most powerful tools of Japanese psychology—in the followers of the school. There is in *Transmission of Light* none of the sectarianism and formalism later associated with certain sects of Soto Zen to the detriment of a general appreciation of the wider range of Soto teaching.

In eighteenth-century Japan there was considerable controversy over this issue in connection with the question of transmission and succession in Zen. One of the greatest masters of the age insisted that mind-to-mind communication in Zen was just that—requiring no institutional or sectarian affiliation and no personal relationship—in contrast to the originator of a school of formalists, among whose successors the "transmission of the teaching" was carried out through doctrine and elaborate ritual and depended on personal and institutional association.

*Transmission of Light* demonstrates how enlightenment and formal successorship do not necessarily take place in the same school or even in the same general lineage. One notorious example of this phenomenon is the patching of the last Chinese Soto lineage by a master of a completely different line. The direct Soto lineage died out in China when all the enlightened disciples of the last great master passed on before him, and the only person left in his school who knew all the teachings was denied successorship because of his competitiveness and desire to be ahead of others—common human weaknesses regarded as forms of mental illness in Zen. This patching

operation is not only acknowledged in *Transmission of Light*, it is even emphasized to show that satori transcends sect. In a famous medieval Soto sectarian hagiography of the founder Dogen, on the other hand, the patching is vehemently denied on the alleged authority of a secret text that no one has ever seen. This particular contradiction is an excellent illustration of one difference between enlightened Soto Zen and sectarian Soto cultism.

The whole issue of Zen transmission and succession has a checkered history. In one sense, the very idea of transmission or succession may seem to suggest that there is actually something "passed on" from teacher to disciple; but this is denied in both scripture and classical Zen teaching, which says that the Zen experience is not passed on from one person to another as a form, doctrine, or hypnotic suggestion might be passed on. Communication of Zen is instead defined in terms of mutual recognition of awakened minds.

In his classic *Ten Guidelines for Zen Schools*, the great ninth-century Chinese master Fayuan writes: "When the founder of Zen came from India to China, it was not because there was something to transmit; he just pointed directly to people's minds, so that they could see their essence and realize enlightenment—how could there be any sectarian styles to value?" In a similar vein, *Transmission of Light* says: "This truth is not received from Buddhas or Zen masters, it is not given to one's children, not inherited from one's parents." Zen proverb calls it "the subtlety that cannot be passed on even from father to son," and a line from a famous poem that also became proverbial says that "the one opening beyond is not transmitted by the sages."

The early Zen masters of China, all the way through the Tang dynasty (618–907), rarely even mention Zen successorship, much less make any claim to authority thereby. The few exceptions to this general rule involve special political and historical circumstances, and in any case they are not part of the broad mainstream of Zen tradition. During the Song dynasty (960–1278), with the dramatic increase of Confucian agitation against Buddhism and the establishment of a government-controlled public monastery system for Zen, there was more concern about Zen succession. Even then, however, a Zen master typically mentioned his succession only at the ceremony of opening of a teaching hall—and even then, while it may have satisfied Confucian demands for orthodoxy, in the context of uncontaminated

Zen it was a symbol of humility and deference to ancient masters, not a mark of assertion and profession. As the Zen proverb says, "Good children don't use their parents' money."

By that time, of course, Zen had been effectively active in China for centuries, laying a basis for direct perception and common knowledge of both abstract and concrete signs of real Zen mastery that may or may not underlie individual claims to succession. In *Transmission of Light* it is noted, for example, that Rujing, the teacher of Dogen, never revealed his succession until the day he died. Yet he was appointed head teacher of several public monasteries, his mastery never in doubt, his tutelage sought even by Taoists.

After the Song dynasty, with the weakening of institutionalized Zen, there was increasing interest in lineage and transmission among some Zennists. Nevertheless, some of the most universally recognized Zen masters of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) did not fit into any lineage at all. In Japan, on the other hand, where Zen was transmitted from Song dynasty China, in an era when institutionalized Zen had already been highly formalized and deeply corrupted, there was generally more intense interest in official succession than there had been in China. Adding to the historical circumstances of the founding of Zen in Japan was the fact that Japanese society is even more status-conscious than Chinese society, and the political and economic structure of religious organization in Japan was in general much more rigid than the ancient Zen of China.

In the history of Soto Zen there are a number of points where the matter of transmission is known to be confused, beginning with the very first generation after Dogen, where differing versions are given as to the number and identities of his successors. The middle ages show increasing complexity and unclarity, with multiple successions and a variety of ill-defined categories. This confusion was eventually replaced by statutory regulation imposed by government fiat in the late medieval and early modern periods. Therefore the ordinary licensing process known as "transmission of the teaching" in modern Soto Zen sects does not mean the same thing as the transmissions recorded in *Transmission of Light* and is not a direct continuation of the teachings of the masters in this lineage.

Indeed, it is a rather well publicized fact in Japan that satori has generally been lost in the dominant sect of Soto Zen for the last two or three hundred years. This sect became and remained institution-



ally strong, however, because of its persistent adherence to dogma, ritual, and conditioning, the very forces that hold every society on earth in spell. An attempt was made to rationalize this institutionalization by claiming that enlightenment is identical to the Soto training system, based on a fragmentary selection of bits and pieces from Dogen's writings. The other major surviving sect of Soto Zen, on the other hand, is descended from a master of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries who vigorously upheld the teaching of satori and the formless reality of mutual recognition among enlightened minds. Because it was purer in its standards from a Zen standpoint, this school could not reproduce its effects mechanically and therefore is less well represented today, at least in numerical terms. Hence there is a general perception that Soto Zen deemphasizes or even denies satori. This, however, is not a complete picture at all.

There is at present no way for people in the modern West to verify the historical authenticity of any of the Zen lineages—in the sense of proving or disproving the understanding and teaching of each and every link in a lineage—to ascertain whether any deviation occurred along the way. There are, however, many universally accepted classical indications of what Zen is all about. The classics are more reliable than sectarian hagiographies as guides to determining authenticity in Zen, because unlike fragmentary historical records they can be proved in personal experience—and this can be done independently without social pressure to uphold any particular claim to authority. One of the proverbial guidelines for Zen study is: "First awaken on your own, then see someone else." As a handbook of method, *Transmission of Light* is a classic guide to "awakening on your own." As a collection of criteria, it is a way to "see someone else."





# *Transmission of Light*



## SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

Shakyamuni Buddha realized enlightenment on seeing the morning star. He said, "I and all beings on earth together attain enlightenment at the same time."

Shakyamuni left his palace one night when he was nineteen years old and shaved off his hair. After that he spent six years practicing ascetic exercises. Subsequently he sat on an indestructible seat, so immobile that there were cobwebs in his brows, a bird's nest on his head, and reeds growing up through his mat. Thus he sat for six years.

In his thirtieth year, on the eligibility day of the twelfth month, he was suddenly enlightened when the morning star appeared. Then he spoke the foregoing words, his first lion roar.

After that he spent forty-nine years helping others by teaching, never staying in seclusion. With just one robe and one bowl, he lacked nothing. He taught at over three hundred and sixty assemblies, and then finally entrusted the treasury of the eye of truth to Kasyapa, and its transmission has continued to the present. Indeed, this is the root of the transmission and practice of the true teaching in India, China, and Japan.

The behavior of Shakyamuni Buddha during his lifetime is a model for the disciples he left behind. Even though he may have had the thirty-two special marks of greatness and the eighty kinds of refinements, he kept the form of an old mendicant, no different from anyone else.

Therefore, ever since he was in the world, through the three periods of his teaching—genuine, imitation, and derelict—those who have sought the way of his teaching have imitated the Buddha's form and manners, have used the endowment of the Buddha, and in all their doings have always considered the task of self-understanding foremost. Having been transmitted from Buddha to Buddha, from

adept to adept, the true teaching has never been cut off. This story clearly points to this.

Even though what the Buddha pointed out and explained in the more than three hundred and sixty meetings over forty-nine years was not the same, the various stories, parables, metaphors, and explanations did not go beyond the principle illustrated in the story of his enlightenment.

That is to say, "I" is not Shakyamuni Buddha—even Shakyamuni Buddha comes from this "I." And it does not only give birth to Shakyamuni Buddha—"all beings on earth" also come from here. Just as when you lift up a net all the holes are raised, in the same way when Shakyamuni Buddha was enlightened so too were all beings on earth enlightened. And it was not only all beings on earth that were enlightened—all the Buddhas of past, present, and future also attained enlightenment.

While this is so, do not think of Shakyamuni Buddha as having become enlightened—do not see Shakyamuni Buddha outside of all beings on earth.

However immensely diverse the mountains, rivers, land, and all forms and appearances may be, all of them are in the eye of the Buddha. And you too are standing in the eye of the Buddha. And it is not simply that you are standing there—the eye has become you. Buddha's eye has become everyone's whole body, each standing tall.

Therefore this clear bright eye that spans all time should not be thought of as the people evidently here—you are Buddha's eye, Buddha is your whole body.

This being so, what do you call the principle of enlightenment? I ask you, is the Buddha enlightened with you? Are you enlightened with the Buddha? If you say you become enlightened with the Buddha or you say the Buddha becomes enlightened with you, this is not the Buddha's enlightenment at all. Therefore it should not be called the principle of enlightenment.

Even so, "I" and "together" are neither one nor two. Your skin, flesh, bones, and marrow are all "together," and the host inside the house is "I." It does not have skin, flesh, bones, or marrow, it does not have gross physical or mental elements. Ultimately speaking, "If you want to know the undying person in the hut, how could it be apart from this skin bag?" So you should not understand the beings on earth as distinct from yourself.



While the seasons come and go, and the mountains, rivers, and land change with the times, you should know that this is Buddha raising his eyebrows and blinking his eyes—so it is the “unique body revealed in myriad forms.” It is “effacing myriad forms” and “not effacing myriad forms.” The ancient master Fayuan said, “What effacing or not effacing can you talk about?” And Dizang said, “What do you call myriad forms?”

So, studying from all angles, penetrating in all ways, you should clarify Buddha’s enlightenment and understand your own enlightenment. I want you all to see this story closely and be able to explain it, letting the explanation flow from your own heart, not borrowing the words of another.

I also want to add a humble saying to this story:

One branch stands out on the old apricot tree;  
Thorns come forth at the same time.

## KASYAPA

When the Buddha raised a flower and blinked his eyes, Kasyapa broke out in a smile. The Buddha said, "I have the treasury of the eye of truth, the ineffable mind of nirvana. These I entrust to Kasyapa."

Kasyapa was born in a Brahmin family. In Sanskrit, Kasyapa means "Drinker of Light." When he was born, a golden light filled the room, then went into his mouth. Hence he was called Kasyapa, Drinker of Light. His complexion was golden, and he had thirty of the thirty-two major marks of greatness.

Kasyapa met the Buddha at a shrine known as the Shrine of Many Children. The Buddha said, "Welcome, mendicant," Kasyapa having already shaved his head and put on a patchwork vestment. Then the Buddha entrusted him with the treasury of the eye of truth. Kasyapa practiced austerities, and never wasted any time.

Only seeing the ugly emaciation of his body and the wretchedness of his clothing, everyone doubted Kasyapa. Because of this, every time the Buddha was going to give a talk in some place or other, he shared his seat with Kasyapa, who thenceforth was the senior member of the community.

Kasyapa was not only the senior member of Shakyamuni Buddha's community; he was the intrepid leader of the communities of all the Buddhas of the past. You should know that he was an ancient Buddha—do not just class him with the other disciples of Buddha.

Before an assembly of eighty thousand on Spiritual Mountain, the Buddha raised a flower and blinked his eyes. No one knew his meaning, all remained silent. Then Kasyapa alone broke into a smile. The Buddha said, "I have the treasury of the eye of truth, the ineffable mind of nirvana, and the formless teaching of complete illumination. I entrust it all to Kasyapa."

The so-called raising of the flower at that time has been transmitted purely through a succession of masters, not erroneously allowing

outsiders to know about it. Therefore it is unknown to professors of doctrines and to many teachers of meditation. Obviously they do not know the reality.

Furthermore, this story, such as it is, is not a record of the assembly on Spiritual Mountain; these words were spoken in entrustment of the bequest at the Shrine of Many Children. The records that say it took place on Spiritual Mountain are wrong. When the teaching of enlightenment was bequeathed, there was this kind of "ceremony." Therefore if he were not a master bearing the seal of the enlightened mind, Kasyapa would not have known the time of that raising of the flower, and he would not have understood that raising of the flower.

Investigate carefully, see thoroughly—know that Kasyapa is Kasyapa, understand Shakyamuni Buddha as Shakyamuni Buddha, and simply transmit the Way of complete enlightenment in depth.

Leaving aside the raising of the flower for the moment, everyone should clearly understand the blinking of the eyes. You raise your eyebrows and blink your eyes in the ordinary course of things, and Buddha blinked his eyes when he raised the flower—these are not separate at all. Your talking and smiling, and Kasyapa's breaking into a smile, are not different at all.

But if you do not clearly understand the one who raised his eyebrows and blinked his eyes, then in India there is Shakyamuni Buddha, there is Kasyapa, and in your own mind there is skin, flesh, bones, and marrow. So many optical illusions, so much floating dust—you have never been free of them for countless eons, and you surely will be sunk in them for eons to come.

Once you come to know the inner self, you will find that Kasyapa can wriggle his toes in your shoes. Do you not realize that where Shakyamuni raised his eyebrows and blinked his eyes, Shakyamuni immediately died away; and that where Kasyapa broke into a smile, Kasyapa immediately became enlightened? Is this not then one's own?

The treasury of the eye of truth is entrusted to oneself, and therefore you cannot call it Kasyapa or Shakyamuni. There has never been anything given to another, and there has never been anything received from anyone; this is called the truth.

Wanting to reveal Kasyapa, Shakyamuni held up a flower to show unchanging, and Kasyapa smiled to show longevity. In this way teacher and apprentice see each other and the lifeline flows through.

Completely enlightened knowledge has nothing to do with thoughts. Kasyapa correctly cut through his conceptual faculty and went into Kukkutapada Mountain, awaiting the birth of the future Buddha Maitreya. Therefore Kasyapa even now has not become extinct.

If you study the Way sincerely and investigate it through in every detail, not only is Kasyapa not extinct but Shakyamuni too is eternal. Therefore since before you were born it has been pointed out directly and communicated simply, extending over all time, met with everywhere. Therefore you should not look to two thousand years in the past. If you just work on the Way with alacrity today, Kasyapa will be able to appear in the world today, without going into Kukkutapada Mountain.

Thus the flesh on Shakyamuni's body will still be warm and Kasyapa's smile will be renewed. If you can reach this realm, you will succeed to Kasyapa, and yet Kasyapa will be your heir. It has not only come from the seven Buddhas of antiquity to you; you can even be the root teacher of the seven Buddhas. Beginningless and endless, beyond the passage of time, the transmission of the treasury of the eye of truth will still be there.

Thus Shakyamuni Buddha also received the bequest of Kasyapa and is now in the heaven of satisfaction, the abode of imminent Buddhas, and you are also in the assembly on Spiritual Mountain, unchanging. Have you not heard the saying, "Always abiding on the Spiritual Mountain and other dwelling places, my land here will be safe and secure when the great fire burns, always filled with celestials and humans." This refers not only to the abode of the assembly on Spiritual Mountain—how could anywhere be left out? The true teaching of Buddha has spread without any lack.

Then this assembly here must be the assembly on Spiritual Mountain, while that assembly on Spiritual Mountain must be this assembly here. The Buddhas have only appeared and disappeared depending on your diligence or lack of it. Even today, if you work on the Way over and over, and pass through it in every detail, Shakyamuni Buddha immediately appears in the world. It is just because you do not understand yourselves that Shakyamuni passed away in olden times; since you are children of Buddha, how could you kill the Buddha? So get to work on the Way and meet your loving father.

Old Shakyamuni Buddha is with you all the time, whatever you are doing; he is conversing and exchanging greetings with you, never

apart from you for a moment. If you never see him, you will be remiss, and even the hands of a thousand Buddhas will not reach you.

I have some humble words to point out this principle:

Know that in the remote recesses of the misty valley  
There is another sacred pine that passes the winter cold.



## ANANDA

Ananda asked Kasyapa, "What did the Buddha hand on to you besides the golden-sleeved robe?"

Kasyapa said, "Ananda!"

Ananda said, "Yes?"

Kasyapa said, "Take down the banner pole in front of the gate."

Ananda was greatly enlightened.

Ananda was from the warrior caste, a cousin of Shakyamuni Buddha. "Ananda" means happiness or joy; he was born the night of the Buddha's enlightenment, and he was so extraordinarily handsome that everyone was happy to see him—hence his name.

Ananda was foremost in learning, intellectually brilliant and broad in understanding. He was the Buddha's attendant for twenty years, propagated all of the Buddha's teachings, and studied all of the Buddha's manners. When the Buddha entrusted the treasury of the eye of truth to Kasyapa, he also instructed Ananda to help communicate the teaching. So Ananda accompanied Kasyapa for twenty more years and became thoroughly familiar with the entire treasury of the eye of truth.

This should document the fact that the way of Zen is not in the same class as other schools. Ananda was already foremost in learning, having studied widely and gained a broad understanding, with the Buddha himself giving him approval many times—yet he did not hold the transmission of truth or attain illumination of the ground of mind.

When Kasyapa was going to compile the teachings left by the Buddha, Ananda was not permitted to attend because he had not yet attained realization. Then Ananda meditated carefully and soon attained sainthood. When he went to go into the room where the teachings were being compiled, Kasyapa told him that if he had attained realization he should enter by a show of supernormal powers.

So Ananda appeared in a tiny body and went in through the keyhole. Thus he was finally able to enter.

The disciples all said, "Ananda was the Buddha's attendant, so he has heard a lot and studied widely. It was like a cup of water poured into another cup, without spilling anything. Let us ask Ananda to recite the teachings for us."

So Kasyapa said to Ananda, "Everyone is looking to you to recite the sayings of the Buddha."

Then Ananda, who had kept the bequest of the Buddha within him, and had now also received this request of Kasyapa, began to recite all the teachings of the Buddha's lifetime.

Kasyapa said to the disciples, "Is this any different from what the Buddha taught?"

The disciples said, "It is no different."

The disciples in attendance were all great saints with the six super-knowledges, including the knowledge of past lives, clairvoyance, and knowledge of the end of contamination. They did not forget anything they had heard. With one voice they said, "Is this the Buddha's second coming, or is this Ananda talking?" They said in praise, "The waters of the ocean of the Buddha's teaching have flowed into Ananda."

The teachings of the Buddha that have come down through the present are those spoken by Ananda. So we know for certain this Way does not depend on great learning or on the attainment of realization; this should be proof. Ananda still followed Kasyapa for twenty years, and he was first greatly enlightened at the time of the event cited in the beginning.

Since he was born the night of the Buddha's enlightenment, Ananda did not hear such discourses as the Flower Ornament Scripture, but he attained the concentration of awareness of Buddha and could recite what he had not heard. That he nevertheless had not entered the Way of Zen is just the same as our failure to enter.

In the distant past, Ananda had awakened the aspiration for complete perfect enlightenment in the presence of the Buddha called King of Emptiness, at the same time as did the present Buddha Shakyamuni. Ananda was fond of intellectual learning, and that is why he had not yet truly realized enlightenment. Shakyamuni, on the other hand, cultivated energy, whereby he attained true enlightenment. Surely much academic learning is a hindrance on the Way—here is proof of that. This is why the Flower Ornament Scripture says,

"Much learning without practical application is like a poor man counting another's treasures without half a cent of his own."

If you want to find out what this Way really is, do not be fond of academic learning, just be energetic in progressive practice.

Yet I daresay that there must be something besides the handing on of the robe. Thus Ananda once said to Kasyapa, "The Buddha bequeathed the golden-sleeved robe to you; what else did he transmit?" Kasyapa, realizing the time was ripe, called "Ananda!" When Ananda responded, Kasyapa said, "Take down the banner pole in front of the gate." Ananda was greatly enlightened as he heard this; the Buddha's robe spontaneously entered the top of Ananda's head.

That golden-sleeved robe was the vestment transmitted and kept by the seven Buddhas of antiquity. There are three explanations of that robe. One is that the Buddha brought it with him from the womb, another is that it was given by a being of the heaven of pure abodes, and the third is that it was presented by a hunter.

There are several other vestments of the Buddha. The vestment transmitted from Bodhidharma through the first six Zen founders in China was made of blue-black muslin. When it came to China, a blue-green lining was put in. It is now kept in the shrine of the sixth founder and is considered a national treasure. This is the one mentioned in the *Treatise on Transcendent Wisdom*, where it says, "The Buddha put on a coarse monk's garment."

The golden sleeves were golden felt. A scripture says that the Buddha's aunt made a vestment of golden felt by herself and gave it to the Buddha.

These are only one or two of many vestments. As for the miracles associated with them, they are found in many scriptural passages containing situational teachings.

In ancient times, when the Buddhist master Vashashita was challenged by an evil king, the Buddha's robe emanated light of five colors while in a fire, and when the fire was extinguished the vestment was unharmed. The king then believed it was the Buddha's vestment. It is that which will be transmitted to Maitreya.

The treasury of the eye of truth was not transmitted to two people; only one person, Kasyapa, received the Buddha's bequest. Moreover, Ananda attended Kasyapa for twenty years and held the transmission of the teaching. Thus the Zen school should be known to be a special

transmission outside of doctrine, but recently it has thoughtlessly come to be considered the same as doctrinal schools.

If they were one and the same, since Ananda was a saint with the six superknowledges, he would have received the Buddha's bequest and would have been the Buddha's successor. Was there anyone who understood the teachings of the scriptures better than Ananda? If there were anyone surpassing Ananda in this regard, then it could be admitted that the idea of the scriptures is one and the same as the meaning of Zen. If you say they are just one, why would Ananda take the trouble to attend Kasyapa for twenty years and become illumined at the command "Take down the banner pole"? Know that the idea of the scriptures is not to be considered the Way of Zen.

It is not that Buddha was not a Buddha, but even if Ananda was his attendant, how could he transmit to him the mind seal as long as he had not penetrated the enlightened mind? You should realize that this does not depend on having a lot of academic learning. Even if you can memorize the sacred teachings in books perfectly by means of your intelligence, if you do not penetrate the heart it is like uselessly counting another's treasures. It is not that the heart is not in the scriptural teachings, but that Ananda had not yet penetrated it. The literalist interpreters in the Far East fail to penetrate the heart of the scriptures.

You should also realize that the way of enlightenment is not easy. When Ananda, who was versed in the sacred teachings of the Buddha's whole lifetime, propagated them as the disciple of Buddha, who would not go along? Nevertheless you should know he attended Kasyapa and again propagated the teachings after his great enlightenment. It was like fire joining fire.

If you want to reach the true path clearly, you should give up your idea of self, your old feelings of conceit and self-importance, and return to the pristine inspired mind to comprehend enlightened knowledge.

As for the incident in Ananda's enlightenment story, Ananda thought that Kasyapa had received the golden-sleeved vestment and was a disciple of Buddha, and that there was nothing special other than that. Nevertheless, after following Kasyapa and attending him closely, he thought Kasyapa had realized something more. Kasyapa then knew that the time was right, and called to Ananda. Like a valley spirit echoing in response to a call, Ananda replied immediately,



like a spark issuing from a flint. Although Kasyapa called "Ananda," he was not calling Ananda, and Ananda did not echo in reply.

As for "Take down the banner pole in front of the gate," it refers to a custom of India. When the Buddhists and followers of other religions and philosophies would set to debate, both sides would put up a banner; when one side was defeated, their banner would be torn down. The present incident seems to suggest that Kasyapa and Ananda had set up their banners next to each other; since now Ananda was appearing in the world, Kasyapa should fold up his banner—one appearing, one disappearing.

But this is not what the story means. If Kasyapa and Ananda are both banner poles, the principle is not evident. Once a banner pole is taken down, another banner pole should appear. When Kasyapa instructed Ananda to take down the banner pole in front of the gate, Ananda was greatly enlightened because he realized the communion of the paths of teacher and apprentice.

After his enlightenment, Ananda took down even Kasyapa, and mountains and rivers all crumbled away. Hence the Buddha's robe naturally entered the crown of Ananda's head.

But do not use this story to remain in the state of "standing like a mile-high wall in the mass of naked flesh." Do not linger in purity. You should go on to realize that there is a valley spirit. Buddhas appeared in the world one after another; the Zen masters pointed it out generation after generation. It was only this matter; the mind-to-mind communication was ultimately unknown to others.

Even if the obvious masses of naked flesh, Kasyapa and Ananda, are one or two faces of the appearance in the world of "That One," do not consider Kasyapa and Ananda as "That One." Now each of you stands like a wall a mile high, you are myriad transformations of "That One." If you know "That One," you will be buried at once. If so, one should not look for "taking down the banner pole" outside of oneself.

Again I want to add some words:

The vines withered, the trees fallen,  
 The mountains crumble away—  
 The valley stream swells in a torrent,  
 Sparks fly from stone.



## SHANAVASA

Shanavasa asked Ananda, "What is the fundamental uncreated essence of all things?"

Ananda pointed to the corner of Shanavasa's vest.

Shanavasa asked, "What is the basic essence of the enlightenment of the Buddhas?"

Ananda grabbed the corner of Shanavasa's vest and tugged on it.

Shanavasa was then enlightened.

In Sanskrit, Shanavasa means "Natural Clothing." When Shanavasa was born, he came wearing clothing. In summer it became cool clothing, in winter it became warm clothing. When he was inspired to leave society, his ordinary clothing spontaneously turned into a mendicant's vestment.

Shanavasa did not just happen to be born this way in his present lifetime; when he was a merchant in a past life, he gave a hundred Buddhas a thousand feet of felt, and ever since then he wore natural clothing in every life. Usually people refer to the interval between giving up present existence and before reaching future existence by the term "intermediate existence." During that time they wear no clothing.

"Shanavasa" is also the name of an Indian plant called "Nine Branch Beauty." When a saint is born, this plant grows on clear ground. When Shanavasa was born this plant grew, and that is why he was named Shanavasa.

He was in the womb for six years before birth. In the past the Buddha had pointed to a forest and said, "In this wood a mendicant named Shanavasa will turn the wheel of the sublime teaching a hundred years after my death." As it turned out, Shanavasa was born there a century later, eventually received the bequest of Ananda, and stayed in this forest. Turning the wheel of the teaching, he overcame

a fire dragon; the fire dragon submitted to him and offered him this forest. This was indeed in accord with the prediction of the Buddha.

Originally, however, Shanavasa was a sorcerer from the Himalaya mountains. After becoming a disciple of Ananda, he asked, "What is the fundamental uncreated essence of all things?" This is in fact something that no one but Shanavasa had ever asked. The fundamental uncreated essence of all things is in everyone, yet they do not know they have it, nor do they ask.

Why is it called the uncreated essence? Though all things are born from it, this essence has no producer, so it is called the uncreated essence. Therefore everything is fundamentally uncreated—mountains are not mountains, rivers are not rivers. This is why Ananda pointed to the corner of Shanavasa's vest.

This vest is called *kashaya* in Sanskrit; this means indefinite color, and it means unborn color. Actually it is not to be seen in terms of color. Yet in one sense, the subjective and objective experiences of all beings, from Buddhas to insects, are all colored. But this is not the color perceived by the ordinary senses, so there is no world to transcend, no enlightenment to realize.

Even though he understood this, Shanavasa went on to ask, "What is the fundamental essence of enlightenment of the Buddhas?" Although there has never been any mistake in this, unless you find out that you have it, you will be uselessly hindered by your eyes. This is why Shanavasa asked this question: to clarify the source of all Buddhas.

Responding to the call, Ananda deliberately tugged on Shanavasa's vest to let him know that the Buddhas come out in response to the search for them. Shanavasa was thereupon greatly enlightened.

Although that which never has been off is like this, you cannot ever realize that it is your own wisdom-mother of all Buddhas unless you come across it once.

This is why the Buddhas have appeared in the world one after another, and why the Zen masters have taught generation after generation. Although there has never been anything to give to anyone or anything to receive from anyone, it is necessary to experience this as intimately as feeling the nose on your own face.

Zen study demands that you investigate and awaken on your own. After awakening, you should meet others who are enlightened. If you

do not meet anyone enlightened, you will just become obsessive and cannot be called a Zen seeker.

It should be clear from this story of Shanavasa that you should not waste your life. You should not just be a spontaneous naturalist, and you should not prefer your idea of yourself or your former views.

You may think that Buddhist Zen is just for special people and that you are not fit for it, but such ideas are the worst kind of folly. Who among the ancients was not a mortal? Whose personality was not influenced by social and material values? Once they studied Zen, however, they penetrated all the way through.

There may have been differences in periods of true, initiative, and decadent Buddhism in India, China, and Japan, yet there have been plenty of saints and sages who realized the fruits of Buddhism. Since you have the same faculties as the ancients, so wherever you are you are still human beings. Your physical and mental elements are no different from those of Kasyapa and Ananda, so why should you be different from the ancients with respect to enlightenment?

It is only by failure to find out the truth and master the Way that you lose the human body in vain, without ever realizing what you have in yourself.

Ananda took Kasyapa as his teacher because he learned that he should not waste his life, and for this reason he also accepted Shanavasa as a disciple. Thus the Way was transmitted from teacher to apprentice. The treasury of the eye of truth and the ineffable mind of nirvana communicated in this way are no different from when the Buddha was in the world.

Therefore do not regret that you were not born in the land of the Buddha's birthplace, and do not lament that you have not met the Buddha living in the world. In the past you planted seeds of virtue and formed affinity with wisdom; it is because of this that you have gathered here in this congregation.

This is indeed like standing shoulder to shoulder with Kasyapa, sitting knee to knee with Ananda. So while we may be host and guests for a day, you will be Buddhas and Zen masters all of your lives.

Do not get stuck in objects of sense, do not pass the nights and days in vain. Work on the Way carefully, reach the ultimate point to which the ancients penetrated, and receive the seal of enlightenment and directions for the future in the present day.

I have another verse to clarify the present story:

The sourceless river on a mountain miles high—  
Piercing rocks, sweeping clouds, it surges forth;  
Scattering clouds, sending flowers flying in profusion,  
The length of white silk is absolutely free of dust.

## UPAGUPTA

Upagupta attended Shanavasa for three years, then finally shaved his head and became a mendicant. Shanavasa asked him, "Are you leaving home physically or mentally?"

Upagupta said, "Actually I am leaving home physically."

Shanavasa said, "What has the sublime truth of the Buddhas to do with body or mind?"

On hearing this, Upagupta was enlightened.

Upagupta was from the peasant caste. He called on Shanavasa when he was fifteen years old, became a mendicant when he was seventeen, and realized enlightenment when he was twenty-two.

In his teaching travels, Upagupta came to Mathura, where those who attained salvation were most numerous. Because of this, the palace of demons quaked and the devil was distressed and dismayed.

Whenever anyone attained realization, Upagupta would cast a talisman four fingers in breadth into a cave. The cave was eighteen cubits by twelve cubits, and it was filled with talismans—that is how many people attained enlightenment.

When Upagupta died, he was cremated with the talismans representing those whom he had enlightened. As many people were liberated by him as had been liberated in the time of the Buddha, so Upagupta was called a buddha without special marks.

In anger the devil watched for when Upagupta would enter meditation, and then used all his devilish power to try to destroy the truth. Upagupta went into concentration trance and saw what was going on. The devil, perceiving this, came and put a garland on Upagupta's neck. Upagupta, wishing to subdue the devil, rose from meditation, transformed a human corpse, a dead dog, and a dead snake into a flower garland, and spoke gently to the devil, saying, "You gave me a fine necklace, and now I have a flower garland to offer you in return."

The devil happily extended his neck to receive it, whereupon the



garland turned back into the three stinking corpses, infested and rotting. The devil was disgusted and greatly upset, but he could not get rid of the garland even with all his magical powers. He ascended to the six heavens of desire and told the gods there about this, and also went to the heaven of Brahma seeking to be liberated. They all told him that it was an occult manifestation of the powers of an enlightened Buddhist, and they could do nothing about it. When the devil asked them what he should do, the gods told him that he could get rid of the necklace of corpses if he became Upagupta's disciple. Then they sent him back with a verse:

If you fall on the ground, you must rise from the ground;  
It is impossible to stand apart from the ground.  
You must seek liberation from a Buddhist of enlightened  
powers.

So the devil descended from the heavens, prostrated himself at Upagupta's feet, and repented. Upagupta said, "Will you create any more trouble for the true teaching of Buddha?" The devil promised to dedicate himself to the Way of Buddha and to stop evil forever. Upagupta said, "Then you should declare refuge in the Three Treasures, the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community." The devil repeated the refuge-taking formula thrice, whereupon the garland of corpses fell off. In this way did Upagupta demonstrate the powerful effect of Buddhism, just as when the Buddha was alive in the world.

When Upagupta had his head shaved at the age of seventeen, Shanavasa asked him, "Are you leaving home in body or in mind?" In Buddhism there are basically two kinds of home-leaving—that of body and that of mind.

Those who leave home physically give up social and personal sentiments, leave their native place, shave off their hair and dress in black, and do not have any servants, becoming mendicants. They work on the Way twenty-four hours a day, so they waste no time and have no extraneous desires. Therefore they are not happy to be alive and do not fear to die. Their minds are like the pure clarity of the autumn moon, their eyes are like the flawlessness of a bright mirror. They do not seek mind or look for essence; they do not even practice the holy truths, much less have any worldly attachments. In this way they do not remain in the state of ordinary mortals, nor are they con-

fined to the state of sages and saints—they are mindless wayfarers. These are people who leave home physically.

Those who leave home mentally do not shave off their hair or wear special clothing. Though they live at home and are in the midst of the troubles of the world, they are like lotuses unsoiled by mud, like jewels unaffected by dust. Even though they may have spouses and children according to circumstances, they are not attached to them. Like the moon in the sky, like a pearl rolling in a bowl, they see the one who is free in the midst of a bustling city, they understand beyond time while in the world, they know that "even cutting off passions is a disease," and realize that "aiming for true thusness is also wrong." To them, nirvana and samsara are both illusions; they are concerned with neither enlightenment nor affliction. These are people who leave home mentally.

Therefore Shanavasa asked Upagupta, "Are you leaving home physically or mentally?" He asked this question because otherwise a home-leaver is not a home-leaver.

Upagupta answered, "Actually I am leaving home physically." Here he was not thinking of mind, talking about essence, or discussing mystery. He only knew that the elemental body leaves home. It comes without movement, so he understood it to be spiritual power; it is gotten without seeking, so he understood it to be ungraspable. Therefore he said he was actually leaving home physically.

But the subtle truth of the Buddhas should not be seen or understood in this way, so Shanavasa explained to him that the Buddhas actually do not leave home physically or mentally—they are not to be seen in terms of matter or of psychological and physical elements, and cannot be witnessed in terms of noumenon or mystery.

Therefore the Buddhas are free from both the sacred and the profane; they have shed both mind and body alike. They are like space, without outside or inside, like the water of the ocean. No matter how numerous and diverse their many subtle principles and innumerable teachings, all of them explain only this thing.

Therefore "The Sole Honored One" should not be called Buddha, nor should we refer to it as "not coming or going." Who says "before your parents were born" or "before the empty eon"?

When you get here, you transcend birth and nonbirth, you are liberated from mind and nonmind. It is like water conforming to the vessel, like things resting on space. Though you grasp, your hand is

not full; though you search, you cannot find a trace. This is the subtle truth of the Buddhas.

At this point Upagupta no longer existed, nor did Shanavasa; therefore they did not employ motion or stillness, going or coming. Even if there were affirmation and negation, other and self, it was like sound underwater, like the boundlessness of space.

Furthermore, if you do not experience this once, even millions of teachings and their infinite subtle principles will all uselessly become flows of habitual consciousness.

When this was pointed out to them, Upagupta was suddenly enlightened. It was like thunder in a clear sky, like a raging fire springing up on the ground. Once the swift thunder pealed, not only were Upagupta's ears cut off, he immediately lost his root of life. The blazing fire suddenly burning, the teachings of the Buddhas and the heads of the Zen masters all became ashes.

These ashes have appeared under the name Upagupta, hard as stone, black as lacquer. How many people's original forms were lost, their whole bodies pulverized—he cast talismans counting voidness, finally burning emptiness and leaving empty traces.

Today, as his descendant, I want to look for tracks beyond the clouds and stick worlds up in the clear sky:

The house broken up, the people gone, neither inside nor out,  
Where have body and mind ever hidden their forms?

## DHRTAKA

Dhrtaka said, "One who renounces the world has no personal self, no personal possessions, so is mentally neither aroused nor oblivious. This is the eternal Way. The Buddhas too are eternal. The mind has no shape or form, and its essence is also thus."

Upagupta said, "You should completely awaken and attain this in your own mind."

Dhrtaka was thereupon greatly enlightened.

When Dhrtaka was born, his father dreamed a golden sun came out from the house and illumined heaven and earth. In the foreground was a huge mountain magnificently adorned with jewels; at the summit of the mountain welled forth a spring, flowing in four directions.

When Dhrtaka first met Upagupta, he told him about this dream. Upagupta interpreted it for him: "The great mountain is me; the welling spring means the pouring forth of your wisdom and truth without end. The sun emerging from the house is a sign of your present entry into the Way. The illumination of heaven and earth is transcendence through wisdom."

Hearing Upagupta's explanation, Dhrtaka chanted a verse:

The magnificent mountain of jewels  
Always produces the spring of wisdom;  
It turns into the flavor of real truth  
Liberating those with affinity.

Upagupta also chanted a verse:

My teaching is bequeathed to you,  
You should show great wisdom,  
As the sun emerging from the house  
Illumines heaven and earth.

Henceforth Dhrtaka became a disciple of Upagupta and eventually sought to renounce the world to become a mendicant. Upagupta asked him, "You are intent on renouncing the world. Do you renounce the world in body or mind?"

Dhrtaka said, "I came seeking to renounce the world, not for the sake of body or mind."

Upagupta said, "Since it is not for body or mind, then who renounces the world?"

Dhrtaka said, "One who renounces the world has no personal self . . ." and so on, and finally he was greatly enlightened.

Actually, one who renounces the world shows the self that has no personal self; therefore it cannot be understood in terms of body or mind. This selfless self is the eternal Way; it cannot be fathomed in terms of birth and death. Therefore it is not the Buddhas, and it is not living beings—how could it be material or psychological elements, realms of desire, form, or formlessness, or sundry states of existence?

Thus the mind has no shape or form; even though it be seeing and hearing, discerning and knowing, ultimately it does not come or go, it is not moving or still.

One who sees in this way—that is, one who knows the mind—still must be said to understand on the basis of learning. For this reason, even though Dhrtaka understood in this way, Upagupta rapped him by saying, "You should awaken completely and realize this in your own mind."

It is like putting the imperial seal on an article of merchandise: when the imperial seal is on it, people know it is not poison, it is not suspicious, and it is not government property; therefore people use it. The merging of the paths of teacher and apprentice is like this: even if one understands all principles and comprehends all paths, one must still become greatly enlightened before really attaining.

If you are not greatly enlightened once, you will vainly become mere intellectuals and never arrive at the ground of mind. Because of this you are not yet rid of views of Buddha and Dharma, so when will you ever get out of the bondage of self and others?

Thus even if you can remember all the sermons spoken by the Buddha over his forty-nine years of teaching, and do not misunderstand a single doctrine of the three and five vehicles of liberation, if you do not greatly awaken once, you cannot be acknowledged as a true Zen adept. So even if you can expound a thousand scriptures and



ten thousand treatises, cause the Buddhas to shed their light, cause the earth to tremble and the sky to shower flowers, this is just the understanding of a professor, not that of a real Zen adept.

So you should not understand in terms of "the world is only mind," and you should not understand in terms of "all things are characteristics of reality." You should not understand in terms of all existence being the essence of buddhahood, nor should you understand in terms of ultimate empty silence.

"The character of reality" is still involved in classification; "all is empty" is the same as decadent nihilism. "All existence" resembles spirit; "only mind" is still not free from conscious cognition. Therefore when those who would seek this matter seek it among the thousands of scriptures and myriads of treatises, unfortunately they are running away from their own progenitor.

So when you open up your own treasury in each case to bring forth the great treasure of the scriptures, you will naturally be able to have the holy teaching as your own. If you do not attain realization in this way, the Buddhas and Zen masters are all your enemies. That is why it is said, "What demon caused you to become a mendicant, what demon made you go traveling? Even if you can say, you will die on the hook; and if you cannot say, you will also die on the hook."

Thus it is said that the renunciation of the world is not for the sake of mind or body. But even though Dhrtaka had understood in this way, he was still not a true adept; he had to have it pointed out to him again before he was greatly enlightened and actually realized it.

So you should work on the Way carefully and continuously: without being literalists, and without interpreting spirituality subjectively, smash the universe completely. Without any obstruction even as you go back and forth between before and after, without any disparity even as you go in and out above and below, digging out a cave in space, rousing waves on level ground, see the face of Buddha, perceive enlightenment clarifying the mind, experience the unity of being and spin the pearl of perfect light—when you know there is something in the inner sanctum of Buddhas and Zen masters, then you will finally attain this.

I want to add a saying to this story:

When you attain the marrow, know the attainment is clear;  
An adept still has an incommunicable subtlety.

## MICCHAKA

Dhrtaka said to Micchaka, "To practice sorcery, thus learning something minor, is like being dragged by a rope. You should know for yourself that if you give up the little stream and immediately return to the great ocean, you will realize the uncreated."

On hearing this, Micchaka realized enlightenment.

Micchaka, who was from central India, was the leader of eight thousand sorcerers. One day he brought his followers to pay respects to the Buddhist master Dhrtaka and said to him, "In the past we both lived in the heaven of purity; I met the sorcerer Asita and learned the methods of sorcery, while you met a fully empowered Buddhist and practiced meditation. Thenceforth our lots differed and we have gone our separate ways, for six eons now."

Dhrtaka said, "Having spent eons apart, what a lesson this is indeed! Now you should give up the false and return to the true, thereby to enter the vehicle of enlightenment."

Micchaka said, "Long ago the sorcerer Asita predicted that after six eons I would meet a fellow student and realize the state of noncontamination. Is not our present meeting due to our past relation? Please be so kind and compassionate as to liberate me."

Dhrtaka then had Micchaka renounce worldliness and accept the Buddhist precepts. At first the other sorcerers were too conceited to follow suit, but then Dhrtaka showed great miraculous powers that inspired them all to seek enlightenment. So they all became mendicants at once.

When the eight thousand sorcerers therefore became eight thousand mendicants and wanted to follow him into homelessness, Dhrtaka said, "The Buddha said that to practice sorcery, studying what is minor, is like being dragged by a rope." Finally, after listening to Dhrtaka, Micchaka attained enlightenment.

Even if by studying sorcery you manage to prolong your life and

attain supernormal powers, you can only comprehend eighty thousand eons past and future—you cannot see before or after that. Even though you cultivate the state in which there is neither perception nor nonperception and enter mindless thoughtless trance, unfortunately you will be born in the heaven beyond thought, become a long-lived celestial being, and still have the flowing stream of habitual consciousness even though you are rid of the material body. You cannot find the Buddha, cannot reach the Way. When the results of that active consciousness are exhausted, you will then fall into uninterrupted hell. That is why this is like being bound and dragged by a rope, so there is no chance of liberation.

Although students of individual Buddhist liberation realize four stages of attainment or individual enlightenment, this is still cultivation of body and mind, practice of the Way in terms of delusion and enlightenment. Because of this, saints of the first stage go through eighty thousand eons before they become freshly inspired universalists, saints of the second stage go through sixty thousand eons before they become freshly inspired universalists, and saints of the third stage go through forty thousand eons before they become freshly inspired universalists. Individually enlightened saints only enter the path of universal enlightenment after ten thousand eons. Although good causes eventually pay off, routine activity is regrettable not ended by this kind of practice. This too is like being dragged by a rope; these are not fundamentally liberated people.

Actually, even though you break up compulsions of views and thoughts with their infinite delusions, so that there is not a particle of material sense to control, not the slightest confusion, this is merely contrived effort and is not the undefiled realization of buddhahood. Therefore all work on the Way that involves returning to the source and going back to the fountainhead, and which looks forward to enlightenment as a rule, is all of this category.

So do not even seek nothingness, for you may become the same as nihilists. You should not remain in the "eon of emptiness, before the primordial Buddha," for this too is to be like a corpse from which the spirit has not yet departed. Do not wish to stop illusions in order to arrive at reality, for this is the same as the saints who cut off ignorance to realize the middle way. This is producing clouds where there are no clouds, producing flaws where there are no flaws—you will

become a destitute vagrant in a foreign country, an impoverished traveler drunk with ignorance.

Think about it. Since you are someone, you speak of before birth and after death; but what further past, present, or future could you think of? Always, without a moment's error, from birth to death it is just thus—but unless you encounter it once, you will vainly be confused by material senses, you will not know your own self. This is estrangement from what is right before your eyes.

Because of this you do not know where body and mind come from, you do not understand where myriad things come from. For no reason you want to eliminate something and seek something else. Thus you cause the Buddhas to bother with appearing in the world, you cause the Zen masters to bother with giving instructions. But even though they lend a hand in giving out instructions this way, you are still deluded by your own knowledge and views, you say that you don't know or don't understand. Yet you are not really ignorant; you are not actually boxed in—you are vainly discriminating views of right and wrong within your thoughts and judgments.

Do you not realize that you respond when called and you get where you are going by following directions? This does not come from deliberate thought or conscious knowledge—it is the host within you. That host has no face or physical features, yet it always moves without stopping. From this the mind comes into being. This is called the body. Once this body appears, various elements combine to form your individual body. It is just like a jewel having luster, like a sound bringing along an echo.

Thus there is never any lack or excess in birth and death. In such birth and death, though birth takes place, there is no beginning of birth, and though death takes place, there is no trace of death. It is like waves arising in the ocean, without any tracks, like the waves never dying out—though they go on and on, they never go anywhere else; it is only as a condition of the ocean that great and small waves arise endlessly.

Your mind is also like this. It moves ceaselessly, and so it appears as skin, flesh, bones, and marrow; it functions as matter, sensation, perception, activity, and consciousness. It also appears as peach blossoms and green bamboo, it realizes enlightenment as attainment of the Way and illumination of the mind, it works as speech and action. Though divided, it is not different; though manifesting and mani-



fested, it does not remain in physical form. It is like a phantom exercising magical arts, it is like dreaming producing all sorts of images. Though myriad reflections in a mirror change in innumerable ways, it is just the same mirror. If you do not realize this, but vainly cultivate sorcery, studying a minor affair, there is no hope of liberation.

No one binds you—how can there be any further liberation? Delusion and enlightenment have never existed; bondage and liberation are irrelevant from the first. Is this not the uncreated? Is this not the ocean? Where are there any small streams?

Lands as many as atoms, as many as atomic particles, are all the ocean of the universe. Valley streams, rushing rapids, swirling rivers—all are movements of the ocean. So there are no small streams to abandon, there is no great ocean to grasp. This being so, all divisions gone of themselves, Micchaka's former views underwent a revolution; he gave up sorcery and abandoned worldliness. This was the activation of a preexisting affinity.

Furthermore, if you study and investigate continuously in this way, you will realize immediate communication by mind and by worlds. Truly this is a close friend meeting a close friend, it is oneself understanding oneself. All float and swim together in the ocean of nature, with never a gap. When you realize this, preexisting affinities must become evident.

The great master Mazu said, "Everyone has always been absorbed in the nature of reality, forever in absorption in the nature of reality, wearing clothing, eating food, speaking and conversing. All senses and capacities in action are none other than the nature of reality."

Hearing this, you should not take it to mean that there are beings within the nature of reality. To say "the nature of reality" and "beings" is like saying "water" and "waves." So in terms of words we may speak of water and waves, but is there really any difference?

Again I have a humble saying to explain this story:

Though there be the purity of the autumn waters  
 Extending to the horizon,  
 How does that compare with the haziness  
 Of a spring night's moon?  
 Most people want clear purity,  
 But though you sweep and sweep,  
 The mind is not yet emptied.



## VASUMITRA

Vasumitra placed a wine vessel in front of Micchaka, bowed, and stood there. Micchaka asked him, "Is this my vessel or yours?" As Vasumitra thought it over, Micchaka said, "If you consider it my vessel, yet it is your inherent nature. Then again, if it is your vessel, you should receive my teaching."

Hearing this, Vasumitra understood the uncreated fundamental nature.

Vasumitra was from northern India, of the Bharadhvaja clan. He always wore clean clothing. He used to wander around the villages carrying a wine vessel, whistling and singing. People thought he was crazy. He did not reveal his clan name.

In the course of his teaching travels, the Buddhist master Micchaka came to northern India. As he looked over a wall, he saw auspicious golden clouds rising, and he said to his followers, "This is the aura of a man of the Way. There must be a great man here, one who is to be my spiritual successor."

Before Micchaka had finished speaking, Vasumitra showed up and asked him, "Do you know what is in my hand?"

Micchaka said, "It is an impure vessel, inappropriate for the pure."

Vasumitra then placed the vessel in front of Micchaka, and finally realized the uncreated fundamental nature. Then the wine vessel suddenly disappeared.

Micchaka then said, "Tell me your name, and I will tell you the past basis of your enlightenment."

Vasumitra replied, "For innumerable eons, even until my birth in this land, my clan has been Bharadhvaja, my name is Vasumitra."

Then Micchaka told him, "My teacher Dhrtaka told me that long ago when the Buddha was traveling in northern India he told Ananda, 'Three hundred years after my death there will be a saint in this country. He will be of the Bharadhvaja clan, his name will be Vasumitra,

and he will be the seventh patriarch of Dhyana.' The Buddha predicted your career; you should leave the mundane."

Hearing this, Vasumitra said, "As I think back to the distant past, I remember that I was once a patron of religion and gave a jeweled chair to a Buddha. That Buddha predicted that I would succeed to sainthood in the religion of Shakyamuni Buddha."

Before he had met Micchaka, Vasumitra carried a wine vessel all the time, never letting go of it. Actually this is a representation. He used this vessel morning and night, employing it without inhibition. Really this represents his being a vessel of the teaching.

This is why he started his study by asking, "Do you know what I have in my hand?"

Even if you understand that "mind is the Way" and that "the body is Buddha," this is still a defiled vessel, and being a defiled vessel is inappropriate for the pure. You may understand that "it encompasses all time" and you may know that "it is forever complete," but all this is a defiled vessel. What past or present are you talking about? What beginning or end are you talking about? Views like this are inappropriate for the pure.

Realizing the impeccability of Micchaka's reasoning, Vasumitra then put aside the wine vessel. This represents his becoming a disciple of Micchaka, the enlightened Buddhist master.

This is why Micchaka asked, "Do you consider this my vessel or your vessel?" There was no question of past or present; it was beyond views of coming and going. At this point, do you think it is I, or do you think it is you?

As Vasumitra was thinking that it is neither "I" nor "you," Micchaka said to him, "If you consider it my vessel, yet it is your inherent nature." So it wasn't Micchaka's vessel. "Then again, if it is your vessel, you should receive my teaching." Therefore it wasn't Vasumitra's vessel either. It is not "my" vessel or "your" vessel, so the vessel itself is not even a vessel. This is why the vessel thereupon disappeared.

This whole story is not something that people today can know. Even if you study so intensely that you arrive at a point where even the Buddhas and Zen masters cannot reach in spite of all their efforts, this will still be a defiled vessel inappropriate for the pure.

Those who are really pure do not even establish purity, so the vessel is not established either. This is why the paths of teacher and

apprentice merge. Because there is no obstacle on the way, "you should receive my teaching." Because "it is your fundamental nature," there is nothing to receive from another, nothing to give to anyone.

When you penetrate in this way, then you can be called a teacher, and you can also be called an apprentice. Therefore the disciple climbs over the head of the teacher, and the teacher descends to the feet of the disciple. At this point there is no duality, no discrimination. Therefore the term vessel no longer applies. The disappearance of the vessel in the story represents the realization of this path.

If you reach this state today, it is not your former body and mind, so you cannot even say it encompasses past and present, much less that it is born and dies, comes and goes. Will you keep skin, flesh, bones, and marrow? This is really a state of empty solidity, without inside or outside.

Again I want to illustrate this story with a saying:

If the frosty dawn's bell rings as it's struck,  
You never need an empty bowl here.

## BUDDHANANDI

When Buddhanandi met the Buddhist master Vasumitra, he said to him, "I have come to discuss meaning with you."

Vasumitra said, "Good man, discussion is not meaning, meaning is not discussion. If you try to discuss meaning, ultimately it is not a meaningful discussion."

Buddhanandi knew that Vasumitra's doctrine was supreme, and he realized the principle of the uncreated.

Buddhanandi was from the state of Kamala. His surname was Gautama. He was extremely eloquent and intelligent.

During his teaching travels, Vasumitra came to Kamala and widely carried out the work of enlightenment. Buddhanandi declared to him, "My name is Buddhanandi, and I want to discuss meaning with you." Vasumitra said, "Good man, discussion is not meaning, meaning is not discussion."

Really true meaning cannot be discussed, and true discussion does not carry any doctrine. Therefore when there is discussion and doctrine, this is not meaningful discussion. That is why Vasumitra said, "If you try to discuss meaning, ultimately it is not a meaningful discussion." In the end there is nothing at all to be considered meaning, nothing at all to be considered discussion.

Even so, "the Buddha does not have two kinds of speech." Therefore seeing the Buddha's body is witnessing the Buddha's tongue. So even if you say that mind and environment are nondual, still this is not true discussion. Thus even if you say there is nothing to say and no principle to reveal, this still does not communicate any meaning. Even if you say nature is reality and mind is absolute, what philosophy is this? And even if you say awareness and objects are both forgotten, still this is not a true statement. Even if awareness and objects are not forgotten, neither is this meaningful. So if you say "guest" and

"host," say "one" and "the same," this is increasingly meaningless discussion.

When you arrive here, even to speak of great Manjusri's speechless nonexplanation is not really a true exposition. And even though Vimalakirti stayed silent on his chair, this was not meaningful discussion either. At this point, even Manjusri misapprehended, and Vimalakirti still said "Wrong." Needless to say, Shariputra, foremost among Buddha's disciples in wisdom, and Maudgalyayana, foremost in extraordinary powers, had not yet even dreamed of seeing the meaning of this, like people born blind who had never seen colors.

Furthermore, the Buddha said, "The buddha nature is something unknown to the individually liberated and the self-enlightened." Even universalists of the tenth stage, seeing a flock of cranes from afar, cannot tell if it is water or a flock of cranes. They think it looks like cranes, but still they are not sure. Even these universalists of the tenth stage still do not see the buddha nature clearly. Yet when they realize, through the Buddha's teaching, the existence of inherent essence, they joyfully say, "We have revolved in birth and death for countless eons without discerning this permanence, because we were confused by selflessness."

Furthermore, even if you say you are detached from perception and have forgotten body and mind, have escaped delusion and enlightenment and left behind defilement and purity, you still cannot see this meaning even in a dream. Therefore do not seek in emptiness, do not seek in form. How much less should you seek in Buddhas and Zen masters.

Furthermore, for long eons now how many times have you gone through birth and death, how many times have you come to produce and destroy mind and body? Some may think that this coming and going in birth and death is a dream, an illusion—what a laugh! What kind of talk is this? Is there something that is born and dies, comes and goes, anyway? What would you call the real human body? What do you call dream illusions?

Therefore you should not understand life and death as empty illusions either, nor should you understand them as true reality. If you understand as empty falsehood or true reality, both of these understandings are wrong when you reach here. Therefore, in this one matter, you must search carefully and thoroughly before you will get it. Do not proudly pretend to emptiness and the absolute and consider it



the realm of suchness. Even if you understand it as pure and clear as still water, and say it is like the absence of defilement or purity in space, you still cannot understand this point.

Zen master Dongshan, studying with Guishan and Yunyan, suddenly became a peer of myriad things and expounded the Dharma with his whole body, yet something was still not right. Because of this, Yunyan reminded him, "This matter should be taken up carefully." Thus he still had doubts remaining. Taking leave of Yunyan to go elsewhere, as he crossed a river he saw his reflection and immediately realized this matter; thereupon he composed a verse:

Do not seek from another,  
 Or you will be estranged from self.  
 I now go on alone,  
 Finding I meet It everywhere.  
 It now is I,  
 I now am not It.  
 One should understand in this way  
 To merge with suchness as is.

Understanding in this way, Dongshan finally became a successor of Yunyan and the founder of the Dongshan school of Zen. Furthermore, not only did he understand the whole body expounding the Dharma; even though he understood that this is true of everything, every land, every phenomenon, all things in all times expounding the Dharma, there was still a point to which he had not attained.

This is even truer of people today who only understand intellectually. They understand that mind is Buddha, they understand that the body is Buddha, yet they do not understand how the Way of Buddhahood should be—they only see the flowers bloom in spring and the leaves fall in autumn, and think that "all things abide in the normal state." This is laughable. If Buddhism were like this, why would the Buddha have appeared in the world? Why would the founder of Zen have come to China?

From Buddha through the Zen masters of China, there is no distinction in the ranks of the enlightened—all of them attained great awakening. If everyone were a literalist, there would be no enlightened adepts. So when you cast aside literalism to study this point, you can become Buddhas and Zen masters yourselves.

Without great enlightenment and great penetration, you are not on

the path of Zen. Therefore one does not abide even in a state of spotless purity, and one does not abide even in a state of empty clarity. This is why an ancient master said, "There should be no traces where you hide, yet you should not hide where there are no traces. In thirty years with my teacher, this is all I learned." This means that spotless purity is not the place to hide, and even if you forget both subject and object you still should not hide here. There is no more past and present to talk about, no delusion or enlightenment to discuss.

When you penetrate in this way, "there are no walls in the ten directions, no gates in the four quarters." Everywhere is free and clear, uncovered and pure. So you should be very thorough; do not be careless.

Today I have a humble saying to explain this story:

Even Manjusri and Vimalakirti could not talk about it,  
Even Maudgalyayana and Shariputra could not see it.  
If people want to understand the meaning themselves,  
When has the flavor of salt ever been inappropriate?

## PUNYAMITRA

Buddhanandi told Punyamitra, "You are more akin to mind than to your parents, incomparably more akin. When your action accords with enlightenment, this is the mind of all Buddhas. If you seek a formal Buddha externally, it bears no resemblance to you. If you want to know your original mind, it is neither together nor separate."

Hearing this, Punyamitra was greatly enlightened.

Punyamitra was from Magadha. When Buddhanandi came to Magadha in the course of his teaching travels, he saw a white light spring up over Punyamitra's house. He said to his followers, "There must be a saint in this house. He does not speak, but he is a true vessel of the universal vehicle. His feet do not walk upon the ground; he only knows the defilement of contact. He will be my successor."

At that moment, the elder of the house came out and asked, "What do you want?"

Buddhanandi said, "I am looking for an attendant."

The elder said, "I have a son who is already fifty years old but has never spoken a single word and has never set foot on the ground."

Buddhanandi said, "If he is as you say, he is truly my disciple."

When Buddhanandi saw Punyamitra, and Punyamitra heard him say this, Punyamitra suddenly got up and bowed. Then he asked this question: "My father and mother are not my kin; who is most akin? The Buddhas are not my path; whose is the supreme path?"

Buddhanandi replied, "You are more akin to mind than to your parents, incomparably more akin. When your action accords with enlightenment, this is the mind of the Buddhas. If you seek a formal Buddha externally, it bears no resemblance to you. If you want to know your original mind, it is neither together nor separate."

When Punyamitra heard this, he walked seven steps. Buddhanandi said, "This man once met a Buddha and made a universal vow. It was

only in consideration of the difficulty of abandoning parental love that he did not speak or walk."

In reality, one's parents are not one's kin, the Buddhas are not one's path. Therefore if you want to know real kinship, it is not to be compared with that of one's parents; if you want to know the real path, it is not to be learned from the Buddhas. The reason for this is that your seeing and hearing do not depend on the eyes and ears of another, your hands and feet do not use the action of another. People are such as they are, and Buddhas are such as they are. If one studies the other, in the end they are not akin—so how could this be considered the path?

Because he maintained this principle, Punyamitra did not say anything or walk anywhere for fifty years. Truly a vessel of the universal vehicle is simply not to be placed in the defilement of contact.

"My parents are not my kin"—these are your words, which thus are akin to your mind. Saying that the Buddhas are not your path, you do not walk—this is your activity that accords with enlightenment. Therefore to seek a formal Buddha outwardly is after all wrong practice.

So the Zen school does not set up words, but only transmits direct pointing, proceeding by means of seeing the essence of mind and realizing enlightenment. Therefore, in causing it to be purely transmitted to let people know it is direct pointing, there is no other model. It is just carried out by having people directly subdue their conceptual faculty and be silent.

This is not a matter of aversion to words or considering silence good; it is to let you know your mind is thus. Like clear water, like space, it is pure, clear, and sparkling clean, harmoniously fluid and unobstructed.

Thus there is nothing revealed outside of one's own mind, there is not a single particle that can veil one's own spirit. The whole being is clear and bright, brighter than pearls and jewels. Even the light of the sun and moon cannot compare to one's own light. Do not compare even the light of a fiery jewel to your own eyes. Have you not heard it said that everyone's light is brighter than a thousand suns shining at once? Those in the dark seek outside, while the illumined do not remain within.

You should contemplate quietly. Within there is nothing to consider akin, outside there is nothing to consider alien.

Even though this is so for all time, do not knock yourself down and pick yourself up. This is why the Zen masters saw each other in person—they just met as such, and there was no big deal besides. This should be clear from this story.

I do not necessarily say it is to be reached by practice and experience, nor that it is to be plumbed by meditative study. I just say that when your mind is completely akin to you, then you are the Path. Outside of this, not seeking a formal Buddha, not seeking a formless Buddha either, in truth we know this—with whom are you together, from whom are you separate? After all it is not a matter of union or separation. Even if you say it is the body, still this is not separate; even if you say it is the mind, still this is not together. Even if you reach this state, do not seek mind outside of body. Even if you come and go in birth and death, this is not the doing of body and mind.

The Buddhas attain enlightenment in all times by maintaining this, and the Zen masters have appeared in India, China, and Japan by maintaining this. You too should maintain this and not consider it beyond you. There is never any error; the causal chain of existence is in fact the turning of the wheel of Buddhism.

When you reach this state, the cycles of existence themselves are the axles of the great vehicle of enlightenment, the karma experienced by living beings is your own livelihood. Even if you say there are sentient and insentient beings, they are just different names for your eyes. Even if you speak of Buddhas and living beings, these are different terms for your mind and intellect. Do not think the mind is superior and the intellect inferior.

In this realm, there are no objects of material sense, no views of mind and phenomena. Therefore everyone is the Path, everything is the mind.

Again I have a humble saying to illustrate this story:

Do not say that words and silence touch upon  
 The remote and subtle;  
 How can there be material senses  
 To defile inherent essence?



## PARSHVA

Parshva attended the Buddhist master Punyamitra for three years, never once going to sleep. One day as Punyamitra was reciting a scripture and came to an exposition of the uncreated, Parshva attained enlightenment on hearing it.

Parshva was from central India. His original name was Durjata. On the eve of his birth, his father dreamed of a white elephant with a jeweled seat on its back. On the seat was a bright jewel with a luster that shone upon all the people. When he awoke, Parshva was born.

When Punyamitra came to central India to teach, a certain elder came to him with his son and said to the Buddhist master, "My son here was in the womb for sixty years, so he is named Durjata, 'Difficult Birth.' I have met a wizard who told me that my son is not an ordinary man, but will become a vessel of Buddhism. Now that I have met you, I would have him leave home." So Punyamitra had him shave his head and receive the Buddhist precepts.

Parshva had been in the womb for sixty years and was eighty years old at the time of this meeting, so in all he was one hundred and forty years old when he set out for enlightenment. He was extremely old, so when he set his heart on enlightenment people told him he was too old, that he was unable either to practice meditation or to recite scriptures.

Listening to these critics, Parshva promised himself that he would not lie down as long as he had not mastered the Buddhist canon and attained higher knowledge. So he studied and recited scriptures by day and meditated by night, never going to sleep. He worked diligently for three years, mindless of fatigue, and finally mastered the canon and attained higher knowledge. One day he heard Punyamitra reciting a scripture expounding the uncreated and attained enlightenment.

You should know that he worked diligently in this way, forgetting

his fatigue, studying and reciting scripture and practicing meditation, as the work of Buddhas and Zen masters. The master Punyamitra also used to recite scripture and expound the uncreated.

This scripture was a scripture of true universalist Buddhism. Although all the Buddhist scriptures are teachings of the Buddha, he did not recite anything but universalist scriptures and did not rely on anything but scriptures of the complete teaching.

These universalist scriptures do not speak of effacing any sense experience, nor do they talk of removing illusions. The scriptures of the complete teaching not only deal exhaustively with noumenon and the inconceivable, they also deal exhaustively with phenomena. Dealing exhaustively with phenomena means explaining everything from the Buddhas' inspiration to their enlightenment and nirvana, expounding the various vehicles of liberation, and telling about their eras, lands, and names. This is what is meant by complete teaching. So you should know the scriptures of Buddha are like this.

Even if you can say a phrase and understand a principle, if the task of your whole life's study is not finished you can hardly be acknowledged as a Buddha or a Zen master. Thus you should work diligently, forget fatigue, awaken an extraordinary will, and carry out extraordinary practice. Examine thoroughly, investigate completely, continuing day and night. Set your resolve, exert your strength to clearly discern the fundamental meaning of the appearance of enlightened teachers in the world, as well as the import of your own responsibility. If you do this all your life without failing to penetrate every principle and consummate its actualization, then you should be Buddhas and Zen masters.

These days, as the Way of the founding teachings of Zen is neglected, and study has no reality to it, people think it is enough when they understand one word or penetrate one principle. I fear they will be among the conceited. Beware!

Have you not heard it said that the Way is like a mountain, higher as you climb, that virtue is like an ocean, deeper as you enter? Enter the depths and search out the bottom; climb the heights and find the summit. Then for the first time you will be true offspring of the lion.

Do not waste your body and mind. Everyone is a vessel of the Way, every day is a good day. It is just that there are people who have penetrated and people who have not penetrated, depending on whether or

not they have carried out careful investigation. It is not necessarily a question of discriminating among people or times either, as the present case attests—Parshva was already over one hundred and forty years old, but because his resolve was single-minded and he worked diligently, mindless of fatigue, ultimately he finished his study in one lifetime.

It is really touching how he spent three years in attendance, without sleeping, in his old age. People these days are lazy, especially when they get old. Thinking far back to the ancient worthies of the distant past, do not consider bitter cold as bitter cold or blistering heat as blistering heat, do not think your physical life will end, do not think your mental powers are insufficient. If you can be like this, you must be one who studies the ancient Way, one who is imbued with the Way. If they study and contemplate the ancients and are imbued with the Way, who would not be Buddhas and Zen masters?

I have already said that he recited scripture. To recite scripture does not necessarily mean that just reciting with your mouth and turning the pages with your hands is actually reciting scripture. Be careful in the house of Buddhas and Zen masters not to waste time in sound and form, not to carry out your activities in the shell of ignorance. When knowledge and wisdom appear everywhere, and the mind ground is always open and clear, this is the way you should "recite scripture." As you practice this way at all times, if you are never dependent, then you will completely realize the uncreated original nature.

Do you not know that we do not come from anywhere even as we are born, and we do not go anywhere even as we die? Born wherever you are, you pass away on the spot; origination and annihilation as time goes by never rest. Therefore birth is not birth, death is not death; and as Zen students, do not keep birth and death hanging on your mind. Do not obstruct yourself by hearing and seeing. Even if it becomes seeing and hearing, becomes sound and form, it is your own storehouse of light.

Emanating light from your eyes, you make arrays of color and form; emanating light from your ears, you hear the buddha work of sounds; emanating light from your hands, you can activate yourself and others; emanating light from your feet, you can walk forward and back.

Again I want to add some humble words to point out this principle:

Turning, turning, how many pages of scripture?

Revolving, revolving, how many scrolls?

Dying here, born there—

Divisions of chapter and verse.

## PUNYAYASHAS

Punyayashas stood before Parshva. Parshva asked him, "Where do you come from?"

Punyayashas said, "My mind is not in movement."

Parshva said, "Where is your abode?"

Punyayashas said, "My mind is not stationary."

Parshva said, "Are you not uncertain?"

Punyayashas said, "The Buddhas were also thus."

Parshva said, "You are not the Buddhas, and the Buddhas also are not so."

Hearing these words, Punyayashas spent three weeks cultivating practice and realized acceptance of the uncreated. He said, "Even the Buddhas are not really so, and neither are you."

Then Parshva accepted him and transmitted the true teaching to him.

Punyayashas was from Kusumapura in Magadha, and his surname was Gautama. When the Buddhist master Parshva first arrived in Kusumapura, he paused to rest under a tree. With his right hand he pointed to the ground and declared to the group, "If this ground turns golden, there will be a sage who will enter the congregation." When he had said this, the earth turned golden in color. Then someone named Punyayashas came and stood before Parshva, as in the story.

Parshva said in verse:

This ground turned gold,  
Foretelling the arrival of a sage.  
You shall sit at the tree of enlightenment  
Where awakening blossoms and becomes complete.

Punyayashas also spoke a verse:

The master sits on golden ground,  
Always expounding the real truth,



Turning the light around to illuminate the self,  
Causing entry into absorption.

Parshva understood what Punyayashas meant, and so he initiated him and transmitted the Buddhist precepts to him.

In the preceding story, Punyayashas was originally a sage, and because of this he said, "My mind is not in motion, my mind is not stationary; the Buddhas are also thus." Yet these are still two views. Why? Because he understood that "my mind is thus" and "the Buddhas are also thus."

Because of this, Parshva "drove off the plowman's ox" and "took away the hungry man's food." Even people who have really found the Way still cannot save themselves completely—why even think of the Buddhas! This is why Parshva said, "You are not the Buddhas." This cannot be known in terms of noumenal essence and cannot be understood in terms of nonform. Therefore it cannot be known by the knowledge of the Buddhas, it cannot be fathomed by one's own perception.

So Punyayashas cultivated practice for three weeks on end after hearing these words, until one day he had a sense of awakening, forgot his own mind, and was liberated from the Buddhas. This is called awakening acceptance of the uncreated. Finally he penetrated this principle, and because there was no inside or outside, he said of his attainment, "Even the Buddhas are not really so, and neither are you."

In reality, the Way of Zen cannot be comprehended in terms of principle, nor understood by mind. Therefore "the body of reality," "the nature of reality," or "myriad things are one mind" cannot be considered ultimate. So it cannot be called the unchanging, and cannot even be understood as purity, much less as empty silence or as the ultimate principle.

Therefore, when they reach this point, the sages of all schools revitalize their original inspiration, reopen the mind ground, directly pass through a way in, and quickly break through their personal views.

This is apparent from the present story. Since Punyayashas was already a sage, when he arrived the ground changed, and the influence of his virtue had the power to awaken people. Nevertheless he still spent three weeks cultivating practice in order to arrive at the point of which I speak. So you should discern clearly, and don't determine the message of Zen based on a little bit of virtue, a little bit of

knowledge, personal views, and old feelings. You must be completely thoroughgoing before you can attain it.

Today I have another humble saying to recapitulate:

My mind is not the Buddhas, and not you either;  
Coming and going has been here all along.

## ASHVAGHOSHA

Ashvaghosha asked Punyayashas, "I want to know Buddha—what is it?"

Punyayashas said, "If you want to know Buddha, it is that which does not know."

Ashvaghosha said, "Since Buddha is not knowing, how can one know it is so?"

Punyayashas said, "Not knowing Buddha, how can one know it is not?"

Ashvaghosha said, "This is the meaning of a saw."

Punyayashas said, "That is the meaning of wood."

Punyayashas also asked, "What is the meaning of a saw?"

Ashvaghosha said, "We come out even."

Ashvaghosha also said, "What is the meaning of wood?"

Punyayashas said, "You are cut apart by me."

At this Ashvaghosha was greatly enlightened.

Ashvaghosha was from Banaras. He was also called by a name meaning Excellence of Virtue, because he excelled in created and uncreated virtues. He went to the Buddhist master Punyayashas and first asked, "I want to know Buddha—what is it?" Punyayashas said, "You want to know Buddha? It is what does not know."

Really what one should seek out first in Zen study is the Buddha. All the Buddhas of past, present, and future, and the Zen masters of every generation, are all called people studying Buddha; if they do not study Buddha, they are all called outsiders.

So it is not to be sought by way of sound, not to be sought or perceived by form or signs. Therefore the thirty-two marks of greatness and eighty kinds of refinement are not enough to be considered Buddha. That is why Ashvaghosha asked, "I want to know Buddha—what is it?"

Punyayashas pointed out, "You want to know Buddha? That which

does not know is it." That which does not know is none other than Ashvaghosha. Whether before he knew or after he knew, there was no different responsibility, no different appearance. So from ancient times until now it is just thus, sometimes bearing the thirty-two marks of greatness, replete with eighty kinds of refinement, or wearing three heads and eight arms, immersed in the degeneration and misery of the world, sometimes wearing fur and bearing horns, sometimes burdened with fetters and chains, always in the world taking care of one's own actions, appearing and disappearing within one's own mind, wearing different faces.

Therefore, though born, one does not know what it is, and though dying, one does not know what it is. Though you try to assign a form, it is not a thing that can be constructed; though you try to affix a name, it cannot be defined either. Therefore, from eon to eon, totally unknown, it follows and accompanies oneself, yet one does not discern it at all.

Hearing the foregoing story, many interpret it in this way: "When there is any knowing in any way, this goes against buddhahood. When there is no knowing and no discernment, then this must be buddhahood." If you understand this "not knowing" in such a way, why would Punyayashas have taken so much trouble to explain as he did? It is just the same way in going from darkness to darkness—because it is not this way at all, he directly pointed out that "the one not knowing is it."

Ashvaghosha still did not understand what was now indicated to him. Therefore he said, "If the Buddha does not know, how can one know it is so?" Punyayashas retorted, "Not knowing Buddha, how could you know it is not Buddha?" It is not to be sought outside—the one not knowing is Buddha—should one say it is not so?

Then Ashvaghosha said, "This is the meaning of a saw." Punyayashas said, "That is the meaning of wood." Punyayashas again asked, "What is the meaning of a saw?" Ashvaghosha said, "We come out even." Ashvaghosha then asked, "What is the meaning of wood?" Punyayashas said, "You are cut apart by me." At this Ashvaghosha was greatly awakened.

Truly you are thus and I am thus. Opening up fully, Ashvaghosha imparted it with both hands. You and I do not take on a single dot, I and you do not depend on the slightest bit of anything—therefore we

come out even, like a two-man saw. Therefore he said, "This is the meaning of a saw."

But Punyayashas said, "That is the meaning of wood." Why? In an endless expanse of 'darkness, there is no knowledge at all—not a dot is added, not a single bit of knowledge is used. Like a piece of wood, like a pillar, being mindless one is thus. Ultimately there is nowhere to discriminate. Because Ashvaghosha understood this way, Punyayashas said, "That is the meaning of wood."

But with such an understanding Ashvaghosha still had habits remaining and did not know what the teacher meant. At this, Punyayashas went down into the weeds out of compassion and proceeded to ask what he meant by a saw. Ashvaghosha said, "We come out even." Then Ashvaghosha spoke again on his own, asking what Punyayashas meant by wood. Punyayashas again gave him a hand and imparted it to him, saying, "You are cut apart by me."

At this, the paths of teacher and apprentice communed, feelings of past and present were broken; in the middle of a dream he made a road, walking along in emptiness. This is why Punyayashas said, "You are cut apart by me." At this point the frozen bond of mindlessness suddenly melted, and Ashvaghosha left his nest of clarity, greatly opening up to enlightenment.

Punyayashas said to the assembly, "This great man was a king of Vaisali in ancient times. In his country certain people went naked like horses. Using supernatural powers, the king multiplied his body and turned into silkworms so that they could have clothing. That king later was reborn in central India; the horse people, longing for him, cried sadly. Therefore he was called Ashvaghosha, 'Horse Cry.' The Buddha predicted, 'Six hundred years after my death there will be a wise man named Ashvaghosha; refuting the Hindus in Banaras, he will liberate many people. He will liberate countless people and succeed me in transmitting the teaching.' This is now that time." So saying, Punyayashas entrusted to him the Buddha's treasury of the eye of true teaching.

The point of this story should not be wrongly taken to be not knowing anything, where there is no cognition or sense. So even if you are unknowing, see thoroughly and contemplate thoroughly where there is not yet an embryo conceived; even though you look for the Buddha's face or the face of the Zen masters, you cannot find



them. Even though you look for human faces, ghosts or animals, you cannot find them.

This is not unchanging, yet it is not moving. It has never been void; there is no question of inside or outside, no separation of absolute and relative. Realize that this truly is your own original face: even if it appears as ordinary or holy, even if it divides into objective and subjective experiences, all comes and goes completely within it, all arises and vanishes herein. It is like the water of the ocean making waves; though they rise again and again, never is any water added. It is also like waves dying away; though they die out and vanish, not a drop is lost.

In the human and celestial realms, this has temporarily come to be called "the Buddhas," come to be called ghosts and animals. It is like temporarily displaying a multitude of faces on one face. If you consider it the face of Buddha, it is not so; and if you consider it the face of a ghost, that is not so either.

Yet the work of teaching has come down through questioning and answering; cultivating phantom meditation, it does buddha work in a dream. Thus the magical arts of teaching in India continue to the present, circulating through India, China, and Japan, turning ordinary people into sages. If you can evolve and practice in this way, then you will not be disappointed by your own faults, and you will not be deluded by your own birth and death. Then you will be real Zennists.

I have another saying to illustrate this story:

The red of the village is not known to the peach blossoms,  
Yet they made an ancient Zen master reach certainty.

## KAPIMALA

Ashvaghosha, expounding the ocean of buddha nature, said, "The mountains, rivers, and earth are all established on it; all insights and mental powers appear from here."

Hearing this, Kapimala believed and understood it, and was awakened.

Kapimala was from Pataliputra. He used to be a Hindu guru with three thousand followers and was conversant with all the different philosophies.

When Ashvaghosha was teaching in Pataliputra, suddenly an old man collapsed in front of the seat. Ashvaghosha said to the assembly, "This is not an ordinary kind of man; he must have some unusual characteristics." When Ashvaghosha had spoken, the old man disappeared and a golden man sprang up out of the earth. Then he again changed, into a girl; with her right hand she pointed to Ashvaghosha and said in verse:

I bow to the venerable elder,  
To receive the Buddha's prophecy.  
Now on this land  
The ultimate truth should be spread.

After speaking this verse, she disappeared.

Ashvaghosha said, "There will be a demon who will come to have a contest of power with me." After a while heavy wind and rain came, and the sky and earth were darkened. Ashvaghosha said, "This is evidence of the coming of the demon. I should get rid of it." Then as he pointed into the sky, a huge golden dragon appeared, displayed its awesome power, and caused the mountains to tremble. Ashvaghosha sat still on his seat; the demon's tricks then vanished.

After seven days there was a tiny mite that concealed itself under the preaching seat; Ashvaghosha picked it up in his hand, showed it

to the assembly, and said, "This is a transformation of the demon—it is just stealing an audience of my teaching." Then when he let it go, the demon could not move.

Ashvaghosha said to it, "If you would take refuge in the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community, you would attain supernatural powers." The demon then returned to its original form, bowed, and repented.

Ashvaghosha asked him, "What is your name? How many followers do you have?"

He answered, "My name is Kapimāla, and I have three thousand followers."

Ashvaghosha asked, "How is it when you use all your magical power to produce a display?"

Kapimāla said, "To produce an ocean is a very small thing for me."

Ashvaghosha said, "Can you produce the ocean of essential nature?"

Kapimāla said, "What do you call the ocean of essential nature? I have no knowledge of it."

Ashvaghosha then explained the ocean of essential nature to him, saying, "The mountains, rivers, and earth are all established on it; all insights and mental powers appear from here." Kapimāla then believed and understood.

From the time the old man fell on the ground to the time he turned into a mite, he had actually manifested supernatural powers countless times. As he said, to produce an ocean was a small matter for him. But even though he manifested supernatural powers without end, turning oceans into mountains and mountains into oceans, still he did not know even the name of the ocean of essential nature, let alone produce or transform it. Furthermore, since he had no realization of what that is of which the mountains, rivers, and earth are manifestations, Ashvaghosha explained that they are transformations of the ocean of essential nature. Not only that, all insights and psychic powers are manifested from this.

Immeasurable states of concentration such as the Heroic March, in which one can enter any state at will, and the supernormal faculties such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, and so on, have no beginning and no end. This is what is meant by the saying, "Three times three in front, three times three in back." Just when this establishes the mountains, rivers, and earth, concentration transmutes into earth,

water, fire, and air, and also into mountains, rivers, plants, and trees. It also turns into skin, flesh, bones, and marrow, and also into body and limbs. Not a single thing, not a single phenomenon, has ever come from outside.

Thus there is no wasted time or effort twenty-four hours a day, no appearance of countless births and deaths in vain. Therefore seeing has no limit, hearing has no limit either; such seeing and hearing perhaps not even buddha knowledge can assess. Is this not produced of the ocean of essential nature?

Thus everything, every particle, is boundless reality and does not come within the scope of number or measure at all. This is the ocean of essential nature; that is why it is thus.

Furthermore, to see the body now is to see the mind, to know the mind is to realize the body. There is no duality at all in mind and body; how could you divide essence and characteristics?

Even if Kapimala manifested miracles in a non-Buddhist way, while this is not beyond possibility, still he did not know himself that this is the ocean of essential nature. Because of this he was confused about himself and doubted others. Moreover, since he did not know all existences, he was not at all one who had arrived at the root. When he matched powers, he lost, so ultimately his demonic powers were exhausted and he could not produce any more wonders. Finally he gave up his ego and became Ashvaghosha's disciple, ceasing contention and revealing what is right.

So even if you understand the mountains, rivers, and earth, do not get uselessly tied up in sound and form. Even if you clarify your own original nature, still do not dwell in conscious knowledge. Yet conscious knowledge too is one or two faces of Buddha, of Zen mastery: as we say, "Walls and shards are It."

The original nature is not bound by perception or knowledge; it does not depend on movement or stillness. But when the ocean of nature is established, of course movement and stillness, coming and going, after all never cease—they appear simultaneously with skin, flesh, bones, and marrow.

If you talk about the root basis, even appearing as seeing and hearing, appearing as sound and form, there is nothing to do for another. So when you strike space it echoes, and thus all sounds are manifested; transforming emptiness to manifest myriad things is why shapes and forms are so various.

Therefore you should not think that emptiness has no form, or that emptiness has no sound. When you furthermore investigate carefully on reaching this point, it cannot be considered void and it cannot be considered existent either. Therefore it is not to be considered something in concealment or revelation, or something with selfhood and otherhood.

What do you call other, what do you call self? This is like space, where there is not a single thing, like the ocean, where all waters appear. Throughout all time, it has never changed; how could going and coming have separate roads?

Therefore, revelation adds nothing and concealment causes no loss. The conglomeration of many elements forms this body. Obliterating myriad things, we go on to speak of one mind. Therefore understanding the Way and realizing the mind should not be sought externally at all.

But if the scenery of your own original ground just becomes manifest, others call this a human face, or a ghost, or an animal. An ancient Zen master said, "If you want to understand this matter, here I am like an ancient mirror; when a foreigner comes a foreigner is reflected, when a native comes a native is reflected."

This is all magical concentration, so it has no beginning or ending limits. Therefore, when it establishes the mountains, rivers, and earth, it all depends on this; manifesting insights and powers too depends on this. So you should not see even an inch of the whole earth as being outside your own mind. Do not put even a drop of river water outside the ocean of nature.

Again I would like to add a humble saying:

Even if the enormous waves flood the skies,  
When has the water of the pure ocean ever changed?



## NAGARJUNA

When Kapimala answered the invitation of the Naga king, he received a wish-fulfilling jewel. Nagarjuna asked, "This is the ultimate jewel of the world; does it have form, or is it formless?"

Kapimala said, "You only know of having form or not; you do not know that this jewel neither has form nor is formless. And you do not yet know that this jewel is not a jewel."

Hearing this, Nagarjuna was profoundly enlightened.

Master Nagarjuna was a man of western India. He was known by the names Dragonic Ferocity and Supreme Dragon. In his time, Kapimala, having been ordained and having received the transmission of Buddhism, came to western India. There was a prince there who respected the name of the Buddhist master Kapimala and invited him to his palace and presented him with offerings.

Kapimala said, "The Buddha has a teaching that monks should not approach the house of kings, ministers, and politicians."

The prince said, "North of our capital city is a huge mountain, in which there is a stone cave. Would the master meditate in peace there?"

Kapimala agreed. When he had gone a couple of miles into the mountains, he encountered a huge python. Kapimala went straight ahead, paying no attention to it, but the python came and finally encircled the Buddhist master. Kapimala then administered Buddhist initiation to the snake, and it left.

As Kapimala was about to reach the cave, an old man dressed in white came out to greet him. Kapimala asked him where he lived, and the old man said, "In former times when I was a monk I very much enjoyed quietude, and lived alone in the mountain forests. There was a novice monk who used to come and ask for instruction, and I, feeling it troublesome to reply, produced thoughts of anger and resentment. After I died I became a python and have lived in this cave

for a thousand years. Now that I have chanced to meet you and gotten to hear the initiatory teachings, I have just come to thank you."

Kapimala then asked who else was living in those mountains. The python said, "Several miles north of here there is a great man named Nagarjuna who always preaches to a crowd of Nagas. I also listen."

Kapimala finally went there with his followers. Nagarjuna came out and greeted the Buddhist master, saying, "The deep mountains are lonely and desolate, a place where Nagas dwell. Why have you, a great sage, a supremely honorable one, bent your steps here?"

Kapimala said, "I am not the supremely honorable one. I have come to visit this wise man."

Nagarjuna thought silently, "Has this teacher attained certainty and clearly illumined the eye of enlightenment? Is he a great sage continuing the true Way?"

Kapimala said, "Even though you are speaking in your heart, I already know it in my mind. Just take care of renunciation of worldly ties—why worry about whether I am a sage or not?"

Hearing this, Nagarjuna repented and became a renunciate. Kapimala ordained him, and the community of Nagas also received the Buddhist precepts.

After that, Nagarjuna followed Kapimala for four years. Kapimala answered an invitation of the Naga king, who presented him with a precious wish-fulfilling jewel. Nagarjuna then initiated the dialogue about the ultimate jewel and was finally deeply enlightened.

Nagarjuna had studied different paths and had supernormal powers. He often went to the palace of the Nagas and read the scriptures of the seven prehistorical Buddhas. As soon as he saw the title he would immediately know the heart of the scripture. He always taught a group of five hundred Nagas.

The Naga kings Nanda, Bhadrananda, and others were all enlightened beings; they had all received the bequest of the former Buddhas and kept their scriptures in storage. Now that the affinity of humanity with the scriptural teachings of the great Shakyamuni Buddha is virtually exhausted, all of them should be stored in the Naga palace.

Even though Nagarjuna had such great powers and used to converse with the great Naga kings, he still was not a truly enlightened man—he was just studying outside paths. Only after he became the disciple of the Buddhist master Kapimala did he have the wide-open clear eye. So everyone thinks that Nagarjuna was not only a Zen an-

cestor, he was also the ancestor of various schools. The Shingon school also considers him an original patriarch, the Tendai school also considers him an ancestor, and so do diviners and silk growers and others.

The fact is that although he learned all the arts in the past, after he had become a Buddhist master the disciples he abandoned still considered Nagarjuna as their own predecessor. These are demons and animals who mix up the true and false and do not distinguish jewels from pebbles. When it comes to Nagarjuna's Buddhist teaching, only Kanadeva got the true transmission—the rest were all schools that he had abandoned. This can be known from the present story.

Nagarjuna asked, "This jewel is the ultimate treasure of the world; does it have form, or is it formless?" In reality, Nagarjuna knew to begin with. Do you consider it to have form? Do you consider it formless? He was clinging uncertainly to the views of existence and non-existence; that is why Kapimāla taught him as he did.

Actually, even if it is a worldly jewel, when you talk about its true reality it is not formed or formless—it is just a jewel. Moreover, the jewel stuck in the wrestler's forehead, the jewel in the king's topknot, the Naga king's jewel, and the jewel inside the drunken man's robe—scriptural metaphors for inherent buddha nature—are not within the view of others, so it is difficult to discern whether or not they have form. Yet these jewels are all mundane jewels, not the ultimate jewel of the Way. Needless to say he could not know this jewel is not even a jewel. Truly we must be careful.

Zen master Xuansha said, "The whole body is a jewel—who would you inform?" He also said, "The whole universe is a single bright jewel." Really this cannot be discerned by human views. Even though it be a mundane jewel, it does not come from outside—all appears from people's own minds.

Therefore Indra, king of gods, used it as a wish-fulfilling jewel. When sick, if you apply this jewel to the ailing part the sickness disappears. When troubled, if you put this jewel on your head the trouble spontaneously disappears. Supernatural powers and magical displays also depend on this jewel.

Among the seven treasures of a ruling monarch there is a wish-fulfilling jewel from which all rare treasures are born. Its use is infi-

nite. In this way there are differences according to the ordinary and higher psychological states of human experience.

The wish-fulfilling jewel of the human world is also called a grain of rice. This is called a precious gem. Compared to the jewels in the heavens, this is considered artificial, yet it is called a jewel. Moreover, when Buddhism dies out, the relics of Buddha will become wish-fulfilling jewels raining everywhere; they will also become grains of rice to help people.

Even if it appears as a Buddha body, as grains of rice, as myriad phenomena, or as a single jewel, as one's own mind manifests it becomes a body five feet tall, it becomes a three-headed figure, it becomes a body wearing fur and horns, it becomes all kinds of forms. So then you should discern that mind jewel.

Do not live secluded in mountain forests seeking peace and quiet like that ancient monk. Really this is a mistake that has been made in the past, and in recent times also, by those who have not yet realized enlightenment. Still people say that mixing with others, studying in all activities, is not tranquil, so they want to live alone in the mountain forests and quietly sit in meditation to carry out the Way. Those who say this and then hide in the mountains, practicing wrongly, mostly get into aberrations because of this. If you want to know why, it is because they do not know reality and they vainly put themselves first.

People like this say, "Zen master Damei sat among the pines and mist with a miniature shrine on his head; Zen master Guishan also practiced in the clouds and mists with tigers and wolves for companions. We too should practice this way." This is really laughable. You should know that the ancients practiced this way while awaiting appropriate conditions to teach, in order to mature their work on the Way after having become enlightened and received the approval of a true teacher. Damei received the true seal of Mazu, and Guishan received the transmission of Baizhang—it was after their enlightenment that they lived alone in the mountains, it was not what the ignorant envision.

People of ancient times like Yinshan and Luoshan did not live alone before they had attained enlightenment. They were real people who had realized the Way, great sages with clear eyes, whose virtuous conduct was great in their time, and who left their fame to latter ages. If you live in the mountains while neglecting to investigate what you



should investigate and failing to arrive where you should arrive, you will be like monkeys. This is a serious lack of the spirit of the Way.

If people just practice to train themselves, they become followers or conditionally enlightened; they will become spoiled seed for naught. Spoiled seed means they are scorched seed, in that they cut off the seed of buddhahood.

Therefore, after you have practiced Zen carefully and thoroughly in a community, having studied with one who knows for a long time, when the great matter is thoroughly clear and you have just about finished clarifying and mastering yourself, you may say that deepening the roots and strengthening the stems for a while is the teaching imparted by the ancient masters. But Dogen, the founder of our Zen school, proscribed living alone. This was to prevent people from aberration. His successor Ejo said, "My disciples should not live alone. Even if you have attained the Way, you should cultivate and refine it in a community. Needless to say, those who are still studying should not live alone. Anyone who goes against this rule is not a member of my school."

Zen master Yuanwu also said, "After they had attained the essence of Zen, the ancients would live in the mountains for ten or twenty years, forgetting all about human society, forever forsaking the realm of dust. In these times we cannot presume to aspire to this."

Huanglong Huinan said, "Rather than grow old in the mountain forests preserving the Way by yourself, is it not better to guide people in a community?"

The great Zen masters of recent eras have all disapproved of living alone. Especially since people's faculties and capacities are all inferior to those of ancient times, they should just stay in communities to practice, refine, and master the Way. Even one of the ancients was so heedless that he wrongly indulged in peace and quiet to the extent that when a new student came to ask him for help, he did not reply when he should have, getting angry instead. So we know that his body and mind were not yet harmonized. If you live alone apart from your teacher, even if you can preach like Nagarjuna, you will still be making some kind of retribution for your actions.

You have been able to hear the right teaching of Buddha because you have planted roots of goodness. The teaching says not to approach kings and politicians, but do not therefore wish to live alone unencumbered. Just progress diligently on the work of the Way, and



single-mindedly pierce through the source of the Dharma. This is the real teaching of the Buddha.

Today I have a humble saying to bring out the preceding story:

The solitary light, aware space, is always free from darkness;  
The wish-fulfilling jewel distributes its shining radiance.

## KANADEVA

Kanadeva visited the great master Nagarjuna. Knowing he was a man of wisdom, Nagarjuna sent an attendant out to place a bowl full of water in front of Kanadeva just as the latter was about to reach the gate. Nagarjuna then watched to see what Kanadeva would do. Kanadeva placed a needle on the surface of the water and brought it with him to meet Nagarjuna. Happily they had a meeting of minds.

Kanadeva was from southern India. He used to perform rituals for good fortune, propitiatory rites for blessings; he also enjoyed philosophy, rhetoric, and debate.

In the course of his teaching travels after having attained Buddhist enlightenment, Nagarjuna came to southern India. Many people there believed in performing rites for blessings. Hearing Nagarjuna explain the subtle truth for them, they said to one another, "For people to have done things to merit blessings is what is most important in the world. He talks nonsense about 'enlightened nature,' but who can see this nature?"

Nagarjuna said, "Do you want to see the enlightened nature? First you must get rid of your conceit."

They said, "Is the enlightened nature large or small?"

Nagarjuna said, "The enlightened nature is not large or small, and wide or narrow. It has no blessing, no retribution; it is undying and unborn."

Seeing how superior his doctrine was, they all changed their minds.

A man of great knowledge among them, Kanadeva, visited Nagarjuna, and they ultimately attained accord. Then Nagarjuna shared the teaching seat with him just as Guatama Buddha had done with Kas-yapa on Spiritual Mountain. Nagarjuna then expounded the teaching for them by manifesting the form of the full moon. Master Kanadeva said to the crowd, "This is the teacher manifesting the essential form

of the enlightened nature to show us. How do we know? Because signless, formless absorption is like the full moon; the meaning of the buddha nature is wide-open clarity." When Kanadeva had finished speaking, the sphere disappeared; reappearing, Nagarjuna spoke the following verse:

Body manifests the full moon symbol  
 To represent the body of all Buddhas.  
 The teaching has no such shape;  
 Thereby we discern it is not sound or form.

Thus teacher and apprentice were indistinguishable and the lifeline flowed through.

The foregoing event is not ordinary. Kanadeva united with the Way at the very first: Nagarjuna did not have a word of explanation, and Kanadeva did not have a word of inquiry. Therefore the existence of "teacher" and "apprentice" could hardly be maintained—how could "guest" and "host" be distinguished?

Thereafter Kanadeva especially upheld and expounded the religious way, and eventually it was known throughout India as the Deva school. It was, as it is said, like "piling snow in a silver bowl, hiding a heron in the moonlight."

Because it was like this, when they first saw each other a bowl full of water was immediately placed before the seat—could inside and outside exist? Since it was a full bowl, there was no lack. This is also still water, absolutely clear, pure throughout. Expansive, filling, it is aware and radiant. Therefore Kanadeva put a needle on the water and met with understanding.

It is necessary to reach the very bottom and the very top. There is no absolute or relative. Reaching this point, teacher and apprentice can hardly be distinguished: when you array them, they're not the same; when you mix them together, there are no traces.

This matter is manifested by the raising of eyebrows and blinking of eyes; this matter is shown by seeing color and hearing sound. Therefore there is nothing to name sound and color, no seeing or hearing to abandon. Round and bright, without form, it is like the transparency of clear water. It is like penetrating through the spiritual noumenon and seeking the spiritual sword. The point appears everywhere; clear and bright, it pervades the mind. Water too pierces mountains with its flow and inundates the skies; and a needle pene-

trates a bag and pierces a seed. Yet water is after all not destroyed by anything—how could there be any tracks made in it? And a needle, to other things, is harder than a diamond.

Are this needle and water anything else but your body and mind? When swallowing up, it is just a needle; when spitting out, it is clear water. Therefore the paths of teacher and apprentice arrive together, fulfilled together, there being no self or other at all. Therefore, when the lifeline goes right through and there is open clarity, it cannot be hidden in the ten directions; it is like squash vines entwining squashes—they cling and entwine—it is just that there is only one's own mind.

Furthermore, even if you have gotten to know the clear water, you should feel it carefully and clearly realize there is a needle in it. If you drink it by mistake, it will cut your throat.

Yet even though it be so, do not entertain a dualistic understanding. Just swallow up, spit out, and think carefully and thoroughly. Even if you feel clear and pure, empty and fluid, right then there must be a pervading firmness—the disasters of water, fire, and wind cannot impinge upon it, nor will the eons of becoming, subsistence, decay, and emptiness affect it.

I have another humble saying to explain this story:

One needle fishes all the waters of the ocean,  
Wherever it goes, the ferocious dragon can hardly conceal its  
body.

## RAHULATA

In attendance on Kanadeva, Rahulata experienced enlightenment on hearing about a past cause.

Rahulata was from Kapilavastu. As for the past cause, after Kanadeva had been liberated and was traveling around teaching, he came to Kapilavastu; there was a rich man there named Brahmashuddhaguna, in whose garden a fungus grew on a tree one day, a fungus like a mushroom, with an exceedingly fine flavor. Only the elder and his second son Rahulata partook of it. After they ate it, it regrew, and when it was gone it sprouted again. Yet the other members of the family could not see it. At that time, Kanadeva knew the past cause of this phenomenon, and he went to that house. The elder asked him the reason, and Kanadeva said, "In your house once in the past you gave offerings to a monk, and that monk's perception of the Way was not yet clear. Because he was receiving alms in vain, he became a tree fungus to repay. Since only your son and you provide offerings with pure sincerity, you have been able to partake of it, not so the others."

Kanadeva also asked the elder how old he was. The man said he was seventy-nine years old. Kanadeva then spoke a verse:

Entering the Way, if one does not penetrate truth,  
 One returns one's body to requite the alms of the faithful.  
 When your years are eight-one,  
 The tree will not grow ears.

After hearing this verse, the rich man was even more respectful. He said, "I am old and feeble and unable to serve you, but please let me give up my second son to follow you as a renunciate." Kanadeva said, "The Buddha prophesied the appearance of this child; he said that in the second five hundred years there would be a great master of the teaching. Our meeting now is the fulfillment of a past cause."



Then Kanadeva shaved Rahulata's head, and Rahulata eventually became a Zen master.

In ancient and modern times, this story has often been brought up to admonish students who vainly mix in with the pure flow without shame or conscience, who wastefully accept the charity of the faithful without having any knowledge or discernment. Really one should be ashamed of this. As monks we have abandoned home and entered the Way—even our dwelling place is not our land, and what we eat is not ours at all, what we wear is not earned by our own labor. Not even a drop of water or a blade of grass is to be exploited. Why? Because you people are all born and raised by the land, and all the land and waters in the country belong to the sovereign. Therefore, if you live at home you serve your parents, and if you work for the nation you serve the ruler. At such a time heaven and earth give protection, and you naturally receive the benefit of the sun and shade energies. So if you make a halfhearted claim to seek the Buddha's teaching, and don't serve your parents and rulers as you should serve them, how will you requite the debt of gratitude to your parents who bore and raised you, and to the sovereign, the rivers, and the earth? If you enter the Way but do not have the eye of the Way, if you do not have enlightened vision, you should be called thieves, plunderers of the country.

You say you have already abandoned sentiment, entered nondoing, and left the world, so after having become mendicants you don't pay respects to your parents and civil leaders. Having adopted the guise of Buddhists, you rest your bodies in the pure stream. Even though you say you receive that which is given by women and children, this is not the same as receiving it while in ordinary life—it is alms given in faith. And as an ancient said, if your eye of enlightenment is not yet clear it is hard to chew through even a single grain of rice, but when your eye of enlightenment is clear and bright, even if you had space for a bowl and a mountain of rice, even if you partook of it every day and night, you would not be beholden to the faithful for their alms. But you don't pay attention to whether or not your eye of enlightenment is complete. Having become mendicants in the wrong way, you think you will receive offerings from people, and if offerings are scarce you look to humanity in vain.

Think about it—when you left home and parted from your native places, you hadn't a grain of provisions stored, and you weren't wearing a single thread: you roamed alone and exposed. You should just

devote your body to the purpose of the eye of truth and give up your body for the purpose of the Way. Should beginning aspirants vainly do anything for the sake of fame and profit, or for food and clothing?

So it is not necessary to ask about others—just look back on your very first determination of mind; look into yourself and see what is right and what is not right. This is why it is said that it is hard to be as careful of the end as of the beginning. If they would really be as beginners, who would not become people of the Way?

Thus, even though they all become monks and nuns, people uselessly become plunderers of the nation. How is that so? The monk of ancient times in the present story requited his debt by not regressing in practice even though his eye of enlightenment was not yet clear. Thus he even became a tree mushroom for this reason. As for the likes of monks nowadays, when your one life is about to end, the king of death cannot release you. Today's gruel and rice may become molten iron or iron pills, and when you ingest them your body and mind will be inflamed.

Zen master Yunfeng Yue said, "Haven't you heard how one of our spiritual ancestors said, 'Having entered the Path, if you don't penetrate the principle you should turn over your body to pay back the donations of the faithful.' This is something definitely certain, ultimately not false. Elders, be careful of time—time doesn't wait for anyone. Don't wait until the morning when the light of your eyes falls to the ground and you begin to die. If you don't have a sieve's worth of accomplishment in the field of monkhood, you'll fall into the pains of a hundred punishments, enclosed by iron mountains. Don't say I didn't tell you."

Good people, we have been lucky enough to meet the true teaching of Buddha. This is more rare than meeting a tiger in the middle of a city. It is supposed to be rarer yet than the single blooming of the udumbara flower, which blooms once in three thousand years. Concentrating carefully and investigating thoroughly, you need the eye of the Way to be pure and clear.

Don't you see today's story? Don't say "sentient" and "insentient," don't divide into objective and subjective. The monk of a former life had become the wood fungus of today. When it was a mushroom it didn't know it had been a monk, and when he was a monk he didn't know he had appeared as myriad things. So now as a sentient being he has a little cognitive awareness.

But though he has some sense of discernment, he is still not different from a wood mushroom. Why? The mushroom's not knowing you is ignorance, is it not? Your not knowing the mushroom is just the same. Because of this there is distinction between the animate and inanimate, the sentient and insentient, there are distinctions in subjective and objective states. When you clarify yourself, what would you call animate and what inanimate? It is not past, future, or present; not senses, objects, or consciousness. There is no one to stop and nothing stopped either, no self-doing and no other-doing. You should really investigate very thoroughly and see it with body and mind shed.

Don't vainly be proud of having become a monk in form; don't wrongly stop at having left the ordinary household. Even if you avoid the flood, you'll be bothered by the fire. Even if you break away from mundane turmoil, it is still unavoidable even in buddhahood—so how much the more so for those who are not like this, who pursue things and are confused by others, who are like light hairs or floating dust, running east and west, rising and falling to court and country, their feet not walking on real ground, their hearts not having arrived at truth. Such people not only cheat away one life, they will go on passing ages in vain.

Don't you know that from ancient times until now there has never been error, there has been no obstruction? You don't yet know of it—that is why you become floating dust for naught. If you do not finish today, until when will you wait?

I have a humble saying to expound the foregoing story:

What a pity the eye of the Way is not clear—  
Losing himself, repaying others, his retribution isn't ended.

## SANGHANANDI

Sanghanandi's mind was opened when he heard Rahulata say to him in verse,

Because I no longer have self,  
You should see my self;  
Since you take me as your teacher,  
Know that I am not my self.

Master Sanghanandi was the son of King Ratnavyuha of Shravasti. He was able to speak as soon as he was born. He always praised Buddhist works. When he was seven years old he was already weary of the pleasures of the world, and declared to his parents, "I bow to my great loving father, and salute my bone and blood mother: I now want to leave home, and hope for your compassion."

But his parents sternly forbade him to leave home. In protest, he stopped eating, so then they allowed him to become a monk while staying at home. They also had a monk become his teacher. For nineteen years he never regressed or flagged in his efforts, but he thought to himself, "Living physically in the royal palace, how can I be considered a mendicant, a leaver of home?"

One night a celestial light shone down; he happened to see an even road, and unconsciously began to walk slowly on it. After a few miles he came to the front of a huge cliff. There was a cave there, in which he rested peacefully.

His father the king, having lost his son, cast out the monk who was teaching him, sending him out of the country to look for his son. The monk was unable to find Sanghanandi.

Ten years later the Buddhist master Rahulata came to Shravasti on his teaching journeys. There was a river there called Golden Waters, the taste of its water exceptionally fine. The images of the five meditation Buddhas appeared in midstream, and Rahulata said to his

group, "At the source of this river, about five hundred miles away, there lives a sage named Sanghanandi. The Buddha predicted that a thousand years after his death Sanghanandi would succeed to the ranks of the saints."

So saying, Rahulata led his students upriver, and there they found Sanghanandi sitting peacefully in a state of concentration. The Buddhist master and his group watched him, and after twenty-one days he finally arose from stillness.

Rahulata asked Sanghanandi, "Is your body stabilized or is your mind stabilized?" He replied, "Body and mind are both stabilized." Rahulata said, "If the body and mind are both stabilized, how is it that there are exit and entry?"

Indeed, if you say body and mind are both stable, how can there be exit and entry? If you cultivate stability in body and mind, this is still not true stability. If it is not true stability, it will have exit and entry, and if it has exit and entry, it cannot be said to be stable. Don't seek body and mind in stabilization. Zen study is basically the shedding of body and mind. What do you call body, what do you call mind?

Sanghanandi said, "Even though there is exit and entry, the character of stability is not lost. It is like gold in a well; the substance of the gold is always still."

Rahulata said, "If there is no movement or stillness in the gold being in the well or out of the well, what goes out and in? That is, if gold has movement and stillness, and has a place to come out and a place to go in, this is not real gold.

Still not understanding this principle, Sanghanandi said, "You say the gold moves or is still, what thing comes out and goes in—you concede the movement and stillness of the gold, yet gold is not movement or stillness." If you say the gold has no movement or stillness but has exit and entry, there is still a dualistic view.

Therefore Rahulata said, "If the gold is in the well, what comes out is not gold; if the gold is out of the well, what is in there?" Outside after all doesn't let in, and inside doesn't let out. When emerging, emerging completely, when entering, entering completely, why be in or out of a well? That is why Rahulata said, "What comes out is not gold—what is in there?"

Not comprehending this principle, Sanghanandi said, "If the gold comes out of the well, what is in the well is not gold. If the gold is in the well, what comes out is not a thing." These words are actually



ignorant of the nature of gold, so Rahulata said Sanghanandi was not right. Though it seemed he was really in stable concentration and perceived this principle, yet Sanghanandi still had views of things and self. That is why I say the principle wasn't clear to him, and there is no truth to this as doctrine—it's like a light hair following the wind.

Because it is not really true, Rahulata said, "This doctrine must fall." He was talking about what Sanghanandi had said.

Sanghanandi said, "That doctrine doesn't stand."

Out of compassion, Rahulata said again, "Because your point doesn't stand, my point is made."

But because he understood selflessness wrongly, Sanghanandi said, "Though 'my doctrine' is established, it is because things are not self."

Rahulata said, "My point is already made, because 'I' have no 'self.' "

Although Sanghanandi knew that all things are really selfless, still he didn't know reality, so he said, "Because self is selfless, what doctrine or point can you establish?"

In order to let you know personally, Rahulata said, "Because 'I' have no self, your point is established."

The physical elements are really not oneself; mind and body are originally not existent. Realizing somewhat on reflection that there is self where there is no self, Sanghanandi said, "What sage taught you to realize this selflessness?"

To let him know that the path of teacherhood and discipleship is not arbitrary, Rahulata said, "I learned to realize this selflessness from my teacher Kanadeva, the Buddhist master."

Sanghanandi said, "I bow to Kanadeva, who produced you. Since you are selfless, I want to have you for my teacher."

Rahulata said, "Since I have no self, you should see my self. Since you take me as a teacher, know that I am not my self."

Those who manage to see the real self no longer keep the subjective self, so how can anything block their eyes? Perception and cognition are ultimately not differentiated; there is one thing, one reality, which is undivided. Therefore the paths of teacher and apprentice meet with no separation between sages and ordinary people. When you see this principle, you are said to meet the Buddhas and Zen masters. Therefore you make your self the teacher, and make the teacher your self—they cannot be split apart.

Sanghanandi suddenly realized this principle, so he sought initiation and liberation. Rahulata said, "Your mind is free, not to be tied down by me."

When the Buddhist master Rahulata had spoken, he lifted a golden bowl all the way up to the palace of Brahma, took fragrant rice from there, and offered it to the group. The people in his group, however, suddenly became disgusted. Rahulata said, "This is not my fault—it is your own doing." Then he had Sanghanandi sit next to him and share the food.

The people thought this was strange. Rahulata said, "This is the reason you don't get any food. The one sitting with me is a past Buddha who has come down to be reincarnated out of compassion. You people, on the other hand, reached the third realization in a past eon, but still have not experienced noncontamination."

The people said, "We have to believe in your supernormal powers, but we doubt that he was a past Buddha."

Knowing the people were contemptuous, Rahulata said, "When the Buddha was alive, the world was even, without hills, and the waters of the rivers and canals were sweet; plants and trees flourished, the land was rich, there was no misery, and people behaved virtuously. Eight centuries after the Buddha's death, the world is hilly, the trees are withered, people lack sincere faith, right recollection is weak—they don't believe in reality, but only like magical powers."

So saying, he extended his hand gradually and reached into the earth down to the sphere of adamant, where he took some ambrosial water and brought it to the meeting place in a crystal bowl. Everyone was humbled and repented of their error when they saw this.

How sad it is that it was already like this eight centuries after the Buddha—how much more acute it is now, in the last five hundred years of the teaching, when even though the name of Buddhism is heard, it is not understood what its principles might be. Because there are no bodies and minds that have arrived at it, no one asks how it should be. Even having intelligence and having a little perception and comprehension due to the teachings of the Buddha, one may be invaded by laziness and have no real faith or understanding. Therefore, when there are no true people of the Way, there is no resolve. Truly, because of the moral weakness and longstanding ill effects of doings of the final age, we have met with such a time as this. It is more than a shame.

But even though we are pitiful both as teacher and students, not having been born in the ages of the true or at least the imitation teaching, you should consider how Buddhism gradually spread eastward, reaching its final age, and in our country we have heard the true teaching of the Buddha for fifty or sixty years. This event should be considered the beginning.

Buddhism flourishes wherever it goes. You people should arouse your determination with bold and powerful effort, not consider your selves as yourselves, directly realize selflessness. Promptly become mindless, and without being constrained by the doings of body and mind, without being bound by feelings of confusion or enlightenment, without staying in the cave of birth and death, without being tied up in the net of sentient beings and Buddhas, you should know that there is a self which never changes through all time.

As a capping phrase, I say:

Mental workings turn freely in accord with mental  
characteristics;

How many times has the self of selves changed faces now?

## JAYASHATA

Jayashata attended the Buddhist master Sanghanandi. Once when they heard the sound of the wind blowing in the chimes in the hall, Sanghanandi asked Jayashata, "Is it the chimes ringing or the wind ringing?" Jayashata said, "It is neither the wind nor the chimes—it is just my mind ringing." Sanghanandi said, "And who is the mind?" Jayashata said, "Because all is silent." Sanghanandi said, "Good! Who but you would succeed to my path?" Then he transmitted the treasury of the teaching to Jayashata.

Jayashata was born seven days after his mother became pregnant, having dreamed of a great spirit holding a mirror. His skin was lustrous as crystal, and he was naturally fragrant and clean without even being washed. Since the time he was born, a round mirror always appeared accompanying the boy. He was always fond of peace and quiet, and was not at all influenced by mundane conditions. As for this mirror, when the boy sat it was right in front of him, and all the works of past and present Buddhas appeared in it. It was even clearer than illumining his mind with the teachings of the Buddha. When the boy went anywhere this mirror followed him like a halo, yet the boy's form was not concealed. When the boy lay down, the mirror covered the bed like a celestial canopy. The mirror followed him whatever he did.

Now when Sanghanandi, who was traveling around teaching, came to the land where Jayashata lived, a cool breeze suddenly came over his group, and their minds and bodies were extraordinarily delighted, although they didn't know why. Sanghanandi said, "This is the breeze of enlightened virtue; a sage will appear in the world and inherit the lamp of the masters."

Having said this, Sanghanandi used his supernormal powers to take his group over the mountains and valleys. In a short time they reached the base of a peak, and he said to the group, "On the summit

of this peak there is a canopy of purple clouds—there must be a sage living here." Then they wandered around for a long time.

Finally they saw a mountain hut, and a boy holding a round mirror came right up to Sanghanandi. Sanghanandi asked him, "How old are you?" He answered, "A hundred years old." Sanghanandi said, "You're still a child—why do you say you're a hundred years old?" The boy said, "I don't understand the reason—I'm just a hundred years old, that's all." Sanghanandi said, "Are you fulfilling your potential?" He answered, "The Buddha said, 'Even if someone lives for a hundred years, if he doesn't understand the potential of enlightenment, it is not as good as living one day while definitely realizing this.' "

Sanghanandi said, "What does the thing in your hands represent?"

The boy said, "The great round mirror of the Buddhas: flawless and unclouded inside and out, two people both can see, their minds and eyes alike."

When his parents heard this, they let the boy leave home. Master Sanghanandi brought him back to his place, invested him with the Buddhist precepts, and named him Jayashata. The round mirror suddenly disappeared when the boy left home.

Actually everyone's light is just like this round mirror, without flaw or obscurity inside and outside. Ever since the boy was born he always praised buddha works and did not mix in mundane affairs. Looking into the clear mirror, he observed the deeds of Buddhas past and present. Though he really knew that their minds and eyes are all like each other, still he thought he did not understand the potential of the Buddhas, so he said he was a hundred years old.

If you understand the potential of Buddhas, the potential of enlightenment, even for only one day, this not only surpasses a hundred years, it also surpasses innumerable lifetimes. Therefore he finally gave up the round mirror.

Through this story it should be known that the work of the Buddhas is not done carelessly and is not easy. When you understand the great round mirror of the Buddhas, could there be anything else left over?

Nevertheless this is still not the real thing. How could there even be the round mirror of the Buddhas? How could two people both realize it? What inner and outer flawlessness could there be? What do you call a flaw? What are mind and eye? Could they be alike?

Thus the boy "lost" the mirror—is this not the boy dropping his



skin and flesh? Yet even if your view is like this, so you understand that mind and eye are not separated and both people can see, actually this is a dualistic view. It is not one that has really clarified the self.

So do not entertain the view of a sphere, and do not conceive of the form of a body. You should investigate most meticulously, break through the objective and subjective at once, and realize that even your self is incomprehensible. Unless you reach this realm you are just beings formed by the results of your actions and do not yet comprehend the potential of buddhahood. In this way did Jayashata finally repent and leave home; becoming initiated, he subsequently spent years in attendance on Sanghanandi.

Once, hearing the sound of wind in the chimes in the hall, Sanghanandi asked Jayashata, "Is it the chimes ringing or the wind ringing?" This story should be examined thoroughly. Though Sanghanandi ultimately didn't see the chimes or the wind, still he asked this question to have Jayashata know what is what. What is this? You cannot understand in terms of wind and chimes—it is not ordinary wind chimes.

When the wind blew on the chimes, there was this koan; and Jayashata answered, "It is not the wind, not the chimes—it is just my mind ringing." Clearly there is no setting forth of any bounds of even a single atom. Thus "it is not the wind ringing or the chimes ringing—and if you think of it as ringing, then it is ringing." But such a view is still not the silence of the mind as well. Therefore he said, "My mind is ringing."

Hearing this story, people misunderstand and think it is not necessarily the wind's ringing—that "it is just mind ringing" and that this is supposedly why Jayashata spoke this way. In the naturally real spontaneous state when all things do not appear, how can you even say that it is not the ringing of chimes? Therefore "my mind is ringing."

There is a long distance in time between Jayashata and the sixth Zen patriarch of China, yet they are not separated: the sixth patriarch said, "The wind and flag are not moving—your minds are moving."

Now when you too penetrate through this mind ground, then past, present, and future are originally not separated. Realization is continuous past and present, so what difference can you discern? Don't discriminate with your ordinary views—you can only know it by its not being the ringing of the wind or the ringing of the chimes. If you want

to know what it is, you must know it is your own mind ringing. The form of that ringing is like the soaring height of the mountains, like the plunging depths of the oceans. Even the profusion of plants and trees, and the lights of people's eyes, are the form of mind ringing.

So you shouldn't think of it as the ringing of a sound—sound too is the ringing of mind. The physical elements and mental clusters and all things are all as a whole the ringing of mind. There is never a time when this mind is not ringing; therefore after all it does not carry an echo. Also it is not heard by the ears; because ears *are* ringing, Jaya-shata said that all is silent.

When you see in this way, there is no place at all for myriad things to appear. Thus there are no forms of mountains, no forms of oceans—there is no longer a single thing with any shape or form. It is like riding a little boat on the ocean in a dream; whether you hoist sail and plow through the waves, or whether you stop the boat to determine the direction of the currents, there is no sky to float in, no bottom to sink to—what more mountains and seas are there that can be established outside? And what self is there sporting in the boat?

That is why Sanghanandi taught in this way: though there are eyes, they have no hearing; though there are ears, they have no vision. Therefore you should not say that the senses merge—there are no senses to be equipped with. That is why "all is silent." When you try to grasp them, there are no senses; when you try to abandon them, there are no sense fields. Senses and objects both shed, mind and environment are both forgotten. When you look closely, there are no senses or objects to shed, no mind or environment to obliterate. Truly peaceful and silent, it is not a question of sameness or difference, not a feeling of inside or outside.

When you truly reach such a state, then you receive and hold the treasure of the teaching of the Buddhas and rank among the Zen masters. If not, then even if you understand that all things are not mistaken, you are still maintaining your self and talking of others, and ultimately things are separate from each other. If they are separate, how can you commune with the Buddhas? It is like building boundary fences in the sky—how could the sky be blocked? It is just that you are creating obstructing boundaries yourself. Once the boundaries are broken, what would be considered inside or outside?

At this point, even Shakyamuni Buddha is not the beginning, you are not the end. There is no visage of the Buddhas at all, and no form

of people either. When it is like this, just like clear water making waves, the Buddhas and Zen masters go on appearing—this is not increase and not decrease, yet the water flows and the waves go on peaking. Therefore you should actually reach such a realm by investigating thoroughly.

Since beginningless time and forever into the future, though we are temporarily creating divisions and arranging time frames of past, present, and future, yet from eon to eon it is all just like so. To comprehend this pure clear original nature, you cannot toil over it with skin and flesh, you cannot discern it by means of the movement or stillness of your body. This realm is not knowable at all by body-mind, not discernible by motion or stillness. It can only be attained by carefully making a penetrating investigation and stopping your own folly and realizing the truth by yourself.

If you do not understand in this way, you will be uselessly carrying your body and mind twenty-four hours a day, like carrying a heavy burden on your shoulders. After all body and mind won't rest easy. If you cast off body and mind, with the mind ground empty and open, you will attain to utmost normalcy.

But even if you are thus, as long as you cannot express and illumine the ringing of mind in the foregoing story, you do not know the appearance of the Buddhas and do not know the enlightenment of sentient beings. Therefore I want to add a humble saying to express the ringing of the mind:

The silent mind ringing echoes in ten thousand ways;  
Sanghanandi, Jayashata, as well as the wind and chimes.

## KUMARATA

The Buddhist master Jayashata said to Kumarata, "In ancient times the Buddha predicted that a thousand years after his death a great man from Yuezhi would succeed to the mystic teaching and spread it. Now you have met me in fulfillment of this auspicious prophecy."

When Kumarata heard this, his knowledge of former lives was awakened.

Kumarata was from a priestly family of the Central Asian country of Yuezhi, north of India. In the past he had been a god in the heaven of freedom; there he saw a bodhisattva's ornaments and suddenly conceived love. Falling, he was born in the heaven of the thirty-three celestial mansions. There he heard the king of those gods speaking about transcendental wisdom, and because of the excellence of the teaching he ascended to the heaven of pure intellect, and because his faculties were sharp he skillfully expounded the essence of the teaching. The gods revered him as their guide, and when it came time for him to succeed to spiritual leadership in Buddhism he finally descended to Yuezhi.

The Buddhist master Jayashata went to Yuezhi on his teaching travels. Seeing an unusual atmosphere around one of the houses of the people of the priestly caste, he went to enter that house. Kumarata said, "What group is this?" Jayashata said, "In ancient times the Buddha predicted that a man from Yuezhi would inherit and propagate his teaching a thousand years after his death." It was then that Kumarata became aware of his past lives.

This story should be treated very carefully. Even if you clearly understand that the verbal teaching itself is a manifestation of buddha nature, or understand that birth and death, coming and going, is the true human body, if you do not realize that your own fundamental nature is empty and luminous, spiritual and spacious, you do not know the experience of the Buddhas.

Therefore you would be startled on seeing the light emanated by a bodhisattva, and upon seeing the marks and refinements of the Buddhas you would admire them. Why? Because you have not yet escaped the three poisons of greed, hatred, and folly.

Let us consider Kumarata's past causes. By love he regressed and fell and descended to a lower heaven, but due to past causes he happened to hear the king of the gods there expounding the teaching, and thereby ascended to a higher heaven. Later he came down to be born in Yuezhi. The virtues he had accumulated over the eons were not in vain; finally he met a master of Buddhism and realized knowledge of his former lives.

So-called knowledge of former lives is usually thought to mean knowing the past and future. What is the use of that? If you just observe that the original unchanging inherent nature has no holiness or profanity and no delusion, a hundred thousand teachings and innumerable wonderful meanings are all in the mind source.

Therefore the errors of sentient beings and the enlightenment of the Buddhas are both within one's own heart. It is not a phenomenon of sense, faculties, or sense data at all; it is not the form of mind or environment. When you reach this point, what can you consider past, what present? Which are the Buddhas, which sentient beings? There is not a single thing blocking the eyes, not a single mote of dust touching the hands.

There is just a mass of empty brightness, open and free, without bounds. The true Buddha whose realization of thusness has been fulfilled for an immensely long time is precisely the undimmed original sentient being. When you awake in this way, it is not increased; and when you do not know it, it is not decreased. Contacting the awareness that it has been *thus* since time immemorial is called the awakening of the knowledge of past lives.

Unless you reach this realm, you will uselessly be confused by feelings of delusion and enlightenment, be moved by appearances of coming and going, and ultimately fail to realize there is your own self. You will fail to realize that the original mind is not in error, by your failure causing Buddhas to take the trouble to appear in the world and making Zen masters come from far-off lands.

The original purpose of Buddhas appearing in the world and Zen masters communicating the teaching was just for this matter, not for anything else. You should concentrate closely and know it is spiri-



tual, unclouded, radiant and bright, not concealed. Knowing that there is an original light is called knowledge of past lives.

Again I have a humble saying to convey a bit of the principle:

Pushing over the body of past lives blocked by experience,  
Now he meets the same old fellow.

## JAYATA

Kumarata said to Jayata, "Although you believe in three kinds of karma, you do not yet understand that karma comes from confusion. Confusion is based on consciousness, consciousness depends on ignorance, ignorance depends on the mind. The mind is originally pure, having no origination or destruction; in it there is no fabrication, no retribution, no victory or defeat. It is serene and spiritual. If you penetrate this teaching, you can be the same as the Buddhas. All good and evil, contrived and uncontrived, are like dreams or illusions."

Jayata understood the message and realized knowledge of the past.

Jayata was from northern India. He was a man of profound knowledge and guided countless people. When he first met the Buddhist master Kumarata, he asked, "My parents have always been pious Buddhists, but they have been plagued by sickness and failure of their undertakings. Our neighbors, on the other hand, are butchers, yet they are always healthy and successful. What is their luck, and what is wrong with us?"

The Buddhist master said, "This is not hard to understand. There are three time frames in the consequences of good and evil. Whenever people see the good die young and the violent live long, or see the evil being lucky and the just suffering tragedy, they do not understand the past or future and are just deluded by the present situation. Therefore they think that there is no causality and that evil and virtue are naught. This is very stupid and foolish—they are like this because of ignorance in study of the Way."

The three kinds of karma are karma followed in the present, karma experienced in the next life, and karma followed later. Karma followed in the present means actions done in the present life whose effects are experienced in the same lifetime. Karma experienced in the next life means actions done in the present life whose effects are felt in the next time. Karma followed later means actions done in the present life whose effects come in later lifetimes, even in the distant future.

Therefore people may experience good in the present because of good deeds done in the past, yet it may be that present results are not the same because of past actions. Those who have purely good or purely bad active causes experience purely good or bad results of action in the present life. Those of mixed good and bad action experience mixed good and bad results.

Moreover, the power of cultivation of Buddhism changes grave karma so that it is experienced lightly, and changes light karma so that it no longer exists in the present. Evil causes in past ages should bring on grave suffering in the future, but it can happen that it is lightly experienced because of the power of Buddhist cultivation in this life. One may be plagued by disease, or nothing may turn out as one wishes, or else whatever one says may be slighted by others—these are all examples of lightly experiencing in this life the grave sufferings of the future.

So we should resort all the more to the power of Buddhist cultivation. The retributions prepared in the remote past can all be made light simply by vigorous effort. Although you have some understanding of the Way through your Zen study, you may get a bad name, or your undertakings may not work out as you want, and you may not be physically healthy either. If that is the case, think that it is transformation of the grave into relatively light experience; so even if people despise you, don't resent it, and even if people slander you, don't blame them. Though you might even pay respect and honor to these slanderers, what you should not do is hate them. Your work on the Way will grow daily, while your residual karma will vanish hourly. So you should study and practice carefully.

"Though you now believe in the three kinds of karma, you don't know the root of karma yet." Good and bad rewards of karma—action—are distinguished; ordinary and holy are different. All worlds, all states of being, all states of mind, are all results of karma. This karma arises from confusion. This confusion is hating and loving where we should not hate or love, judging right and wrong where right and wrong are not to be judged. Illusion is knowing as man what is not man, knowing as woman what is not woman, separating self and others. Ignorance is not knowing the root source of oneself and not knowing where myriad things are born. Lacking wisdom in all respects, losing wisdom in all places, is called nonenlightenment.

Without thought, without objects, this mind is originally pure and

clear, not turning away to extraneous objects. Changing this mind is called ignorance. When you are aware of this ignorance, your own mind is originally pure and clear; it is spiritually illumined of its own nature.

When you can understand in this way, ignorance breaks up, the wheel of routine is empty, the various kinds of life in mundane existences quickly vanish. Everyone's original mind is like this. Thus there is no separation or barrier caused by birth and death, there are no created things. Thus there is no hatred, no love, no increase, no decrease—only silent peace, sublime awareness.

If you want to see your original basic mind, put down myriad concerns, set all mental involvements to rest; don't think of good or bad, and for now set your eyes on the tip of your nose and look at your original mind. When the one mind is silent, all forms done with, then the branches and leaves—karma and its results—do not remain.

So you do not stay in the realm of nondiscrimination, you are not confined to the sphere of inconceivability. It is not permanent, not impermanent; it is not that the original mind has ignorance, nor is it that it is pure. There is no separation of the Buddhas, no distinction of sentient beings. When you arrive at the realm of pure clear complete illumination, for the first time you will be the same as Buddha. When you reach here, everything conditioned and unconditioned is all ended and is like a dream, an illusion. Though you try to grasp, your hand is empty; though you try to see, nothing catches the eye.

When you have arrived at this realm, you understand the essence before the Buddhas appeared in the world, you get to where sentient beings have not yet erred. Unless your study has reached this state, even if you prostrate yourself before a statue of Buddha all day and tune your mind and body during your daily activities, this is just leading to higher states of mind, with contaminated reward still remaining. It is like the shadow following the form; though it exists, it is not real. Therefore you should concentrate your energies and clarify your original mind.

As usual I add a humble saying:

The camphor tree, as ever, grows to the sky;  
The branches and leaves, root and trunk, flourish beyond the  
clouds.

## VASUBANDHU

Jayata said, "I do not seek the Way, yet I am not confused. I do not pay obeisance to Buddha, yet I do not disregard Buddha either. I do not sit for long periods, yet I am not lazy. I do not limit my meals, yet I do not eat indiscriminately either. I am not contented, yet I am not greedy. When the mind does not seek anything, this is called the Way."

When Vasubandhu heard this, he discovered uncontaminated knowledge.

Vasubandhu became a Buddhist monk when he was fifteen years old, and subsequently he became a leading debator. Eventually the Buddhist master Jayata came to Vasubandhu's area on a teaching journey, expounding the doctrine of sudden realization. There he found a group of students of philosophy whose chief was Vasubandhu.

This Vasubandhu always limited his meals to one a day, never lay down to sleep, and performed ritual obeisances to an image of Buddha six times a day. He was pure and desireless, regarded as an ideal by the group.

Jayata wanted to liberate Vasubandhu, so he first asked the group, "This ascetic Vasubandhu practices pure conduct well, but can he attain the Buddha Way?" The group said, "Our teacher is very diligent—how could there be anything wrong with him?" Jayata said, "Your teacher is far from the Way. Even if one practices asceticism for eons, it is all the root of illusion." The group said, "What virtue do you have, that you criticize our teacher?" Jayata said, "I don't seek enlightenment, yet I am not confused," and so on, as in the opening story. Finally Vasubandhu realized uncontaminated knowledge, whereupon he joyfully praised the Buddhist master Jayata.

Jayata also said to that group, "Do you understand my words? My reason for saying what I did is that his search for enlightenment was too eager. If the harp string is too tight it will snap. Therefore I did



not praise him, but made him abide in the state of peace and enter the knowledge of all Buddhas."

In this story in particular we find the most essential secret of study of the Way. If you think there is buddhahood to attain and a Way to find, and if you fast or do ascetic exercises with that thought, or sit for long periods of time without lying down, or do prostrations and recite scriptures, trying to build up merits for attaining the Way, all of this is raining flowers in the flowerless sky, making holes where there are no holes. Even if you pass eons in this way, you will never have a bit of liberation. Indeed, not craving anything is called the Way, so even if it is contentment you want, this is still based on greed.

If you must indulge in sitting for a long time, this is the error of attachment to the body. If you would eat only once a day, this is still seeing food. And if you would do prostrations and recite scriptures, this is making flowers in the eyes. Therefore every one of these practices is based on illusion; it is not your original self.

The disciples of Buddha set up various kinds of pure regulations to show the disciplined behavior of Buddhas and Zen masters. Clinging to them obsessively becomes an affliction, however, a passion. Furthermore, if you must reject birth and death to seek the Way beyond, yet you cannot cut off the beginningless process of dying in one place and being born in another—what state would you consider attainment of the Way? Yet you want to seek the Way while still caught up in all these things—it is all a misunderstanding.

What further buddhahood to attain do you see? What sentient beings do you see who can be deluded? There is no one who is deluded, no doctrine to realize. For this reason, though we speak of overturning delusion to attain enlightenment, or of transforming ordinary people into sages, all this is talk for people who are not yet enlightened. What ordinariness is there to transform? What delusion is there to awaken from? This is why Zen master Jiashan said, "Clearly there is no phenomenon of enlightenment; the doctrine of enlightenment deludes people. Stretch out your legs and sleep—there is no falsehood and no reality." The essence of the Way is truly like this.

Yet even though this be so, beginners should study carefully to actually arrive at this stage of equanimity and peace. For if you yourself have no genuine understanding, you may be deluded by the words of others. So if you try to lift your eyes to see, you will be invaded

by the buddha demon. Today even though you hear such talk and understand that there is nothing to attain, yet if a teacher tells you there is some doctrine to realize, or if a buddha demon comes and tells you there is some method to practice, ultimately your mind will be stirred and you will go astray.

Now, accepting the true teaching of all Buddhas and investigating it carefully and thoroughly, you should reach the realm where you are yourself at peace. Someone who has attained peace is like someone who has had enough to eat—even a regal feast would no longer be appealing. This is why it is said that fine food is not for the satisfied to eat. An ancient said, "Once troubled, finally at rest."

When you look carefully, your own original mind does not see Buddha, does not see sentient beings—how could there be any delusion to reject or any enlightenment to seek? Ever since the Zen founder came from India to get people to see directly, Zen teachers have had people sit up single-mindedly and rest peacefully in themselves, without question of their learning or experience.

You have thought mistaken what has never been mistaken. Do not waste time just concerning yourself with the frost on other people's yards and forget about the treasure in your own house.

So now you have met a close friend. Do not hope for enlightenment on another day far in the future. Just look within your own heart, examining carefully—do not seek from another. If you can do this, hundreds of thousands of teachings and boundless buddha works all flow from here, covering the heavens and the earth. Just don't seek the Way—all you need to do is maintain your true self.

If you do not know of the existence of your true self even though it has always been with you, you are like someone holding something in his hands while at the same time looking here and there for that very thing. What a mistake this is! This is just forgetting one's true self.

Now as we look at the matter closely, the sublime path of the Buddhas and the pure tradition of the Zen masters too are in this one thing alone. You should not doubt this. When you reach this stage you will not doubt what the Zen masters say.

In the foregoing story it says that when Vasubandhu heard this he realized uncontaminated knowledge. If you want to realize uncontaminated knowledge, you should maintain your true self. If you want to maintain your true self, you should know that from birth to

death it is just *this*. There is not a single mote of dust to reject, not a single doctrine to grasp. And don't particularly think of realizing uncontaminated knowledge either.

As usual, I have a humble saying to explain the story:

The wind traverses the vast sky,  
clouds emerge from the mountains;  
Feelings of enlightenment and things of the world  
are of no concern at all.

## MANORA

Manora asked Vasubandhu, "What is the enlightenment of the Buddhas?" Vasubandhu said, "It is the original nature of the mind." Manora then asked, "What is the original nature of the mind?" Vasubandhu said, "It is the emptiness of the elements of sense faculties, sense consciousness, and sense data."

Manora was enlightened on hearing this.

Manora was a son of the rajah of the kingdom of Nadi. He met Vasubandhu when he was thirty years old, when Vasubandhu came to Nadi in the course of his travels. The rajah asked Vasubandhu, "Why are the customs of Rajagṛha (Vasubandhu's homeland) different from here?" Vasubandhu said, "In that land three Buddhas have appeared in the world. Now in your kingdom there are two teachers of the Way." The rajah said, "Who are these two teachers?" Vasubandhu said, "The Buddha predicted that in the second five hundred years after his death there would be a great man with spiritual power who would leave home and succeed to the saints. Your second son Manora is just such a man. And though my virtue is slight, I am the other teacher." The rajah said, "If it is as you say, I should give up my son and make him a mendicant." Vasubandhu said, "Very good, your majesty, you are following the Buddha's message well." So he then transmitted the precepts to Manora.

After that Manora attended Vasubandhu. At one point he asked, "What is the enlightenment of the Buddhas?" Vasubandhu said, "It is the original nature of the mind." This is precisely what should be asked in the beginning of the study of the Way. Enlightenment means the Way. Therefore this question means "What is the Way?" People these days do not ask about the teaching with an open mind, and do not study with teachers as beginners, so they don't ask this question. If you have a genuine aspiration for enlightenment, you shouldn't be this way. First you should ask what Buddha is, then you should ask

what the Way of buddhahood is. That is why Manora asked this question. And Vasubandhu answered, "It is the original nature of the mind." Now because he was single-minded and didn't cling to anything, Manora then asked what the original nature of mind is. Vasubandhu answered that it is the emptiness of the elements of sense—faculties, consciousness, and data. Manora was then enlightened.

Buddha is none other than the basic nature of the mind. This original nature is ultimately unknowable and imperceptible, indeed the unexcelled Way. So the mind has no form and no abode. Of course "Buddha" and "the Way" are both forced names. Therefore Buddha is not conscious knowledge, the Way is not something cultivated. Mind is not conscious knowledge either. This realm has no objects and no faculties—where can consciousness be established? This is why he said that all these elements being empty is the original nature of mind.

So do not talk about this state in terms of mind and objects, do not understand it as cognitive knowledge. At this point the Buddhas ultimately do not appear, and the ineffable Way also does not need cultivation or maintenance. Furthermore, though perception and awareness may have no traces, sound, form, and motion cannot have boundaries. Therefore it is said, "This is identical to seeing and hearing, yet is not seeing and hearing; there is no more sound and color to present to you. If you understand that there is nothing here at all, what does it matter if substance and function be distinguished or not?"

Thus you should not understand "sound" here in terms of tone and pitch, and you should not understand "color" here in terms of blue, yellow, red, or white. Don't consider sight the correspondent of the light of the eyes, don't think hearing is the faculty of the ears. No one has eyes or ears as partners to color and sound. If you say there is correspondence between the ear and sound, or that the eye relates to form and color, you don't understand sound, you are ignorant about eyes.

For if you say there is something related to, then how does sound enter the ear, how can form be seen in the eye? Therefore, unless it is like space merging with space, like water mixing with water, hearing and seeing are impossible, for otherwise a sound would always remain in the ear and a form would always remain in the eye. Because



this is not so, the eye communes with forms and colors, the ear with sounds, merging without separation, fusing without tracks.

This being so, even a sound that can make heaven and earth reverberate enters a tiny ear—isn't this a case of "the largest is the same as small"? And with a tiny eye you can see the whole world—isn't this "the smallest is the same as the large"? Is it not that the eye is form and color, and sound is the ear? Knowing this, you understand in this way. This mind has no borders, no boundaries, no sides or surfaces. Therefore the eye basically does not apprehend anything, forms and colors cannot divide. Is it not that faculties, consciousness, and data of sense are all empty?

Therefore when you reach this realm, you can say it is sound, you can say it is the eye, you can say it is consciousness. "Thus" is all right, "not thus" is all right too—"thus" and "not thus" are both all right. Nothing comes from outside, there is no boundary, nothing separating. Therefore when you speak in terms of sound, both hearing and speaking are discerned in sound; when you speak in terms of form and color, both subject and object are set within form and color—there is nothing outside.

But you people don't understand this principle. You may think that sound and form are false and should be erased, that the original mind is fundamentally permanent and cannot change or move. This is laughable. In this realm, what thing can change or not change? What can be real or not real?

So if you do not clearly understand this matter, you will not understand either the fields of perception or perception itself, and will therefore try not to see or hear. This is tying yourself up without rope, falling where there is no hole. Because of this you cannot escape defilement by feelings and leaking of your mental energy.

If you investigate thoroughly, and if you penetrate the depths and see clearly, you will rise unhindered to the very heights.

Again I have a humble saying to illustrate this story:

The spirit of emptiness is not inside or outside;  
Seeing, hearing, sound and form, all are void.

## HAKLENA

The Buddhist master Manora said to Haklena, "I have the treasure of the unexcelled great teaching; you should listen to it, accept it, and teach in the future."

Hearing this, Haklena attained enlightenment.

Haklena, from the country of Yuezhi, was from a family of the priestly caste. His parents had been without issue until they prayed at a Buddhist shrine; that night his mother dreamed that a spiritual boy from atop the polar mountain, bearing a gold ring, announced his arrival, and on awakening she found she was pregnant.

When he was seven years old, Haklena saw the village people performing superstitious sacrifices. He went into the shrine and upbraided the spirit of the shrine, saying, "You are deluding people, arbitrarily creating calamity and fortune. Every year you waste cattle and sheep for sacrifices, cruelly having them killed." When he had said this, the shrine suddenly collapsed. Because of this the villagers called him a holy child. When he was twenty-two he became a Buddhist monk, and when he was thirty he met the Buddhist master Manora.

When he first met Manora, there were various extraordinary occurrences. I should mention them all, but I'll just bring up one story. Haklena said to master Manora, "What is the reason I am followed by a group of cranes?" For Haklena was always accompanied by a flock of cranes.

Manora said, "You were once a monk in the fourth eon. As you were going to a meeting in the dragon palace, your disciples wanted to go along with you, but you saw no one among your five hundred disciples worthy of the sublime offerings of the dragons. At that time your disciples said to you, 'You always preach that what is equal in respect to food is equal in respect to all things. What is the wisdom in your refusal to act in accord with this now?' So you let them go.

Although you were reborn in various different countries after you died, your five hundred disciples, because of their lack of virtue, were born among feathered beings. Now, feeling your benevolence, they have become cranes and follow you."

When Haklena heard this, he asked, "By what means shall I liberate them?" Manora said, "I have the unexcelled treasure of the true teaching."

In truth, the principle of equality of food and equality of all things draws no distinction between sages and ordinary people. But as a matter of principle, though both teacher and students went to the dragon place, because those with slight merit and virtue were not worthy of the sublime offerings there, they became birds. This story should be a warning to students.

Now there is no discrimination in teaching the true nature of things, and food also should be equal. Yet there are those who can digest the donations of the faithful, and there are those who are harmed by the donations of the faithful. At this point it would seem as if they were not equal, that we should say there is discrimination. The reason for this is that if you see "food" and see "the teaching," though you may see that they are equal and understand that they are the same for all, you are still seeing food and seeing a teaching and haven't escaped a dualistic view. Deluded by covetousness, those disciples followed their teacher, and as a result eventually became birds. So we know that they hadn't arrived at the principle of equality in food and equality in truth. Indeed, they were bound by forms and appearances.

The supreme teaching referred to has nothing of food or of doctrine or of things. What is sacred, what is profane? It is not something that can be reached by form or shadow. It can hardly even be called mind or nature. This "teaching" is not received from Buddhas or Zen masters, it is not given to one's children, not inherited from one's parents. It has nothing that can be called self or other. Where can the names of food or phenomena come from? Is there any place to answer an invitation? Is there any turning into birds?

So you must look closely, meditate thoroughly, and first know that the original nature of your own mind is an open awareness, wondrously clear and bright. Be able to maintain it and thoroughly mature it, and then know that there is also the phenomenon of the Buddhas' transmission of the lamp of enlightenment.

Even if you have understood the essence of the original nature of your own mind and are as liberated as the Buddhas and Zen masters, there is still a supreme treasury of truth that can illumine the future. This is not the principle of the original nature, much less an object of perception. It far transcends ideas of antiquity and modernity, and has never remained in the realm of sentient beings or Buddhas. Therefore such a person cannot even be called a Buddha, nor can such a person be considered ordinary. Such people neither sit in the hall upright nor tend to either side; so not even their shadows can be found, nor can their tracks be discovered.

If you have reached this state, what is "the nature of the mind"? What is "enlightenment"? Spit it all out at once, shit it all out at once. When you can do so, you are a person beyond measure. If you do not reach such a state, you are still an ordinary mortal.

So you should see closely and aspire to bear the supreme treasure of the great teaching. Then the body of Buddha will still be alive. Just don't cling to names and worry about forms. In Zen study you must discern reality.

I have a humble saying to illustrate this principle:

A powdered wall sticking through the clouds—  
 snow on the massive crags.  
 Absolute purity without a blotch  
 is different from the blue sky.

## SINHA

Sinha asked the Buddhist master Haklena, "I want to seek enlightenment—how should I apply my mind?" Haklena said, "If you seek enlightenment, there is no way to apply the mind to it." Sinha said, "If there's no way to apply the mind, who does the work of Buddhas?" Haklena said, "If you apply anything, this is not virtue; if you don't contrive anything, this is the work of Buddhas. A scripture says, 'The virtues I practice are not mine.' "

Hearing this, Sinha gained access to the wisdom of Buddhas.

Sinha was from central India, born to a family of the priestly caste. Originally he was a Hindu scholar, but later he called on the Buddhist master Haklena and directly encountered the state where there is nowhere to apply the mind, thus entering suddenly in the wisdom of Buddhas.

Now Haklena pointed to the northwest and said, "What is that atmospheric sign?" Sinha said, "It looks to me like a white rainbow extending from the sky to the earth, crossed by five black vapors." Haklena said, "What does it portend?" Sinha said, "I have no idea." Haklena said, "Fifty years after my death there will be trouble in northern India, and it will affect you. Even so, you should transmit my spiritual teaching for the education of the future."

Having received this secret prediction, Sinha went to teach in Kashmir. There he found Vashashita, who was to become his spiritual heir. He told Vashashita about Haklena's prediction, and sent him to take the Way to another land and teach there.

Now at this time the king of Kashmir was deeply devoted to Buddhism, but he was still fascinated by appearances. As it happened, there were two magicians in that country who tried to stir up trouble. Assuming the appearance of Buddhist monks, they stole into the royal palace with the intention of blaming their actions on the Buddhists if they were apprehended.

The two magicians were in fact arrested, and the king did blame



the Buddhists. Outraged, he had monasteries destroyed and the Buddhist monks and nuns driven out. He also personally took a sword and went to the Buddhist master Sinha. He asked Sinha, "Have you attained emptiness of body and mind?" Sinha said, "Yes." The king said, "Are you detached from birth and death?" Sinha said, "Yes." The king said, "If so, give me your head." Sinha said, "This body is not my own possession—why should I begrudge the head?"

The king then swung the sword and cut off Sinha's head. White milk gushed from the neck up to a height of several dozen yards, and the king's right arm fell off. After seven days the king died.

That was the end of master Sinha.

When teacher and apprentice first met, Sinha asked the Buddhist master Haklena, "I want to seek enlightenment—how should I apply my mind?" Haklena said, "If you seek enlightenment, there's nothing to apply the mind to." When one really and truly seeks enlightenment, how could it have anything to do with using the mind? Here we die, there we are born. Though we aspire to enlightenment and seek truth here and there, the fact that now we have not arrived at the ultimate reality is basically because of using this mind.

So if you want to accord instantly with enlightened wisdom, it is not only a matter of detaching from false views and mental poisons; you must also detach from the bodies and knowledges of Buddhas. When you practice in this way, you cannot be relegated to the state of the ordinary person or exalted to the rank of a Buddha. You transcend far beyond the realm of the sense of holy or ordinary, and leave behind assessment of difference and sameness.

Therefore it is said that even Buddhas and Zen masters can hardly reach the realm of mysterious wonder. It is not just that Buddhas and Zen masters cannot reach it—basically, when you talk about this realm, ultimately Buddhas and Zen masters do not even exist. Reaching such a realm is called the true essence of seeking enlightenment.

If you are not yet thus, even if you can make flowers shower and cause the earth to move, expounding the nature of mind and discoursing on esoteric marvels, you have not even glimpsed the true ineffable Way. So you should experientially arrive at this mysterious realm and clarify that which all the Zen masters bore.

To explain a little bit of principle, as usual I have a humble saying:

If you want to reveal the void, do not cover it up;

Thoroughly empty, pure and peaceful, it is originally clear.

## VASHASHITA

The Buddhist master Sinha said to Vashashita, "I now hand over to you the treasury of the eye of the true teaching of Buddha; you should guard it for the universal benefit of the future."

Sinha discovered the preexistent basis and personally inherited the mind seal.

Vashashita was from Kashmir, born to a family of the priestly caste. His mother dreamed she had gotten a magical sword, and found she was pregnant.

When the Buddhist master Sinha came to Kashmir on his teaching travels, there were five groups of seekers there: those who practiced meditation, those who cultivated knowledge, those who clung to forms, those who rejected forms, and those who did not speak. Sinha unified these groups, and his fame spread far and near.

When Sinha was looking for a successor, he met a householder who brought his son to the Buddhist master and said, "This boy's name is Shita. When he was born, his left hand was closed in a fist, and though he is now grown he still cannot open his hand. Please tell us the underlying cause."

Sinha looked at the youth, took him by the hand, and said, "Give me back the jewel." The youth immediately opened his hand and gave him a jewel. Everyone was amazed. Sinha said, "In a past life I was a monk and had a boy attendant named Vasha. I went to a feast on the western seaboard once and received a jewel as a gift. I entrusted the jewel to the boy, so it is reasonable that he now return it to me." The man then gave up his son and allowed him to leave home and become a mendicant. The Buddhist master then ordained him and invested him with the precepts. Because of the boy's past condition he named him Vashashita.

Finally, in making his bequest to Vashashita, Sinha said to him, "I now hand over to you the treasury of the eye of the true teaching of

the Buddha; you should guard it well and pass it on to the future." Vashashita's discovery of his former condition refers to his having been the boy Vasha in a past life, entrusted with a jewel by the Buddhist master; now, having entered a womb and having been born in another family, he still kept the jewel, and finally presented it to master Sinha.

By this we should know that this causal nexus should not necessarily be said to be the sole existence of a real body after the disintegration of the flesh body. If this body is a perishable body, how could he now still be holding the jewel? Thus we should know that relinquishing life and being reborn is not a matter of physical death.

At this point we should not say that the physical body disintegrates and one thing remains forever as the eternal spirit. What sort of thing would the eternal spirit be? It is only a matter of the appearance of the relinquishment of the body and the appearance of incarnation, that is all.

Therefore we must say that before and after are not two, past and present are not different. Thus this should not be called body, nor should it be called mind. Since it is not divided into mind and body, we should not divide it into past and present. Therefore it is *thus*.

It is not only Vasha who is thus; in reality, everyone is thus. Hence there is no place of birth, nor of death; it is just a matter of changing heads and faces with time. It is not necessarily a change and renewal of the physical body and psychophysical clusters. There has never been any covering by a mass of flesh or supporting by bones. Even if there are thousands of forms and types, all are the original mind light. It is because of not knowing this that we think this one is young and that one is old. There is no substance of old age, and originally no youth. So how can we divide birth and death and distinguish before and after?

Therefore, pointing out that Vasha of a former age and Shita of the present are not two bodies is the preexistent basis. Thus he transmitted the treasury of the eye of the true teaching of the Buddha to benefit the future.

So we should know that the Buddhas and Zen masters fundamentally have never been enlightened, ignorant people ultimately are not lost. Sometimes they cultivate spiritual practices, sometimes they awaken the will for enlightenment; enlightenment and awakening the will basically have no end or beginning. Sentient beings and Bud-

dhas are originally not inferior or superior. It is just *thusness* everywhere.

Therefore it is simply a matter of always maintaining the trust in this way and not forgetting the preexistent basis.

To explain this story, as usual I have a humble saying:

Blooming flowers, falling leaves, when they directly show,  
The medicine tree fundamentally has no different flavor.

## PUNYAMITRA

When Punyamitra was a prince, the Buddhist master Vashashita asked him, "Why do you want to leave home?" Punyamitra said, "If I leave home, it is not for anything else." Vashashita said, "Not for what?" Punyamitra said, "Not for anything mundane." Vashashita said, "Then for what?" Punyamitra said, "To do buddha work." Vashashita said, "Your wisdom is natural; you must be an incarnation of one of the sages." Then the Buddhist master permitted the prince Punyamitra to leave home and become a mendicant.

Punyamitra was the crown prince of a kingdom in southern India. The Buddhist master Vashashita came to southern India after converting the Hindu Anatmanatha in central India. The king of that south Indian kingdom was called Devaguna; he welcomed the Buddhist master Vashashita and made offerings to him. The king had two sons, one of whom was violent and powerful, the other gentle and sickly. The Buddhist master expounded causality to them, and the king was suddenly relieved of doubt.

After that king died, his son, who was Punyamitra's father, assumed the throne. He believed in Hinduism and caused trouble for the Buddhist master Vashashita. Punyamitra was imprisoned for coming forth and admonishing his father about bothering the Buddhist master. The king suddenly asked the master, "My country has always been free of the weird and the strange—what religion is it that you are disseminating?"

Vashashita said, "There has actually been no false teaching in your country since ancient times. What I transmit is the religion of Buddha."

The king said, "The Buddha has been dead for twelve hundred years; from whom did you get this teaching?" Vashashita said, "The great Kashyapa personally received the Buddha's seal, and it has con-



tinued for twenty-four generations to the venerable Sinha; I received it from him."

The king said, "I have heard that the monk Sinha was unable to avoid being executed; how could he transmit the teaching to a successor?" Vashashita said, "Before my teacher's persecution occurred he secretly handed on to me the robe of faith and a verse of the teaching indicating successorship."

The king said, "Where is the robe?" The Buddhist master brought it forth from his bag and showed it to the king. The king commanded that it be burned. Five colors blazed forth in the fire, but when the fuel was exhausted the robe remained as before. The king then repented and prostrated himself, realizing that this was the true successor of Sinha. Then he pardoned his son, who now wanted to leave home and become a mendicant. The Buddhist master Vashashita asked him, "Why do you want to leave home?" Finally he permitted Punyamitra to become a Buddhist monk.

After that Punyamitra attended Vashashita for six years. Finally transmitting the Buddha's treasury of the eye of the truth to him, Vashashita said, "From the Buddha it has been handed down from successor to successor, up to the present; now you must receive and hold it, to enlighten all beings." When Punyamitra received this private direction, he felt a physical and mental sense of relief.

The story shows that Punyamitra did not have any ulterior motive for becoming a monk. Vashashita asked him what he wanted to leave home for, and he said he wanted to do buddha work. From this we should know that mendicants basically do not do anything for mundane purposes. Buddha work is not for oneself, nor for others, so it is not for anything ordinary.

Even if you shave your head and don monastic robes, assuming the appearance of a Buddhist mendicant, this does not mean you have escaped ideas of self and other. If you are not detached from appearances of maleness and femaleness, whatever you do is mundane activity, not buddha work.

Although it is true that when we speak for the moment from the point of view of people's original mind, there is no buddha work and no mundane concerns, as long as you do not know the original mind, whatever you do is a mundane affair. Understanding the original mind is called buddha work.

When you actually know the original mind, there is not even any

sign of birth or of death, much less delusion or enlightenment. When you see in this way, even the physical and psychological elements do not remain, much less their various states of being. So there is no home to abandon, no body to set aside—therefore this is called “leaving home.”

Because there is nowhere to dwell, the home is broken up and the person is gone. Therefore samsara and nirvana both disappear without being effaced, enlightenment and affliction are originally irrelevant without being abandoned. It is not only like this now; from age to age, it is not changed by phases of becoming, subsistence, decay, and emptiness, it is not bound by appearances of birth, life, change, and death. Open as space without inside or outside, clear as pure water—such is the original mind that is in everyone. So you shouldn't fear home life, and shouldn't be proud of leaving home. Just stop seeking outwardly; turn to yourself to understand.

For the moment try this: do not scatter your mind, do not look around, but observe carefully—now what can you call self, what can you call other? Since there is no polarity of self and other, what do you call good or bad? If you can do this, the original mind is basically evident, as clearly as the sun and moon, illumining everywhere.

Again I have a humble saying to express this story:

The original ground is level, without a blade of grass—  
Where can Zen teaching make an arrangement?

## PRAJNATARA

The Buddhist master Punyamitra said to Prajnatarā, "Do you remember events of the past?" Prajnatarā said, "I remember in a distant eon I was living in the same place as you; you were expounding great wisdom and I was reciting the most profound scripture. This event today is in conformity with past cause."

Prajnatarā was from eastern India. In his time Punyamitra came to eastern India, where there was a king known as The Resolute who was a Hindu worshiper, his guru a Brahmin ascetic with long nails. When the Buddhist master Punyamitra was about to arrive, the king and the ascetic both saw a white vapor extending from above to below. The king said, "What omen is this?" The ascetic already knew that the Buddhist master had entered the realm, and he was afraid that he would gain the king's favor, so he said, "This is just a sign of a demon coming. This is not an auspicious omen."

The ascetic gathered his followers together and said to them, "Punyamitra is about to enter the capital city; who can defeat him?" A disciple said, "We each have various magical spells by which we can even move the heavens and the earth, or even enter water and fire; what is there to worry about?"

When the Buddhist master Punyamitra arrived, he first saw a black atmosphere around the palace walls. He said, "This will be just a little difficulty," and went straight to the king. The king said, "What did you come here for?" The Buddhist master said, "I came to liberate sentient beings." The king said, "By what method do you liberate them?" Punyamitra said, "I liberate each according to kind."

The Hindu ascetic heard these words and could not control his anger; he then magically produced a mountain on top of the Buddhist master's head. Punyamitra pointed at the magical mountain, and suddenly it was on the heads of the ascetic's followers. They were all terrified and submitted to the Buddhist master. Punyamitra pitied

them for their ignorance and delusion, and pointed at the mountain again, whereupon it disappeared. Then he expounded the essentials of Buddhism to the king, inducing him to incline to true religion.

Punyamitra also said to the king, "In this country there is a sage who will succeed me." At that time there was a young man of the priestly caste, about twenty years old, who had been orphaned since childhood and did not know his family name. Some called him Keyura, so people referred to him by that name. He spent the days wandering through the villages begging. He was just like the Buddhist saint who never despised anyone. When people asked him why he was going so fast, he would answer, "Why are you going so slow?" If someone asked his family name, he would reply, "Same as yours." No one knew what he meant.

Later, the king and the Buddhist master Punyamitra went out together riding in a chariot. Seeing the youth Keyura bowing his head before them, the Buddhist master said to him, "Do you remember past events?" And so the story goes, their meeting being in accord with past cause. Punyamitra also said to the king, "This youth is none other than Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva. This sage will produce two enlightened disciples; one will teach in southern India, the other has affinity in China. After four or five years he will want to return here." Finally, because of the past cause, he named the youth Prajnatarā, "Pearl of Wisdom."

Now the founding teachers who transmitted the seal of the enlightened mind, the sages whose mind ground was opened and illumined, were arhats or bodhisattvas—saints of the individual and collective Buddhist paths—yet because they were not ignorant of the fundamental Way they were eternally enlightened ones. Even if you seem to be a beginner, if in a single moment the mind is turned around to reveal its originally inherent qualities, nothing is lacking at all; together with the realized ones, you will commune with the Buddhas. Though it is not a matter of one appearing and one disappearing, it is not a matter of together putting forth a single hand; there is no multiplicity, no different lineage.

Therefore seeing today is seeing all time; looking over the ages is guarding the present. The enlightened ones are born together with you and live together with me, without the slightest separation, accompanying us at all times. When you manage to arrive at this state, it is not something of past, present, or future, it is not a matter of

sense, objects, or sense consciousnesses. This is why it is said that succession to the reality of Buddhism transcends time, that realization continuously pervades time. Because it is so, the golden needle and jade thread pass through finely. When you look closely, which is other, which is self? Neither the frame nor the point shows. Here everyone gets a seat, and it is always shared.

Therefore in the foregoing story too it says, "You were expounding great wisdom and I was reciting the most profound scripture." If form is pure, then omniscience is pure. There is no difference, no distinction. Sentient beings are the buddha nature, the buddha nature is sentient beings. The teacher does not introduce anything from outside, the student does not bring out anything from inside. Though the two are distinguished in this way, ultimately there is no difference in plurality.

Therefore Prajnatarā was named "Pearl of Wisdom" in the same way as the Buddhist master Vashashita was named in accord with past cause and present condition. Past and present cannot be separated. How can emptiness and existence be different? This is why an ancient said, "If you can understand here, there is no problem; what is wrong with distinguishing or not distinguishing substance and function?"

When we consider emptiness the substance of myriad forms, there is nothing before us; when we consider myriad forms the function of emptiness, there is no different road. Therefore at this point the path of teacher and apprentice is transmitted. Even to understand that the seal of approval of Buddhas and Zen masters is of many kinds seems to suggest that there are divisions; yet even if you understand that there is no duality, you are still carrying a one-sided view. When you examine and evaluate carefully, when a white heron stands in the snow they are not the same color, and white flowers and moonlight are not exactly like each other. Traveling in this way, you go on "filling a silver bowl with snow, hiding a heron in the moonlight."

To analyze the foregoing story, I have a humble saying:

The light of the moon reflected in the depths of the pond is  
bright in the sky;

The water flowing to the horizon is thoroughly clear and pure.  
Sifting and straining over and over, even if you know it exists.  
Boundless and clear, it turns out to be utterly ineffable.



## BODHIDHARMA

The Buddhist master Prajnatarā asked Bodhidharma, "What among things is formless?" Bodhidharma said, "Nonorigination is formless." Prajnatarā asked, "What among things is greatest?" Bodhidharma said, "The nature of reality is greatest."

Bodhidharma was from a family of the warrior caste, and his original name was Bodhitara. He was the third son of a rajah, or king, of southern India. That king was unusually devoted to Buddhism, and he once gave a priceless jewel to the Buddhist master Prajnatarā.

The king had three sons, one named Chandratara, the second named Gunatarā, and the third named Bodhitara. In order to test the wisdom of the princes, Prajnatarā showed the jewel given him by their father and said, "Is there anything comparable to this jewel?" The first and second princes said, "This jewel is the finest of precious stones; there is certainly none better. Who but someone of your sanctity could receive such a jewel?"

But the third son Bodhitara said, "This is a worldly jewel, and cannot be considered of the highest order. Among all jewels, the jewel of truth is supreme. This is a worldly luster, and cannot be considered the finest. Among all lusters, the luster of wisdom is supreme. This is a worldly clarity, and cannot be considered the best. Among all clarities, clarity of mind is supreme. The sparkle of this jewel cannot shine by itself, it needs the light of knowledge to discern its sparkle. When you discern this, you know it is a jewel, when you know this jewel, you know it is precious. When you understand that it is precious, the value is not value in itself. If you understand the jewel, the jewel is not a jewel in itself.

"The jewel is not a jewel in itself because we need the jewel of knowledge to distinguish it as a jewel in the worldly sense. Value is not value in itself because we need the treasure of knowledge to understand the value of truth. Because your Way is a treasure of

knowledge, you have been rewarded with a worldly treasure. So that treasure has appeared because there is enlightenment in you, just as the treasure of mind appears in anyone with enlightenment."

Hearing the eloquent explanation of the third prince, the Buddhist master Prajnatarā knew that he was an incarnated sage and perceived that the prince would be his spiritual successor. He knew the time was not yet ripe, however, so he kept silent and did not single him out.

Later Prajnatarā asked the youngest prince, "What among all things is formless?" The prince said, "Nonorigination is formless." The Buddhist master asked, "What among things is paramount?" The prince said, "The sense of self and others is paramount." Finally Prajnatarā asked, "What among things is greatest?" The prince said, "The nature of reality is greatest." Although the minds of teacher and apprentice communicated through such dialogue, Prajnatarā still waited for the opportunity to ripen.

Subsequently, when the king died and everyone was mourning, Bodhitara sat alone in front of the casket and went into a trance. He came out of the trance seven days later, then went to Prajnatarā to request ordination as a Buddhist monk.

Prajnatarā knew the time had come, so he ordained the prince and invested him with the precepts. After that Bodhitara sat in meditation for seven days in Prajnatarā's presence, and Prajnatarā gave him thorough instructions in the subtle principles of meditation. Hearing these instructions, Bodhitara developed unsurpassed wisdom. Then Prajnatarā said to him, "You have already attained full comprehension of all principles. Dharma has the meaning of greatness of comprehension, so you should be called Dharma. "Thus he changed his name to Bodhidharma.

Having been initiated and having received the teaching, Bodhidharma knelt and asked, "I have already realized the truth—to what land shall I go to work." Prajnatarā instructed him, "Though you have realized the truth, you should stay in southern India for a while; sixty-seven years after my death, you should go to China and teach those of great potential."

Bodhidharma said, "Will I be able to find great people with the capacity for the teaching? Will trouble arise after a thousand years?" Prajnatarā said, "Innumerable people in that land will attain enlightenment. There will be a little trouble. You should humble yourself.

When you get to China, don't stay in the south, where they only like pious works and do not perceive the essence of buddhahood." Then Prajnatarā gave Bodhidharma a verse of instruction:

Traveling the road, crossing the water,  
 you will meet a sheep.  
 Going alone, without rest,  
 you will cross the river in the dark.  
 Under the sun, a nice pair—elephant and horse;  
 Two young cinnamon trees will flourish forever.

He also said, "You will see someone in the woods who will realize enlightenment," and again he spoke in verse:

Though China is vast, there is no other road.  
 You need successors to follow in your footsteps.  
 A golden rooster will be able to pick up a single grain  
 And support all the saintly people in the world.

Having thus received confirmation and predictions in detail, Bodhidharma attended Prajnatarā for forty years.

After Prajnatarā died, another of his disciples, Buddhasena, having received Prajnatarā's confirmation, taught as did Bodhidharma, but another disciple divided his followers into six sects. Bodhidharma taught and converted these six sects and became respected all over the land.

When over sixty years had passed in this manner, Bodhidharma knew that conditions were ripe for China, so he went to the rajah and said, "Respect the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community, and benefit the people thereby. The conditions for me to go to China are ripe; I will come back when I have finished my work." The rajah wept and said, "What is wrong with this country? What is auspicious about that land? Anyway, when your task in China is done, come right back—don't forget the land of your parents." The rajah saw him off, accompanying him to the port.

Bodhidharma traveled by sea for three years, finally arriving in southern China in the year 527. Thus it was that he first had an audience with the Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty in southern China. This was what Prajnatarā had been referring to when he said, "Don't stay in the south."

From there Bodhidharma went north to the kingdom of Wei. It is

said that he rode on a reed; people usually take this literally, so Bodhidharma is often portrayed standing on a reed, but this is wrong. A reed is a small boat shaped like a reed, not literally a reed. "You will meet a sheep" refers to Emperor Wu of Liang. "You will cross the river in the dark" refers to the Yangtze River, which separated the northern kingdom of Wei and the southern kingdom of Liang.

So Bodhidharma soon arrived at Shaolin monastery on Mount Song, where he stayed in the eastern hall. No one could figure him out, as he sat day and night. Because of this he was called the Indian Who Stares at the Wall. Thus did Bodhidharma spend nine years there without any noisy explanations, without hastily teaching.

After nine years, having bequeathed his "skin, flesh, bones, and marrow" to his four disciples Daofu, Daoyu, Congzhi, and Huike, he knew their potentials had matured.

At that time there were two deviants named Bodhiruci and precept master Guanglu, who were extremely upset to see master Bodhidharma's virtue spreading over the land and to see people trusting him and respecting him. They not only hurled stones at him knocking out his front teeth, they also tried to poison him five times. On their sixth attempt, Bodhidharma placed the poison on a boulder, and the boulder split.

Realizing his mission was over, he thought to himself, "I received the confirmation and prediction of my late teacher; I saw a great atmospheric phenomenon in China and knew for certain that there were people with the capacity for the great teaching. But since my meeting with Emperor Wu of Liang, I couldn't find anyone suitable. As I sat coolly doing nothing for nine years, I found only the great Huike, to whom I passed on the Way that I realized. Having done this task, my time is ended. Now I should leave." So saying, he sat up and passed away. He is buried on Bear Ear Mountain. It is said that he later met a man named Song Yun on the Su Range, but the fact is that he is buried on Bear Ear Mountain.

Based on the instruction and final direction of the Buddhist master Prajnatara, Bodhidharma became the founder of Zen in China. In the beginning of his acquaintance with Prajnatara, when he explained about the jewel, Prajnatara said, "What among all things is formless?" Bodhidharma said, "Nonorigination is formless." Even if you speak of empty silence, actually this is not formless. Therefore he said nonorigination is formless. Thus one would understand it as like a sheer



cliff, one would understand it as being clear in everything, and recognize that everything is nothing else, just naturally abiding in its normal state—but this is not the unoriginated, so it is not formless.

Before heaven and earth are separated, how could holy and ordinary be distinguished? In this realm, there is not a single thing to appear, not a mote of dust that can defile. But it is not that there is originally nothing. Then you are empty and open, spiritually aware, wide awake and unbedazzled. Here there is nothing to compare, and never has anything accompanied it. Therefore it is the greatest of the great. That is why it is said that the great is called inconceivable, and the inconceivable is called the nature of reality.

Even a priceless jewel cannot compare with it; even the clear light of the mind cannot represent it. Therefore Bodhidharma said the jewel had a mundane luster and could not be considered supreme—the luster of wisdom is supreme. This is how he understood it. Though his explanation was truly from natural wisdom, yet he sat in meditation for seven days listening to the subtle teachings of meditation being explained to him, and thus developed supreme knowledge of the Way.

Thus we should know it is after meticulous discernment and complete arrival at such a state that you know the existence of what the Buddhas and Zen founders realized. Having clarified what the Buddhas of the past realized, one should be a descendant of the enlightened ones. This fact is particularly illustrated by this worthy—though he was already like one with natural wisdom, he went on to develop knowledge of the supreme Way. And after that, he also completely mastered the attention needed to preserve and maintain it in the future. He studied thoroughly over a period of forty years in attendance on Prajnatarā, then passed sixty more years not forgetting Prajnatarā's bequest for the future, and subsequently spent three years crossing the sea. At last he arrived in an unknown land, and while sitting coolly for nine years he found people with the capacity for the great teaching. Finally he was able to spread the true teaching of the Buddhas, thus requiting his debt to his teacher. His hardships were hardest of all, his austerities were most austere.

Students of Zen today, however, still want easy attainment even though the times are degenerate and people's capacities are inferior. I am afraid that people like this, the type who claim to attain what



they have not, are conceited people who might as well withdraw from Zen study.

If you thoroughly penetrate the preceding story, you will know more and more how lofty it is. Breaking up your mind and abandoning your body, if you closely investigate the Way, there will be a subtle influence from the enlightened ones, and you will directly meet with what the enlightened ones realized. Don't think that a bit of knowledge or half an understanding is enough.

Again I have a humble saying:

There is no more location, no bounds, no outside—  
Is there anything at all, even in the slightest?

## HUIKE (SHENGUANG)

Huike studied with the Buddhist master Bodhidharma. One day he said to the master, "I have already ended all involvements." Bodhidharma said, "Doesn't that turn into nihilism?" Huike said, "No." Bodhidharma said, "How can you prove it?" Huike said, "I am always clearly aware. Therefore words cannot reach it." Bodhidharma said, "This is the essence of the mind, which all Buddhas realize—doubt no more."

Before Huike's parents had any children, his father used to think to himself, "We honor good in this house—why should we have no children?" He prayed for a long time, until one night he sensed a strange light illumining the room. That night his wife conceived Huike. As he was growing up, Huike was named Guang, "Light," because of the auspicious sign of the light filling the room on the night of his conception.

He had an extraordinary spirit even from childhood. He lived for a long time in the region of the ancient capital and read widely. He paid no attention to making a living, but liked to roam in the mountains and by the rivers. He used to lament, "The teachings of Confucius and Lao-tzu are rules for manners and arts; the book of Chuang-tzu and the *I Ching* still do not exhaust the subtle truth."

He was ordained as a Buddhist monk by a meditation master, then traveled around to lectures and studied all the principles of the individual and collective practices of Buddhism. One day while reading one of the scriptures on wisdom he felt a transcendent sense of satisfaction. For eight years after that he sat peacefully day and night. While in a state of profound calm and stillness he saw a spiritual being, which said to him, "You are about to realize the effect of your practice—why linger here? The Great Way is not far—go south." Realizing that it was spiritual help, he changed his name to Shenguang, "Spiritual Light."

The next day his head hurt as though it had been spiked. As his teacher tried to cure the pain, a voice from nowhere said, "This is the changing of bones—this is not an ordinary pain." Shenguang then told his teacher he had seen a spirit. His teacher looked at the crown of his head and saw lumps like five peaks standing out. He said, "Your features are auspicious—you will have realization. The spirit directing you south must have been referring to the great master Bodhidharma at Shaolin—he must be your teacher."

Receiving this instruction, Shenguang went to Shaolin monastery on Mount Song. This was in December of the year 528. The great teacher did not let him in, so Shenguang stood outside the window. That night a heavy snow fell. He stood in the snow, waiting for daybreak. The snow piled up, burying him to his waist, and the cold penetrated his bones. As he wept, each tear froze, making him even colder. He thought to himself, "When the ancients sought the Way, they broke their bones and extracted the marrow, shed their blood to appease the hunger of others, spread their hair over mud as a mat, hurled themselves from cliffs to feed tigers. If even the people of old did such things, what about me?" With these thoughts he spurred on his determination and stood there firmly, unflagging, without moving.

At dawn, the great master, seeing that Shenguang had been standing in the snow all night, took pity on him and asked him what he was seeking. He replied, "I only ask that the teacher open the gate of the elixir of universal compassion to liberate all beings." The great teacher said, "The supreme ineffable Way of all enlightened ones involves ages of effort, carrying out what is difficult to carry out, enduring what is difficult to endure. How can you hope for true religion with little virtue, little wisdom, a shallow heart, and an arrogant mind? It would just be a waste of effort."

So saying, Bodhidharma paid no more attention to him. Shenguang, hearing these merciful admonitions, wept even more, and his determination to see the Way became yet keener. He took a sharp sword and cut off his left arm. The great teacher then knew he had the capacity for the teaching, and said to him, "When the Buddhas first sought the Way, they forgot their bodies for the sake of truth. Now you have cut off your arm in my presence—you are capable of seeking."

Shenguang's name was therefore changed to Huike, which means

"Wisdom and Capacity." Finally he was allowed to associate with Bodhidharma.

Huike spent eight years with Bodhidharma after that. Once he asked the great teacher, "Can I hear about the seal of truth of the Buddhas?" Bodhidharma said, "The seal of truth of the Buddhas is not gotten from another." Another time he instructed Huike, "Outwardly cease all involvements, inwardly have no coughing or sighing in the mind—with your mind like a wall you can enter the Way."

Huike was always talking about mind and nature, but he did not realize the essence of truth. The great teacher just refuted his errors and did not explain the essence of mind that is free from thought. In *Mystic Devices in the Room* it says, "One time Huike climbed up Few Houses Peak with Bodhidharma. Bodhidharma asked, 'Where are we going?' Huike said, 'Please go right ahead—that's it.' Bodhidharma said, 'If you go right ahead, you cannot move a step.' Hearing this, Huike was enlightened."

One time Huike said to Bodhidharma, "I have already ended all involvements," and he finally reached the point where he had no further doubt. Eventually Bodhidharma bequeathed both the robe and the teaching to him, saying, "Inwardly transmit the seal of truth for the realization of the enlightened mind; outwardly transmit the vestment to certify the religion." So after the great teacher died, the master Huike, succeeding him, spread the mystic way.

When he handed the teaching on to his successor Sengcan, Huike said, "I still have a burden from the past, which I must now make up for." Having transmitted his bequest, he went to the metropolis of Ye and taught when the occasion arose. All kinds of people, monks and nuns and lay people, reposed their faith in him. He spent thirty years in this way, hiding his light and mixing in with the crowd, changing his appearance. Sometimes he would go to the wine shops, sometimes to the butcher stalls. Sometimes he would give talks on the street, sometimes he would work along with the outhouse cleaners. Someone asked him, "You are a man of the Way—why do you act like this?" Huike said, "I tune my mind by myself—what business is it of yours?"

Later he preached at the gate of a certain monastery, and people gathered in droves. At that time a certain monk was lecturing on the Nirvana Scripture in that monastery, but the people attending his lectures were gradually drawn to Huike's talks, and the monk could

not contain his anger. He slandered Huike to a local official, and the official, fooled by what the monk said, unjustly persecuted Huike. Huike submitted without complaint and was executed in the year 593.

Now to begin with there is no distinction of superiority and inferiority among the Buddhist masters in their honorable virtues, but this master was great among the great ones. Even though Bodhidharma came from India, Zen could not have reached the present day had it not been for Huike's transmission. His trials were greater than others, his determination in seeking surpassed all.

And Bodhidharma, waiting for a genuine student, did not speak for a long time and did not especially give any teachings to his successor. He just said, "Outwardly cease all involvements, inwardly have no coughing or sighing in the mind—with your mind like a wall you can enter the Way."

In truth, if you stop thinking you will expose the essence of mind. Hearing this, you may try to become mindless like a wall, but this is not really seeing the mind. Thus Huike said, "I am always clearly aware." If you can be like this, this is what the Buddhas all realize.

So if you stop all involvement with objects outside, there will be no thoughts within. Wide awake, you will be unmuddled—clearly aware, it is originally apparent. Here there is no distinction between old and new or past and present, no separation between self and other. By harmonization with the realization of Buddhas, the mental communication of the Zen founders passed through India to China and joined China to Japan. It was so in the past and it is so today. Don't just long for the past—avail yourself of the present day to practice Zen. Don't think it has been a long time since the Buddha—don't give up on yourself, understand and clarify yourself.

As usual, I have a humble saying:

Empty yet radiantly bright, conditioned thought ended,  
Perspicuous, aware, always open and clear.



## SENGCAN

Sengcan said to the Zen master Huike, "I am riddled with sickness; please absolve me of my sin." Huike said, "Bring me your sin and I will absolve you." After a long pause, Sengcan said, "When I look for my sin I cannot find it." Huike said, "I have absolved you. You should live by the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community."

It is not known where Sengcan came from. When he visited Zen master Huike, he was a layman over forty years of age. He did not say his name, but came to the Zen master and asked for relief from his illness, as told in the story.

When Huike told him to live by the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community, Sengcan said, "I can see you are a monk, a member of the Buddhist community; what are the Buddha and the Teaching?" Huike said, "This mind is Buddha, this mind is the Teaching; the Teaching and the Buddha are not separate. This is also true of the Community."

Sengcan said, "Today for the first time I have realized that the essence of sin is not inside, not outside, not in between. So it is also of mind. Buddha and the Teaching are not separate either." Huike regarded him as having the capacity for the teaching, so he had him ordained as a monk and named him Sengcan, which means "Light of the Religious Community." After this his sickness gradually healed.

Sengcan attended Huike for two years. Then Huike said to him, "The great teacher Bodhidharma came here to China from India, and gave me both the robe and the teaching. Now I entrust them to you." He also said, "Although you have attained the teaching, for the time being you should go into the mountains and not teach publicly. There will be trouble in this country."

Sengcan said, "Since you know about this, please give me some instructions." Huike said, "It is not that I know—this is the prediction given to Bodhidharma by Prajnatarā, who said, 'Inside the heart

is auspicious, but outside is bad luck.' According to my calculations, this prediction refers to your generation. Think about these words and don't get caught up in worldly problems."

After that Sengcan lived in seclusion in the mountains for ten years. This was the time that the Martial Emperor of the Wei dynasty persecuted the Buddhist religion. Because of this Sengcan changed his appearance and stayed in the mountains, dwelling in no fixed place.

While in this condition Sengcan met the novice Daoxin, who was to become his successor. He said to Daoxin, "After my teacher transmitted Zen to me, he went to the big city and spent thirty years there. Now that I have found you, why should I stay here?" Then he went to another mountain, but later returned to his old abode. The local people flocked to him and offered him support. He gave extensive explanations of the essence of mind for the people, then at a religious meeting he died under a tree. His Poem on the Trust in the Heart was recorded and circulates even today. Later he was given the title Master of Mirrorlike Knowledge.

The sickness plaguing him in his first meeting with Huike was leprosy. But as he associated with the Zen master, his sickness disappeared. There is nothing special about this story: understanding that the nature of sin is ungraspable, he realized that the nature of mind is originally pure. Thus he heard that the Buddha and the Truth are not separate, that mind and reality are *thus*. When you really know the original mind, there is no difference in dying in one place and being born in another—how much less could there be any distinction of sin and virtue there! Thus the body-mind after all does not exist; we are fundamentally free from skin, flesh, bones, and marrow. Therefore his disease disappeared and his original mind appeared.

In expounding the essence of the teaching, Sengcan said, "The supreme Way is without difficulty—it is only averse to discrimination." In conclusion he said, "There is no way to talk about it—it is not of the past, future, or present." Really there is no inside or outside, no in between—what would you choose, what reject? You cannot take, you cannot leave. Once you have no hate or love, you are empty and clear. At no time do you lack, nothing is extra.

Yet even so, investigate thoroughly to reach the point of ungraspability, to arrive at the realm of ungraspability. Without becoming nihilistic, not being like wood or stone, you should be able to "strike space and make an echo, tie lightning to make a form." Care-

fully observe the realm where there are no tracks or traces, yet don't hide there. If you can be like this, even though "*that* is not the present phenomena, it is not within reach of ear or eye," you should see without hindrance, you should comprehend without deviation.

Can we add a discerning word to this story?

Essential emptiness has no inside or outside—  
Sin and virtue leave no traces there.  
Mind and Buddha are fundamentally *thus*;  
The Teaching and Community are clear.

## DAOXIN

Daoxin said to the Zen master Sengcan, "I beg your compassion—please give me a way of liberation." Sengcan said, "Who is binding you?" Daoxin said, "No one is binding me." Sengcan said, "Then why seek liberation?" At these words Daoxin was greatly enlightened.

Daoxin, succeeding to the Way of the Zen founders, concentrated his mind without sleeping and never lay down for sixty years. In 617 he came to Qi province with a group of followers. At that time an army of bandits had been besieging the city for seventy days, and all the people were in terror. Daoxin, feeling pity for them, taught them to recite the name of great transcendent wisdom. When the bandits looked over the outer city wall, there seemed to be a supernatural army; they said to each other that there must be someone extraordinary in the city and they shouldn't attack it. Gradually they left.

In 624 Daoxin returned to Qi. That spring he stayed on Broken Head Mountain, where students gathered in great numbers. One day he met his future successor Hongren on the road to Huangmei, and he also produced a collateral branch of the teaching on Ox Head Mountain.

In 643 the emperor of China heard of Daoxin and wanted to see him, so he summoned him to the capital. Daoxin refused three times and finally excused himself on account of illness. The fourth time, the emperor instructed his emissary to take the Zen master's head if he continued to refuse. When the emissary came and told Daoxin about this, the master just stretched out his neck to the sword, remaining fully composed. The emissary thought this remarkable and returned to report it to the emperor. The emperor admired the Zen master all the more; he sent him some rare cloth and let him have his way.

In 651 Daoxin suddenly admonished his disciples, "All things are liberated. You should keep mindful of this and teach it in the future."

So saying, he passed away while sitting peacefully. He was seventy-two years old. He was entombed on the mountain where he lived. The next year the door of the mausoleum opened of itself for no reason; the Zen master looked just as he had when he was alive. After that his disciples did not dare to shut the tomb. Later he was posthumously entitled Great Physician Zen Master.

Although there is actually no superiority or inferiority in the practice of Zen masters, this one followed the religion of emptiness from boyhood, just as though he had studied it in a former lifetime. Throughout his life he never associated with rulers or politicians. He practiced the Way with single-minded determination, never turning back. In the very beginning he declared the way of liberation, and he also opened the gate of liberation when he was about to die, to let people know that life and death do not bind us. He really was an extraordinary man, the kind met once in a thousand years.

The cultivation of emptiness is called the gate of liberation. Why is this? Neither sentience nor buddhahood binds you—what more birth and death could there be to entangle you? This cannot be assessed through body or mind, it cannot be discerned by illusion or enlightenment. Even if you talk about mind, objects, afflictions, and enlightenment, all these are different names for the self. Therefore mountains and rivers have no barriers, subject and object are not different. Because of this, "When it's cold it chills you thoroughly, when it's hot it heats you thoroughly."

Then when you cross this barrier, it is not this principle either. That is to say, there is neither bondage nor liberation, neither that nor this. Things do not set up names, things do not separate their forms. Therefore deliberate cultivation comes to an end; how can it have anything to do with relative and absolute? There is no sitting upright in the hall; do not rest in duality. If you can see in this way, you do not even use the word liberation, much less complain of bondage.

Furthermore, you actually have a light called vision of the world, you have a sense of taste called blending the six flavors. Therefore you emanate light everywhere and prepare a feast everywhere. As you savor it, you find rich flavor where there is no flavor. As you observe it, you find true form where there is no form. Thus there are no rulers or politicians to approach, there is no physical or mental sitting or reclining.



If you can reach this state, you are the Zen master, the Zen master is you. Is this not what is meant by the saying that everything is liberation? Is this not transmitting the teaching to the future? The seamless monument will suddenly open its doors, and the ordinary appearance will be revealed.

Again I have a humble saying:

When mind is empty, pure knowledge has no wrong or right;  
Here I don't know what there is to bind or free.  
Even if you distinguish the elements of body and mind,  
Seeing, hearing, sound and form, are ultimately not another.

## HONGREN

Hongren met the Zen master Daoxin on a road in Huangmei. The Zen master asked him what his name was; he replied, "I have an essence, but it is not a common name." The Zen master said, "What name is it?" He replied, "It is the essence of buddhahood." The Zen master said, "Have you no name?" He said, "None, because essence is empty." The Zen master recognized his capacity for truth, and passed the teaching and the robe on to him.

Hongren was formerly an itinerant forester who planted trees. He once asked the Zen master Daoxin to tell him about Zen, but the Zen master said, "You are already old. Even if you learned about Zen, how could you spread the teaching? If you come back, I will wait for you."

The forester then went to a young woman washing her clothes by the river and asked her, "Can I stay for a while?" The woman said, "Go ask my father and brother." He said, "If you agree, I'll go." The woman shook her head in agreement, and the old man left. Then the woman returned home, and subsequently found she was pregnant. Her parents were outraged and drove her out of their home. Having no place to go, by days she did spinning for hire and at night she stayed at an inn.

Finally the young woman gave birth to a son. She considered him an ill omen and threw him in the river. The infant, however, went against the current and did not get wet. For seven days spiritual beings protected him and prevented any harm from coming to him: by day two birds came and covered the infant with their wings, and by night two dogs curled up around him. The infant was fresh and clean, and had all of his faculties. His mother, now regarding him as a marvel, at length took him in and raised him. As a child he begged with his mother, and people called him the boy without a surname.

Later he met the Zen master Daoxin on a road in Huangmei, one day when the Zen master had gone out for a walk. The master saw

that the boy was unusual, and asked him what his name was. Ultimately the Zen master recognized him as one with the capacity for Zen teaching, so he asked the boy's mother to allow him to leave home and become a disciple. At that time he was seven years old.

From the time Hongren thus received initiation and became a monk, he sat in meditation all the time, except when he was doing his chores. Finally in the year 675 he announced to his own students that he had finished his work and was going to leave. So saying, he passed away as he sat.

There is a name that is not received from one's father, not received from one's ancestors, not inherited from Buddhas, not inherited from Zen masters; it is called the buddha nature, or essence of buddhahood. Zen study is basically to reach the fundamental and clarify the essence of mind. If you don't reach the fundamental, you live and die in vain, misunderstanding yourself and others. As for what this fundamental essence is, your features may differ as you die and are born over and over again, but at all times there is an inherent awareness.

This can be known from the present story—having sought the Way as the pine planter in the past, now receiving the transmission of the robe and the teaching as a seven-year-old boy, from then to now the mind hasn't changed on account of birth, the essence hasn't changed on account of physical form. In Zen master Hongzhi's eulogy of Hongren it says, "Before and after, two bodies; past and present, one mind." Though bodies change, there is no separate mind, past or present. You should know that since countless eons past it has just been *thus*.

If you arrive at this fundamental essence, it cannot be distinguished in terms of caste or class. Because people of all classes have the same essence, because the fundamental essence is *thus*, when people of any caste are ordained as Buddhist monks or nuns, they are all known by the surname Shakyas, the family name of Buddha, to let it be known that there is no distinction among them.

This means that really there is no gap between you and me. It is just that we have the appearance of self and other, just like former and later bodies. But if you cannot discern this and cannot understand the mind, you erroneously think of self and environment as separate, and distinguish your own being from the being of others. Because of this you have emotional attachments to all kinds of things and are

confused all the time. But once you realize this realm, even if you change your form and transform your life, how could that block the self or change the mind?

This should be known from the itinerant forester and the boy. He was born without a father, so we should know that people are not necessarily born of the bloodline of a father and mother. Thus, although according to the view of emotional attachments the physical body is received from one's parents, still we should realize that our being is not the gross physical elements.

If you understand the body in this way, then there is nothing at all accompanying the self, and at no time is there any difference from oneself. That is why an ancient said, "All beings have always been absorbed in the essence of reality." If you can comprehend this Way and practice this Way, you will meet Zen master Daoxin and be equal to Zen master Hongren. There will be no difference between countries or between times.

Now how can I make a comment that will accord with this principle?

The moon bright, the water pure, the autumn sky is clear;  
How could there be a fleck of cloud spotting this great clarity?

## HUINENG

Huineng worked in the mill at Huangmei, where the Zen master Hongren was teaching. One night the Zen master came to the mill and asked Huineng, "Is the rice white yet?" Huineng said, "It's white, but hasn't been sifted." The Zen master knocked the mortar three times with his staff; Huineng shook rice in a sieve three times, and entered the Zen master's room.

During the first quarter of the seventh century Huineng's father was demoted and sent to the southern frontier region, where he settled down. After his father died, Huineng was raised by his mother. As he was growing up his family was extremely poor, and he eked out a living by cutting wood.

One day when Huineng went to market with a bundle of wood, he heard a traveler reciting the Diamond Cutter Scripture. When the traveler reached the part where it says, "You should activate the mind without dwelling on anything," Huineng experienced enlightenment. He said to the traveler, "What scripture is this? Who did you learn it from?" The traveler said, "It is called the Diamond Cutter Scripture, and I learned it from the great teacher Hongren in Huangmei."

Huineng told his mother that he intended to seek a teacher for the truth. He went to another district and became friends with a high-minded man named Liu Zhilue. Liu's mother-in-law was a nun who constantly recited the Nirvana Scripture. After listening to the scripture for a while, Huineng expounded its meaning. The nun then picked up a volume of the scripture and asked about certain words. Huineng said, "I can't read—ask me about the meaning." The nun said, "If you can't read, how can you understand the meaning?" Huineng said, "The subtle principles of Buddha are not bound up in written words." This startled the nun, who told the elders of the town, "This is a man of the Way. We should invite him to stay here and offer him



support." After that the people who lived there came in droves to see him and pay their respects.

In the vicinity there was an ancient temple site; the people decided to rebuild it and invite Huineng to stay there. Monks, nuns, and lay people gathered in large numbers, and it soon became a sanctuary. One day Huineng thought to himself, "I seek the great teaching—why should I stop halfway?" The next day he left.

When he reached a certain cliffside cave in another district, he met meditation master Zhiyuan, from whom he requested more instruction. Zhiyuan said, "You have an unusually serene appearance, not like that of ordinary people. I have heard that the Indian Bodhidharma transmitted the mind seal, and that it has been handed down to Hongren, who lives at Huangmei. You should go there to seek certainty."

Huineng thanked him and left. Then he went directly to Huangmei and called on the Zen master Hongren. The Zen master said, "Where do you come from?" Huineng said, "From the south." The master said, "What are you seeking?" Huineng said, "I just seek to be a Buddha." The master said, "Southerners have no buddha nature—how can you attain buddhahood?" Huineng said, "As far as people are concerned, there are north and south, but how could that apply to the buddha nature?" The Zen master knew he was not an ordinary man, and sent him to the rice-pounding quarters of the monastery mill. Huineng went to work pounding rice. For eight months he worked without rest.

Eventually, realizing the time for transmission had come, Zen master Hongren said to the assembly, "The truth is hard to understand. Don't uselessly memorize my words and take that as your own responsibility. Each of you should freely compose a verse; if the meaning of the words is in accord with truth, I'll give you the robe and the teaching."

At that time Shenxiu was the eldest of the more than seven hundred monks in the community. He was versed in both social and mystic sciences, and was admired by all. They all deferred to him, reasoning that if he couldn't write an appropriate verse then none of them could. Shenxiu heard the praise of the community and reflected no further. Having composed a verse, he went several times to present it, but he felt faint and broke out in a sweat, unable to present the verse. Over a period of four days he tried and failed thirteen times to present his verse. Finally he thought that it would be better to

write it on the wall of the hall. If the Zen master thought it was satisfactory, he would come forth and say it was his work. If the master thought it unsatisfactory, he would go pass the years in the mountains—why practice anymore, receiving the homage of others?

That night at midnight, when no one would know, Shenxiu took a lamp and went into the south hall, where he wrote his verse on a wall, expressing his insight:

The body is the tree of enlightenment,  
 The mind like a clear mirror stand;  
 Time and again wipe it diligently,  
 Don't let it gather dust.

The next day as the Zen master was walking around he saw the verse. Knowing it had been composed by Shenxiu, he praised it, saying, "If later generations practice in accord with this, they too will realize an excellent result." He then had everyone memorize it.

Hearing this verse recited in the mill, Huineng asked a student, "What writing is this?" The student told Huineng what had transpired. Huineng had him recite the verse again; after a silence, Huineng then said, "It's very nice, all right, but it's not perfect." The student scolded him, "What does a common sort like you know? Don't talk like a madman." Huineng said, "You don't believe me? I'd like to add a verse to this." The student just looked at him without answering and laughed.

That night Huineng took a servent boy with him to the hall. Huineng held a lamp while he had the boy write another verse next to that of Shenxiu:

Enlightenment is basically not a tree,  
 And the clear mirror not a stand.  
 Fundamentally there is not a single thing—  
 Where can dust collect?

Seeing this verse, everybody on the mountain said it was the work of a living saint, and everyone praised it. The Zen master, knowing it was Huineng's verse, said, "Who composed this? It is someone who has not perceived his real nature yet." So saying, he erased the verse. Because of this, the community ignored it thereafter.

That night the Zen master secretly came to Huineng in the mill and said, "Is the rice white yet?" Huineng said, "It's white, but hasn't

been sifted." The master struck the mortar thrice; then Huineng sifted some rice three times and entered the Zen master's room. The master told him, "For the sake of the one great matter of the appearance of enlightened knowledge in the world, the Buddhas guide people in accord with their capacities. Eventually there came to be teachings of ten stages, three vehicles, sudden and gradual enlightenment, and so on. Moreover, the Buddha transmitted the supreme, extremely subtle, esoteric real treasury of the eye of the right teaching of complete enlightenment to his senior disciple Kasyapa the Elder. This was handed on until it reached Bodhidharma in the twenty-eighth generation; he came to China and found the great master Huike. Then it continued to be transmitted until it came to me. Now I pass on to you the treasure of the teaching and the robe that has been handed down. Preserve the teaching well and do not let it be cut off."

Kneeling, Huineng received the robe and the teaching. Then he asked, "I have received the teaching—to whom should the robe be imparted?" The Zen master Hongren said, "A long time ago when Bodhidharma first came to China, people didn't believe in Zen, so he handed on the robe as an indication of having attained the teaching. Now faith has developed, whereas the robe has become a source of contention. Therefore let it stop with you—don't pass it on. Now you should go far away and conceal yourself until the appropriate time to teach comes. It is said that the life of a man who has received this robe hangs like a thread."

Huineng said, "Where should I hide?" Hongren said, "When you come to Huai, stop there; when you come to Hui, hide there for a while."

Huineng then paid his respects and left with the robe. Zen master Hongren personally escorted him to the crossing at the foot of Mount Huangmei. Then Huineng saluted him and said, "You should go back now. I have already realized the Way, and should ferry myself over." Hongren said, "Though you have attained the Way, still I will ferry you over." So saying, he took the boat pole and crossed over to the other shore with Huineng. Then Hongren went back to the monastery alone. The community had no knowledge of this.

After that, the Zen master did not lecture any more. When people came and questioned him, he said, "My Way has gone." Someone

asked, "Who has got your robe and teaching?" Hongren said, "The able one got them."

Then the people reasoned that he must be referring to Huineng, because *neng* means "able." But when they looked for him, they found that he was gone. They realized that he had gotten the robe and the teaching, so they set out after him.

At that time there was a monk there named Huiming, who had been a general in the army. He led the expedition in pursuit of Huineng and overtook him on the Dayu Range.

Huineng said, "This robe symbolizes faith—why fight over it?" He put the robe and bowl on a boulder and hid in the bush. When Huiming arrived, he tried to pick up the robe and the bowl, but he was unable to budge them even though he tried with all his strength. Then Huiming trembled and said, "I have come for the teaching, not for the robe."

Now Huineng came out and sat on the boulder. Huiming bowed and said, "Please reveal the essence of the teaching to me." Huineng said, "When you don't think of good or evil, what is your original face?" Huiming was greatly enlightened at these words. He then asked, "Is there any further secret meaning beyond what you have just said?" Huineng said, "What I have told you is not a secret; if you look into your mind, the secret is in you." Huiming said, "Although I was with Hongren at Huangmei, I didn't truly realize my own likeness. Now that I have received your teaching, I am like one who drinks water and knows firsthand whether it is cool or warm. You are my teacher." Huineng said, "If it is as you say, Hongren is your teacher as well as mine."

Huiming then bowed in thanks and left. Later, when he became an abbot, he changed his name to Daoming, avoiding the use of Hui out of deference to Huineng. When anyone came to study with him, he would always send them to call on Huineng.

After Huineng received the robe and the teaching, he concealed himself for ten years among hunters in the forest. In 676 he came to Nanhai in southern China, where he found doctrinal master Yinzong lecturing on the Nirvana Scripture at Faxing temple. Huineng stood in the hallway for a while. A strong wind was blowing the temple banner, and he overheard two monks arguing, one saying that the flag was moving, the other that the wind was moving. They argued back and forth without getting to the truth, so Huineng said, "May a lay-



man interrupt your lofty discussion? It is not the wind or the flag that is moving—your minds are moving."

Hearing these words, Yinzong was amazed. The next day he called Huineng to him and asked about the meaning of the wind and the flag. Huineng gave him a thorough explanation of the principle. Then Yinzong unconsciously stood up and said, "You are definitely not an ordinary man. Who is your teacher?" Concealing nothing any longer, Huineng told him how he had attained the teaching. Then Yinzong became his disciple and asked to receive instruction in the essentials of Zen. He said to the assembly in the temple, "I am an ordinary mortal, but now I have met a living saint." Then he pointed to Huineng in the crowd and said, "This is he." They asked him to bring out the robe of the faith that had been transmitted to him, so that everyone could look upon it.

On the fifteenth day of January, several famous priests were assembled to formally ordain Huineng, and on February eighth he received the precepts from a preceptor. The altar on which this ceremony took place had been set up by the fifth-century doctrinal master and translator Gunabhadra, who wrote in his record of the event, "Later there will be a living saint who will receive the precepts at this altar." Also, in the late sixth century the doctrinal master Paramartha personally planted a bodhi tree on either side of the altar and told the community, "In one hundred and twenty years there will be a great enlightened man who will expound the unexcelled religion under these trees and will liberate countless people." After having received the precepts, Huineng began to teach Zen under these trees, as though in fulfillment of the prophecy.

The next year, on the eighth of February, Huineng suddenly said to the community, "I don't want to stay here—I want to go back to my old hiding place." So Yinzong and over a thousand monks, nuns, and lay people escorted him back to Baolin monastery in Canton. The inspector of the province invited him to teach at Dafan temple, and also received the formless precepts of the mind ground from him. His disciples recorded his sayings there and called this record to Altar Scripture, which now is popular. After that he returned to Caoqi and showered the rain of the great teaching. Those who were awakened were not less than a thousand. Finally Huineng passed away sitting, at the age of seventy-six.

At the time of the transmission of the teaching, the Zen master



Hongren said, "Is the rice white yet?" These grains of rice are the spiritual sprouts of the monarch of truth—the life root of the sages and ordinary people. Once in a wild field, they grow by themselves even without hoeing. Husked and polished, they take on no defilement. Yet even being so, they still have not been sifted and strained. If you sift and strain them, you will comprehend inside and out, you will be free in all ways. As the Zen master knocked the mortar thrice, the rice grains spontaneously arrayed themselves and the mind potential suddenly was revealed. As Huineng shook the rice in the strainer three times, the Zen Way was communicated. Since that time, the night of the knocking of the mortar has never dawned, the day of the transmission has never ended.

Let us reflect on this. The great master Huineng had been a woodcutter from the far south of China; he used to roam the mountains with his axe, and had no scholastic learning. Yet when he heard just one line of a scripture, the mind that does not dwell on anything arose in him. Later he labored in a mill with mortar and pestle. Though he had no experience of formal Zen study, after only eight months of diligent work, as he had illumined the mind like a clear mirror that is not a stand, the transmission was carried out in the middle of the night, and the lifeline of the Zen founders was passed on. While it does not necessarily depend on many years of effort, it is clear that he exerted the utmost diligence and care. The enlightenment of the Buddhas basically cannot be measured in terms of long or short time—how can the transmission of the Way of the Zen founders be understood in terms of divisions of past and present?

Furthermore, I have spoken this way and that for ninety days over this summer retreat, commenting on past and present, explaining the enlightened ones with both coarse words and soft speech. Entering into the subtle and the minute, falling into two and three, I have defiled the Way of Zen and exposed the disgrace of the school. Thus I think you people have all understood the principle and have gained strength, but it seems you have not personally accorded with the meaning of the Zen founders. Your practice is not like that of the sages of the past.

We are lucky to have been able to meet like this. If you work on the Way single-mindedly, you should be able to master it, but many of you have not reached the shore. You still cannot see into the inner sanctum. The time of Buddha is in the distant past, your work on the

Way is not yet complete, and physical life is impossible to guarantee. How can you procrastinate? The end of the summer retreat is already at hand, and it is time to disband. How could you arbitrarily memorize a word or half a phrase and call that my teaching? Would you bring out a mere bit of knowledge, half an understanding, and call that what we are conveying here? Even if you have fully attained that power, the disgrace of the house will still be exposed—how much the more so if you wrongly expound the Way! If you want to truly arrive at this realm, you should not squander the time and should not use your body and mind arbitrarily.

As before, I have a humble saying to explain this story:

Knocking the mortar—the sound is high, beyond the sky;  
Sifting in the clouds—the bright moon is clear deep in the night.

## QINGYUAN

Qingyuan went to study with the Zen master Huineng and asked, "What work is to be done so as not to fall into stages?" The Zen master inquired, "What have you done?" Qingyuan said, "I do not even practice the holy truths." The Zen master said, "What stage do you fall into?" Qingyuan said, "If I do not even practice the holy truths, what stages are there?" The Zen master recognized his profound capacity.

Qingyuan became a monk as a boy, and used to keep silent during discussions of the Way. Subsequently he heard of the teaching of Zen master Huineng and went there to study. He asked what is to be done so as not to fall into stages, and the Zen master recognized his profound capacity. Although Huineng had many disciples, Qingyuan was the foremost. It was the same as when Bodhidharma said that Huike had attained his marrow, even though Huike said nothing in response to a question about what he had realized.

One day the Zen master said to Qingyuan, "Since ancient times the robe and the teaching have been passed on together from teacher to apprentice. The robe represents faith, while the teaching stamps the mind. Now that I have found suitable people, why worry that they will not be believed? Ever since I received the robe I have had a lot of trouble, and there will surely be even more competitiveness in later generations. Therefore the robe will be left in this monastery as a keepsake. You should spread the teaching and not let it die out."

Having received the teaching, Qingyuan became a guide in his own right, during the lifetime of his predecessor Huineng. After he accepted Shitou as a disciple, many of the followers of Huineng came to him. He was the glory of Huineng's school. In 740 he announced his death and passed away sitting in the lotus posture.

Qingyuan's practice—refraining from discussion of the Way with others, keeping silent—was truly extraordinary. With this power of

directed attention he asked Zen master Huineng what work does not fall into stages. He truly had subtle insight and was free from contrivance.

The Zen master wanted him to arrive at realization quickly, so he asked him what he had done. Qingyuan's acuity manifested itself as he replied that he did not even practice the holy truths. This is hearing what is hard to hear, meeting what is hard to meet. Even if contrivance ends, there is still some preservation of the self; if you are like this you make the mistake of falling into the deep pit of liberation, so this state has always been called religious attachment. Yunmen referred to it as the two kinds of sickness of the spiritual body. This comes from not having thoroughly passed through this point.

Therefore Qingyuan did not just realize the fundamental, he passed through this barrier. This is why the Zen master asked him what stage he would fall into. Truly in the realm of recondite mystery there is no more outside or inside; nothing can analyze the sphere of the profound ultimate. Therefore Qingyuan said, "What stages are there?" Having penetrated this state unclouded he reached the limits of investigation, so he said, "If I don't even practice the holy truths, what stages are there?"

In reality, even if you try to set up stages, fundamentally there are no boundaries in the void—where can you put a ladder? Those who interpret this point literally have since ancient times fallen into the view that all things are null and have formed the understanding that all things are annihilated. Qingyuan said he didn't even practice the holy truths—how could he linger in the voidness of things?

Observe closely—this realm of open clarity is brighter than the morning sun. Though this spiritual, immaterial true nature is not perceptual discrimination, it has comprehensive, perfectly lucid knowledge. Though it does not have bones or marrow, it has a clear luminous body that conceals nothing. This body cannot be discerned through motion or stillness, this knowledge cannot be discerned by conscious cognition. Yet because cognition is also this knowledge, motion and stillness are not something else either.

Therefore even the saints who go by stages up to the tenth and highest stage still do not see the buddha nature clearly. The Buddha said that this is because they still maintain that the teachings have objective reality and they still set up practice, and therefore their vision of buddha nature is still not clear. Because Buddhas ultimately

have no practice and do not have spiritual stages, they see the buddha nature with perfect clarity.

In the twelfth book of the Nirvana Scripture it says, "Although innumerable saints fully practice the six ways of transcendence and the ten stages of enlightenment, they still cannot see their inherent buddha nature. Therefore the Buddha has said that they lack perception. Thus even if the state of saints has reached the tenth stage, they still do not clearly know or see the buddha nature. How much less can disciples or conditionally awakened people see it?"

So without relying on seeing and hearing, not being involved in knowing objects, try to see what is underneath. There will be an alert, awake knowledge that is not gotten from others; you will unexpectedly have a spontaneous realization.

Now how can I add a word to this story? Coming to this point, if you can add a word to this story, then you can make a tongueless man speak. If you can hear this principle, then you can make the transcendent being within you hear without ears and nod in understanding.

Coming and going on the bird's path, there are no tracks—  
How can you look for stages on the mystic road?



## SHITOU

Shitou called on Zen master Qingyuan, who asked him, "Where have you come from?" Shitou said, "From Caoqi (where Zen master Huineng taught)." Qingyuan held up a whisk and said, "Is there this at Caoqi?" Shitou said, "Not only not at Caoqi—not even in India." Qingyuan said, "You haven't been to India, have you?" Shitou said, "If I had, it would be there." Qingyuan said, "That's not enough—say more." Shitou said, "You too should say a half—don't rely entirely on me." Qingyuan said, "I don't decline to speak to you, but I am afraid that later on no one will get it." Shitou said, "It is not that they won't get it, but no one can say it." Qingyuan hit Shitou with the whisk, whereupon Shitou experienced a great enlightenment.

Shitou is known for having stopped animal sacrifices among hunting people in his area when he was just a youth. He went to see the Zen master Huineng at Caoqi when he was only fourteen years old; he was initiated, but not yet ordained. When Huineng was about to pass on, he directed Shitou to go study with Qingyuan.

One day Qingyuan held up a whisk and said, "Is there this at Caoqi?" Shitou said, "Not only not at Caoqi—not even in India." In ancient as well as recent times they have held up the whisk to show a clue or introduction, to initiate action, to make people abandon sidetracks, or to give people immediate direction. Qingyuan also did this as a test. But Shitou didn't yet understand what Qingyuan was calling "this," and still fixed his eyes on the raising of the whisk, saying, "Not only not at Caoqi—not even in India."

In the raising of the whisk, what "Caoqi" or "India" can you establish? But such a view is still a verbal understanding of the objective environment, so Qingyuan pressed him, saying, "You haven't been to India, have you?" Shitou still didn't understand this remark, and without forgetting himself he said, "If I had, it would be there." Even though you have spoken of it, if you don't know it exists you are not

suitable. Therefore Qingyuan said, "That's not enough—say more." He really acted with great kindness and compassion, giving detailed indications in this way.

Here Shitou had no place to put himself, so he said, "You too should say half—don't rely entirely on me." Having met and talked thus, if they both transmitted a half, how could the whole thing be said? Even if the universe crumbles and the whole essence is exposed alone, this is still only halfway. Even this point is arrived at on one's own, without depending on the arts of another; needless to say, advancing a step beyond the halfway point, subtly conveying a secret message, doesn't depend on anything at all. How can someone else know?

It is simply that it has always been inherent in oneself. Therefore Qingyuan said, "I don't decline to say it to you, but I'm afraid that later on no one will get it." Even if you speak of pain and bitterness, if the other has no experience of pain piercing his bones or of bitterness splitting his tongue, in the end there is no way to convey it. Therefore there will be no way to get it through words.

Because this is so, teachers do not speak at random and do not act arbitrarily; they are careful in this way. But Shitou still didn't know there was a subtle point conveyed, something that is not a partner of things. Unable to perceive subtly, he said, "It is not that they won't get it, but no one can say it." Shitou may say so, but upon reaching this realm how can someone have nothing to say? If you reach this realm, what will you get? He was still looking outside, estranged from inner realization: therefore, in order to make him speedily realize such a thing exists, to get him to know his original head right away, Qingyuan hit him with the whisk—he "beat the grass to frighten the snakes." Thus Shitou was greatly awakened.

By way of this story you should thoroughly examine learned knowledge and true realization, in order to arrive at the point where you can discern exactly which is which. When Shitou said, "Not only not at Caoqi—not even in India," he succeeded in breaking open heaven and earth and revealing the whole unique being, but he still had the affliction of self-consciousness. It was because of this that he could speak so grandiosely. But in the end, having perceived the revealing of the whole being at the raising of the whisk, at the blow of the whisk he knew it exists.

Zen students of recent times fruitlessly run around in the midst of

sound and form, searching in seeing and hearing. Even if they have memorized the words of the Buddha and the Zen masters and have formulated some way of understanding to cling to, even if they say "not at Caoqi, not even in India," still they have realized nothing. If you are this way, then even if you have shaved your heads and put on robes so that outwardly you resemble the Buddha in appearance, you'll never escape the bonds of the prison of this world. How will you be able to halt the routines of mundane life? What a pity it is that people like this have vainly hung the monastic robe on a piece of wood. As the Buddhist said, "They are not Buddhists—they have no name—they are no different from pieces of wood." That's what this means. Vainly squandering the donations of the faithful all your lives, in the end when you have to swallow a bitter pill you'll surely have many regrets.

So, having thoroughly investigated and penetrated through, if you reach the point where the whole being is revealed alone, as Shitou did when he first arrived, you will realize the nonexistence of either Caoqi or India. Where can one come or go? At this stage of vision, one does not wear the patchwork robe in vain. All the more so was this true of Shitou when at the blow of the whisk he realized the fact of being, and both forgot himself and also knew himself. He came to life in the midst of death; in the dark his true eye was illumined. This is the inner reality under the patchwork robe.

One time, as Shitou was reading a famous Buddhist treatise, he came to the point where it says, "It seems that only a sage can understand that myriad things are oneself." At this point he hit the desk and said, "A sage has no self, yet there is nothing that is not the self. The body of reality is formless—who speaks of self and other? The round mirror is marvelously bright—all things and the mysteries of their beings appear in it spontaneously. Objects and knowledge are not one—who says they come or go to one another? How true are the words of this treatise!" Then he rolled up the scroll and unexpectedly fell asleep. He dreamed he was riding with Zen master Huineng on a turtle swimming around in a deep lake. When he awoke he realized what it meant: the miraculous turtle was knowledge, the lake was the ocean of essence. "The Zen master and I were riding on spiritual knowledge floating on the ocean of essence." Subsequently he wrote *The Merging of Difference and Sameness*, which became popular.

Such a dream occurred to him because his spiritual knowledge was

already equal to that of the Zen master Huineng and no different from that of Zen master Qingyuan. Moreover, one time in a lecture he said, "My teaching is the bequest of the enlightened ones of the past: to arrive at the knowledge and insight of buddhahood without making an issue of meditation or effort. The body itself is Buddha—mind, Buddha, sentient beings, enlightenment, and affliction are different in name but one in essence. You should know that your own mind essence is in substance beyond annihilation and eternity; its nature is neither defiled nor pure. Profoundly still, complete, it is equal in ordinary people and in saints. It functions freely, apart from mentation, intellection, and cognition; all realms of being are just mind revealing itself—how could there be any real origination or destruction of mere reflections? If you can realize this, you will be complete." If he had not had an independent view that dissolved the universe, he could not have spoken thus. Having attained realization at a blow and succeeding in seeing clearly, he ranked as one of the Zen masters.

Your spiritual nature cannot be separate from his—how could your basic mind possibly not have common ground? The existence of states of happiness and misery, superior and inferior conditions, depends solely on whether or not one has developed determination, whether or not one has met an enlightened teacher.

How can we see this story?

All at once he raises infinity—

Never has he clung to anything beyond him.

## YAOSHAN

Yaoshan called on Zen master Shitou and asked, "I know something about the canonical teachings of Buddhism, but I have heard that in Zen they point directly to the human mind to see its essence and realize buddhahood. I really don't understand this and beg you to be so compassionate as to teach me."

Shitou said, "Being just so won't do, not being so won't do either—being just so or not being just so won't do at all. What about you?" Yaoshan was at a loss. Shitou said, "Your affinity is not here. Go to Great Master Mazu's place for a while."

Following these instructions, Yaoshan went to visit Zen master Mazu and set forth the same question. Mazu said, "Sometimes I make 'him' raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes, sometimes I don't make 'him' raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes. Sometimes raising the eyebrows and blinking the eyes is right, sometimes raising the eyebrows and blinking the eyes is not right. What about you?"

At these words Yaoshan was greatly enlightened. He immediately bowed. Mazu said, "What truth have you seen that you bow?" Yaoshan said, "When I was with Shitou, I was like a mosquito climbing up an iron ox." Mazu said, "You have realized the truth; guard it well. Your teacher, however, is Shitou."

Yaoshan became a monk when he was seventeen years old. He learned many scriptures and treatises, and kept the monastic precepts strictly. One day he lamented to himself, "A real man should purify himself without laws. Why should one fuss over petty details of manner?" So he turned to Zen study. He first called on Shitou, then went to Mazu, with whom he became enlightened.

Yaoshan attended Mazu for three years. One day Mazu asked him, "How do you see things these days?" Yaoshan said, "Having shed my skin completely, there is only one true reality." Mazu said, "Your realization may truly be said to accord with the essence of mind and



has permeated your whole body. Since you have come to such a realization, you should gird your loins and live on a mountain, wherever may be fitting."

Yaoshan said, "Who am I to presume to live on a mountain?" Mazu said, "Otherwise, there is no constant going without stopping, no constant staying without going. You may want to help yet there will be no help, and though you try to act there will be nothing done. You should make a boat—don't stay here." So Yaoshan left Mazu and went back to Shitou.

One day as Yaoshan was sitting, Shitou asked him, "What are you doing here?" Yaoshan said, "I'm not doing anything at all." Shitou said, "Then you're sitting idly." Yaoshan said, "If I were sitting idly, that would be doing something." Shitou said, "You said you're not doing—what aren't you doing?" Yaoshan said, "Even the sages don't know." Shitou praised him with a verse:

Though we've been living in the same place,  
I do not know his name;  
We go along with the flow of nature,  
Being just so.  
Even the eminent sages of old don't know him—  
How could the careless rabble understand!

Later, when Shitou once said in a lecture, "Speech and activity miss the point," Yaoshan said, "Silence and inactivity also miss the point." Shitou said, "With me, not even a needle can enter." Yaoshan said, "With me, it's like planting flowers on a rock." Shitou approved of him. Later a group of disciples gathered around Yaoshan.

By this story it should be clear that the two schools of Qingyuan (Shitou's teacher) and Nanyue (Mazu's teacher) are not different. They are really two horns of Huineng (teacher of both Qingyuan and Nanyue), who was a white ox on open ground, standing alone. Yaoshan studied with one and was enlightened with the other. There was no discrepancy at all.

At first Yaoshan asked Shitou, "I know something about the canonical teachings—what is the teaching of direct pointing to the human mind to see its nature and realize buddhahood?" To express this state, Shitou said, "Being so will not do, not being so will not do either—being so or not being so will not do at all." At this point there is no place to put self, and the other is not a matter in doubt: that is

why Shitou explained in this way. But at this stage Yaoshan still clung to the ungraspable, and therefore he didn't yet know the import of the words. He stopped and thought for a while. Then Shitou directed him to Mazu to have him explain instead.

Because Mazu understood the heart of the matter, he said in behalf of Shitou, "I make 'him' raise his eyebrows and blink, or I don't make 'him' raise his eyebrows and blink. Sometimes it's right, sometimes it's not right." Mazu showed him how it differs according to the time. Then Yaoshan awakened to this point and knew that it all exists—seeing, hearing, discernment, knowledge, movement and action, going and coming. He then bowed. Mazu said, "What truth have you seen that you bow?" He said, "At Shitou's place I was like a mosquito climbing an iron ox." There was no place to bite into—his opinions and views ended, his intellectual understanding dropped off. Though he did not know it himself, he was a true human being.

Later Mazu asked him, "How is your view these days?" Knowing there is not a single mote of dust here, not the slightest flaw, he said, "Having shed my skin completely, only one true reality exists." It is exceedingly hard to reach this realm in Zen study. That is why Mazu praised him, saying, "Your realization can truly be said to accord with the mind essence and to permeate your whole body." He reached everywhere and comprehended everything. And though his experiences and activities were varied and changing up until the time he could say he wasn't doing anything at all, he realized it was all like planting flowers on a rock, with no traces at all.

As he questioned and sought the direct pointing to the human mind at first, he was greatly enlightened when the one who raises the eyebrows and blinks the eyes was pointed out to him. When he preached for people himself, he said, "I am speaking these words to you to reveal that which has no words. The original face of that one has no such features as eyes or ears." Because his virtue in the beginning and the middle was genuine, so in his final virtue he showed truthfulness and helped others.

So seekers of truth should study like Yaoshan. Although the Zen founders were not superior or inferior to each other in their virtues, Yaoshan was especially lofty in his dealings with students and austere with himself; so he had fewer than twenty students. The fact that he did not have many students was because of his austerity; it was be-

cause people couldn't stand hunger and cold. But there were many enlightened monks and laymen in his group.

Thus as seekers you should consider thorough study of prime importance and should not worry about abundance or scarcity of worldly things. It was thus that several of Yaoshan's students, with the same determination, spent forty years without lying down. Unless it is a congregation where there is enlightenment, there are no monks like that. You Zen students should hope to be brothers of Yaoshan's students of old, and determine to study to the point that his teachers reached.

Don't you see—that which causes the eyebrows to raise and the eyes to blink is right and not right. That state is not to be doubted—everyone has it. When you try to know it, you find it has no features such as ears or eyes. Therefore it cannot be discerned in seeing or hearing. It does not act at all. Furthermore, although it is something whose name you don't know even though it has always been living with you, yet it naturally comes along with you. Not only that, it causes you to be born, causes you to die, causes you to move and act, causes you to perceive and feel. It is what we call *This*.

You cannot find the truth outside yourself—how can you hope to see your true nature some other time? All the canonical teachings point to this truth. All beings are sustained by this, without end. Why seek proof elsewhere? Are you not raising your eyebrows and blinking your eyes right now? If you just see the one who perceives and feels, you won't doubt what the Zen masters say.

Now how can I add an explanation to this principle?

That one who is always lively—

We call the one raising the eyebrows, blinking the eyes.

## YUNYAN

Yunyan first studied with Baizhang for twenty years, then went to study with Yaoshan. Yaoshan asked him, "What else does Baizhang teach?" Yunyan said, "Once when he went up in the hall to lecture and the assembly was standing there, he dispersed them with his staff. Then he called to them, and when they turned their heads he said, 'What is it?' " Yaoshan said, "Why didn't you say so before! Today, through you, I have been able to see brother Baizhang." At these words Yunyan was greatly enlightened.

Yunyan became a monk when he was young and studied with Zen master Baizhang for twenty years without success. After that he called on Yaoshan. Yaoshan asked him where he had come from, and Yunyan replied that he had come from Baizhang. Yaoshan asked, "What does Baizhang say to the students?" Yunyan said, "He often says, 'I have a saying that contains all flavors.' " Yaoshan said, "Salt is salty, water is plain. What is neither salty nor plain is the constant flavor. What is the saying that contains all flavors?" Yunyan had no reply. Yaoshan said, "What can you do about the birth and death before your eyes?" Yunyan said, "There is no birth and death before my eyes." Yaoshan said, "How long were you with Baizhang?" Yunyan said, "Twenty years." Yaoshan said, "Twenty years with Baizhang, and your mundanity is still not gone."

Another day, as Yunyan was standing in attendance on Yaoshan, the Zen master asked him, "What other teachings does Baizhang expound?" Yunyan said, "Sometimes he says, 'Understand beyond all formulations and propositions.' " Yaoshan said, "Three thousand miles away, there's no connection." He also asked, "What else does he teach?" And Yunyan related the anecdote quoted in the opening story.

Now the basic point of Zen study is to clarify the mind and awaken to reality. So even though Yunyan studied with Baizhang for twenty

years, since conditions weren't right he didn't realize enlightenment. After that he called on Yaoshan. So you shouldn't think that long study is necessarily good—only enlightenment of the mind is fundamental. And the meeting of right circumstances doesn't depend on whether one is a novice or experienced—preexisting conditions are what cause it to be so. It is not that Baizhang wasn't an enlightened teacher, it is simply that Yunyan didn't meet the right conditions.

Being a teacher is not merely a matter of gathering a group and looking after people—it is to make people penetrate directly to the root source and realize the fundamental. That is why the ancients always used to ask people where they came from. Extensive travel was to test teachers, so they wanted to see where the students had come from. Also they would ask what students had come for—this is to clarify the shallowness or depth of their determination and to see how far their development extended.

So in this case too Yaoshan asked Yunyan where he had come from. Yunyan said he had come from Baizhang, to show he had not been merely visiting here and there and wandering over hill and dale. Yaoshan and Baizhang were both public teachers and outstanding representatives of the Qingyuan and Nanyue lineages, respectively. So it was that Yaoshan asked what Baizhang was saying to his students.

At this point, if Yunyan had been worth his salt he would have brought up what he himself had learned, but instead he just mentioned what he had heard, saying, "He often says, 'I have a saying that contains all flavors.'" That one saying contains everything—everything is complete in it. But can people hear that expression?

In order to discern carefully, Yaoshan said, "Salt is salty, water is plain. What is neither salty nor bland is the constant flavor. What is the saying that contains all flavors?" After all it was something Yunyan had not comprehended; because he used his mortal ears to listen uselessly to a clam's explanation, he was at a loss and had no answer.

So Yaoshan asked him, "What can you do about the birth and death before your eyes?" This is truly the most important thing for students, whether beginners or old-timers. Impermanence is swift, the matter of birth and death is important. Even if you have set off on travels and are robed and shaven as a monk, if you do not clarify the great matter of birth and death and do not attain to the path of liberation, you won't know the secret within you. Therefore you will not



get out of the cage of the world and cannot escape the net of birth and death. In such a case it would seem you bear the robes and implements of a monk in vain.

So as Yaoshan questioned him in this way to settle the man and not allow him any idle time, Yunyan immediately answered, "There is no birth and death before my eyes," saying what came to mind. But if you reach the point where you yourself are at peace and accomplish the original purpose of your study, there should not be any such views.

Yaoshan said, "How long were you with Baizhang?" He was asking how many years Yunyan had cultivated the Way. Yunyan said, "Twenty years." Actually even though this ancient had been practicing without an idle moment, at this point it seemed as if he had wasted twenty years. So Yaoshan said to him, "You were with Baizhang for twenty years and your mundanity still isn't gone."

Even if you understand there is no birth or death and see there is no self or others, such a view does not perceive your own original head: you have not "let go over a cliff." If you do not immediately return your self to emptiness, your mundanity will not be removed, you will not break through sentiments and get out of prison. Isn't that sad?

That is why Yaoshan repeatedly questioned Yunyan—to lead him to thorough certainty. Nevertheless, at this point Yunyan still hadn't realized it. Even if he had attained understanding beyond all the formulations and propositions, still a hammerhead without a hole does not make a guiding principle. Even if he had some experience of cutting off the byways of myriad distinctions, he still didn't see his own original light. As it is said, "Three thousand miles away, there is no connection." Yaoshan pointed out to him again that it appeared as if Yunyan's coming to see him had been useless.

At this point, Yunyan cited Baizhang's hall-leaving saying—"What is it?"—but still was concerning himself with another's sayings and did not arrive at his own realization. Yet even as he brought up this story, he brought up the pure unadulterated Zen Way. And that is why Yaoshan said, "Why didn't you say so! Today, through you, I've gotten to see brother Baizhang."

Now the meaning of Baizhang's dispersing the assembly is really liberation and independence. There is no need to bother to do anything else.

But if he just let it go at that, it seemed that they'd never realize anything, so in order to rouse them he called to them, "Hey, everybody!" When you hit the south, the north moves, so they turned their heads without thinking. Baizhang then said, "What is it?" Unfortunately, it seems no one in his group understood. But though no one there had anything to say, Yaoshan far away said, "Through you I have gotten to see brother Baizhang."

When one of the enlightened ancients said something of the enlightened state, other enlightened ones would say they had met. It was like "the same wind for a thousand miles"; it was like "not so much as a thread interposed." Thus Yunyan first studied with Baizhang, then went to Yaoshan, finally succeeding in understanding both with nothing separating teacher and apprentice.

If you realize this state, you will not only have no further doubt about your eternal real self. You will also see through and cut through all the Buddhas and Zen masters; you will meet Yaoshan and Baizhang and see eye to eye with Yunyan and Daowu.

How can we convey this principle?

Without moving, the solitary boat  
sails ahead in the moonlight;  
As you look around, the reeds on the ancient bank  
have never moved.

## DONGSHAN

Dongshan called on Zen master Yunyan and asked, "Who can hear the teaching of inanimate things?" Yunyan said, "It can be heard by the inanimate." Dongshan asked, "Do you hear it?" Yunyan said, "If I heard it, you wouldn't hear my teaching." Dongshan said, "If so, then I don't hear your teaching." Yunyan said, "If you don't even hear my teaching, how much less the teaching of the inanimate." Dongshan was greatly enlightened at this. He spoke a verse to Yunyan:

Wondrous, wondrous!  
 The teaching of the inanimate is inconceivable.  
 If you listen with your ears you won't understand,  
 When you hear the sound with your eyes, then you'll know.

Yunyan approved.

When Dongshan was a boy he followed a teacher and recited the Heart Wisdom Scripture. When he came to the point where it says, "There is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, body, or mind," he suddenly felt his face with his hand and said, "I have eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and so on—why does the scripture say they don't exist?" The tutor was amazed and said, "I am not your teacher." Then he directed Dongshan to a Zen master, who initiated him. He was fully ordained as a monk when he was twenty-one.

Dongshan was his mother's favorite son. His elder brother had passed away, his younger brother was poor, and his father had died. But once he aspired to the school of emptiness, he left his old mother and vowed he would never go back to his native place to see his relatives without having realized the Way. He left home with this determination.

Eventually Dongshan completed his study successfully. His mother, separated from her son, had no other support; day after day she looked for him, eventually becoming an itinerant beggar. When

she heard where her son was living, she wanted to go see him, but Dongshan refused—he barred his door and wouldn't let her in because he wasn't willing to see her. Because of this his mother finally died of grief outside his room.

After his mother had died, Dongshan went out and took the rice she had had with her and mixed it in with the community's morning gruel as a funerary offering. Before long his mother appeared to him in a dream and said, "Because you kept your determination firm and would not see me, the delusive feelings of emotional attachment were ended on the spot; due to the power of that virtue, I have been born in the heaven of satisfaction."

Although the Zen masters were not better or worse than each other in terms of virtue, Dongshan, ancestor of our school, especially caused Zen to flourish. This was due to this power of leaving his parents and keeping his determination.

In the beginning of his Zen study, Dongshan joined the congregation of Nanquan. He happened to be there on the anniversary of the death of Nanquan's teacher Mazu. As they were preparing a commemorative ceremony, Nanquan asked the group, "We are having a ceremony for Mazu tomorrow—do you think he will come?" When nobody answered, Dongshan came forward and said, "He'll come when he has a companion." Nanquan said, "Although this is a young man, he is suitable for polishing." Dongshan said, "Don't demean the good or enslave the free."

Next Dongshan called on Guishan and said, "Recently I heard that National Teacher Zhong of Nanyang had a saying about the teaching of inanimate things; I don't understand the subtle meaning." Guishan said, "Do you remember it?" Dongshan said that he did. When Guishan asked him to repeat it, Dongshan recounted the following story.

A monk asked the teacher, "What is the mind of the ancient Buddhas?" The teacher said, "Fences, walls, tiles, pebbles." The monk said, "Aren't those inanimate things?" The teacher said they were. The monk said, "Can they teach?" The teacher said, "They are always teaching, clearly, unceasingly." The monk said, "Why can't I hear them?" The teacher said, "You yourself don't hear, but you shouldn't hinder that which does hear." The monk said, "Who can hear it?" The teacher said, "The saints can." The monk said, "Do you hear it?" The teacher said, "No." The monk said, "If you don't hear it, how do you know inanimate things can teach?" The teacher said, "It's lucky

I don't hear it, for if I did I'd be equal to the saints and you wouldn't hear my teaching." The monk said, "Then sentient beings have no part in it?" The teacher said, "I teach sentient beings, not the saints." The monk said, "After sentient beings hear it, then what?" The teacher said, "Then 'they are not sentient beings.'" The monk said, "What scripture is the 'teaching of the inanimate' based on?" The teacher said, "Obviously 'words that do not accord with the classics are not the talk of a scholar.' Haven't you read where the Flower Ornament Scripture says, 'Lands teach, beings teach, all things in all times teach'?"

After Dongshan had recited this story, Guishan said, "I also have it here, but I hardly ever meet anyone suitable for it." Dongshan said, "I don't understand—please teach me." Guishan stood his whisk up and said, "Understand?" Dongshan said, "I don't." Guishan said, "Words will never explain it to you."

Then Dongshan asked, "Is there anyone who sought the Way at the same time as you?" Guishan directed him to Yunyan. Dongshan asked, "What is this man like?" Guishan said, "He once asked me what a student should do in order to serve the master. I told him that one must simply cut off attachments. He asked if he would then be able to avoid violating my teaching, and I told him first of all not to say I am here."

Finally Dongshan left Guishan and went to Yunyan. Bringing up the preceding events, he asked, "Who can hear the teaching of the inanimate?" Yunyan said, "The inanimate can hear it." Dongshan asked, "Why don't I hear it?" Yunyan raised his whisk and said, "Do you hear?" Dongshan said, "No." Yunyan said, "If you don't even hear my teaching, how could you hear the teaching of the inanimate?" Dongshan said, "What scripture contains the 'teaching of the inanimate'?" Yunyan said, "Haven't you read where the Infinite Light Scripture says, 'Rivers, birds, trees and groves, all invoke the Buddha and the Teaching'?" At this Dongshan had an awakening.

After expressing his understanding, Dongshan said to Yunyan, "I still have residual habits that have not yet been exhausted." Yunyan said, "What have you done?" Dongshan said, "I don't even practice the holy truths." Yunyan said, "Are you happy?" Dongshan said, "Yes—it is as though I have found a jewel in a trash heap."

Dongshan also asked Yunyan, "What should I do when I want to



see my true being?" Yunyan said, "Ask the messenger within." Dongshan said, "I'm asking now." Yunyan said, "What does he tell you?"

When Dongshan took leave of Yunyan, he asked, "After your death, if someone asks me if I can describe your reality, how should I answer?" Yunyan remained silent for a while, then said, "Just *this* is it." Dongshan sank into thought. Yunyan said, "You should be most thoroughgoing in your understanding of this matter."

Dongshan still had some doubts, but later he was greatly enlightened when he saw his reflection in the water as he crossed a river. Then he understood the meaning of what had gone before. He said in verse.

Don't seek from others  
 Or you'll be estranged from yourself.  
 I now go on alone—  
 Everywhere I encounter It.  
 It now is me, I now am not It.  
 One must understand in this way  
 To merge with being as is.

Dongshan's life study was not accomplished, and he was free from lingering doubts; this was how it came about.

As for the story of the teaching of the inanimate, it began when a worker asked the national teacher of Nanyang, "I've heard that you say inanimate things teach. I don't understand this, and ask for your instruction." The teacher said, "If you would ask about the teaching of the inanimate, you should understand the inanimate—only then will you hear my teaching. Just ask after the teaching of the inanimate."

The worker said, "At the moment I'm just going by expedients for animate beings—what is the relation of inanimate being?" The teacher said, "In all present activities, as long as the twin currents of 'profane' and 'holy' do not arise and vanish, this then is mystic consciousness that is not in the realm of being or nonbeing yet is fully perceptive and aware. It is just that it has no emotional consciousness or binding attachments. That is why the sixth founder of Zen said that the senses discerning objects is not consciousness."

This is how the national teacher spoke about the teaching of the inanimate. That is, he said that as long as profanity and holiness do not appear and disappear in the midst of activities, this is mystic con-

sciousness that is not in the province of either existence or nonexistence, yet is fully aware. People usually think that "inanimate" means things like walls, pebbles, lamps, and pillars. This is not what the teacher is saying. He means there is a mystic consciousness in which the views of ordinariness and holiness are not divided, emotional attachments to illusion and enlightenment are not produced—it is not conceivable by emotional assessments and discrimination, it is not the movements of birth and death, coming and going. This mystic consciousness is fully perceptive and aware, but it is not sentimental or cognitive clinging.

Therefore Dongshan said that one must understand this way in order to merge with being as is. If you know that wherever you are you go on alone, you will never be apart from being as is. That is why an ancient said, "There is no knowledge outside of suchness that is proved by suchness, no suchness outside of knowledge that is cultivated by knowledge."

Suchness, being as is, is immutable, clear constant knowledge. Therefore it is said, "Round and clear, knowledge does not depend on thought." Full awareness is not attachment. Guishan said, "Words cannot explain it." Nanyang also said, "If sentient beings hear it, then they are not sentient beings." Thus having received the guidance of several teachers, since he understood true "insentience," Dongshan became the ancestor of a school and caused Zen to flourish.

Thus, observing carefully, you become fully aware of this mystic consciousness, which is called "inanimate" or "insentient." It is called inanimate because there is no running after sound and form, no bondage of emotion or discrimination. Nanyang really explained this principle in detail, so when you hear talk of the inanimate, don't make the mistake of understanding it as like fences or walls. As long as your feelings and thoughts are not deluded and attached, and your perception is not scattered here and there at random, then that mystic consciousness will be bright and unclouded, clearly aware.

If you try to grasp this, you cannot get it; it has no form, so it is not existent. If you try to get rid of it, you cannot separate from it; because it is forever with you, it is not nonexistent. It is not cognition or thought, it is not tied to any physical or psychological elements.

This is why Zen master Hongzhi said, "There is a wisdom apart from intellectual assessment and discrimination; there is a body which is not clusters of elements." In other words, it is this mystic

consciousness. "Always teaching clearly" means it is always manifest—this is called teaching. It has one raise the eyebrows and blink the eyes, it makes one walk, stand, sit, and recline. Rushing, hurrying, dying here, being born there, eating when hungry, sleeping when tired—all is "teaching." Speaking, working, all activities are also "teaching."

It is not just spoken or unspoken teaching; there is something that appears obviously and is clearly never hidden. Everything, down to the chirping of insects, is revealed. Therefore everything is always teaching, clearly, unceasingly. If you can discern minutely, someday you'll be able to be a model for others, as was our ancestor Dongshan.

Now how can we explain this principle?

Extremely subtle, mystic consciousness is not mental attachment:

All the time is causes *that* to teach profusely.

## YUNJU

Yunju studied with Zen master Dongshan. Dongshan asked him, "What is your name?" Yunju said, "Daoying." Dongshan said, "Speak on the transcendental plane." Yunju said, "Speaking on the transcendental plane, I am not named Daoying." Dongshan said, "This is no different from the reply I made when I was with Yunyan."

Yunju left home to become a monk when he was still a boy. He was fully ordained at the age of twenty-five. His teacher had him study the texts of elementary individualistic Buddhism, but this was not to his liking, so he quit and went traveling. He went to the Zen master Cuiwei to ask about the Way, and there he heard from a traveler of the teaching of Dongshan. Eventually he went to Dongshan.

Dongshan asked Yunju, "Where have you come from?" Yunju said, "From Cuiwei." Dongshan said, "What words of instruction does Cuiwei have for his students?" Yunju said, "When Cuiwei was making ceremonial offerings to the image of a saint, I asked, 'You provide offerings for the saint, but will the saint come?' Cuiwei said, 'What do you eat every day?' " Dongshan said, "Did this conversation really take place?" Yunju said that it had. Dongshan said, "You didn't meet that adept in vain." Then he asked Yunju his name, and there ensued the dialogue cited at the beginning of this story.

Yunju realized the Way upon seeing the Dong River, and then spoke to Dongshan of his enlightenment. Dongshan said, "My way will spread endlessly through you." And once Dongshan asked Yunju, "I hear that Great Master Si was born in Japan and became a king—is it so?" Yunju said, "Great Master Si wouldn't even become a Buddha, much less a king." Dongshan agreed.

One day Dongshan asked, "Where have you been?" Yunju said, "I've been walking in the mountains." Dongshan said, "Which mountain is suitable to live on?" Yunju said, "Which is not?" Dongshan said, "If so, the whole country has been occupied by you." Yunju said,

"No." Dongshan said, "Then you have found a road of entry?" Yunju said, "There's no road." Dongshan said, "How can you meet me if there is no road?" Yunju said, "Were there a road, I'd be a life apart from you." Dongshan said, "Hereafter even a thousand people, even ten thousand people, will be unable to hold this man back."

Once as Yunju was crossing a river along with Dongshan, the latter asked, "Is the water deep or shallow?" Yunju said, "Not wet." Dongshan said, "Coarse man." Yunju said, "Please, *you* say." Dongshan said, "Not dry."

Dongshan also said to Yunju, "Zen master Nanquan asked a monk, 'What scripture do you lecture on?' The monk said, 'The scripture on the incarnation of Maitreya, the future Buddha.' Nanquan said, 'When will Maitreya be incarnated?' The monk said, 'Now he is in heaven, in the future he will be born on earth.' Nanquan said, 'There is no Maitreya in heaven or on earth.' " Now Yunju asked Dongshan, "If there is no Maitreya in heaven or on earth, to whom is the name given?" Dongshan's seat rocked when he heard this. He said, "When I was with Yunyan, I asked a question that rocked the hearth—now that I have been asked this question by you, my whole body is running with sweat."

Dongshan and Yunju never differed in these dialogues. No one in Dongshan's congregation could equal Yunju.

Later Yunju built a hut on the mountain peak and didn't come to the monastery for ten days at a time. Dongshan asked him, "Why don't you come to meals?" Yunju said, "Every day a celestial spirit sends an offering." Dongshan said, "I thought you were an enlightened man, but I see you will entertain such views. Come tonight." That night Yunju went to see Dongshan. Dongshan said, "O Hermit!" Yunju said, "Yes?" Dongshan said, "Not thinking good, not thinking bad, what is this?" Yunju returned to his hut and sat in absolute silence; hence the celestial spirit couldn't find him. After three days like this, the spirit vanished.

Once Dongshan asked Yunju, "What are you doing?" Yunju said, "Making bean paste." Dongshan said, "How much salt are you using?" Yunju said, "As needed." Dongshan said, "How is the taste?" Yunju said, "All right."

Dongshan said, "An incorrigible commits inhuman crimes—where is the caring?" Yunju said, "This is real caring."

After this Dongshan gave his approval and made Yunju leader of



the students and permitted personal interviews. When Yunju became a teacher in his own right, his teaching didn't flourish at first, but after he moved to Yunju great numbers of mendicants and lay seekers gathered there.

After Yunju saw Cuiwei, he studied with Dongshan and was a brother of Caoshan. Through the foregoing dialogues, the settling of doubt between teacher and apprentice was accomplished. Dongshan predicted that his way would spread limitlessly through Yunju, and those words were not in vain, as it was handed on through the generations, down to the present day. This way is now active; it has been handed down through the school of purity. The source has not dried up; it is cool as autumn.

When Yunju asked a single question, he set his great ability in action. Dongshan was not only shaken thereby, he even broke out in a sweat. This is a rare occurrence. But when Yunju was living in seclusion and a celestial spirit sent him food, Dongshan said to him, "I thought you were an enlightened man, but you still entertain such views." He told Yunju to come to him that night, and when he did, Dongshan called him by name, to which he responded. That which responded is that which should not receive celestial food. To settle the matter, Dongshan said, "Not thinking of good or bad, what is this?" When you completely arrive at this state and can see in this way, "the gods find no road to strew flowers on, demons and outsiders secretly spying cannot see you." At such a time even the Buddha's eye cannot see you. When he had realized this, he "made bean paste," putting in "what is needed." He was self-sufficient, relying on no one.

Therefore Yunju repeatedly committed the crimes of incorrigibles—"killing father and mother," "killing Buddhas and Zen masters," and so on. At this point there was no thought in his mind of "caring." Dongshan questioned him to test his insight: "Where is the feeling of parent and child?" Yunju said, "Only this is really the feeling of parent and child."

So when Yunju received the transmission as the foremost of the disciples, Dongshan purposely asked him, "What is your name?" When seeing someone in the meeting of teacher and apprentice, one doesn't go by former sense—this is why Dongshan asked Yunju what his name was. Of course Dongshan knew his name, but he still asked, not without reason. Yunju replied, "Daoying." Even if one goes on

asking in thousands of different ways, it still must be *thus*. You shouldn't make up rationalizations.

Although he didn't disagree with Yunju's insight, Dongshan still wanted to see if he had the ability to pass through barriers and escape conventions, so he said, "Tell me again, on the transcendental plane." Yunju was already free from discriminatory consciousness, he was like a faceless man, a straw dog—so he said, "On the transcendental plane, I am not named Daoying." It is very difficult to reach this realm, but if you don't reach this stage in Zen study, you haven't the potential to be an adept. You will still be confused by intellectual complications. Because Yunju preserved this state carefully, in the end they had the dialogue about the great incorrigible. There was no discord.

If you can discern thoroughly, you will be true Zen practitioners who have done what is to be done. Now what can we say to see through this story?

Name or form it has never had—

What transcendence or immanence is there to speak of?

## DAOPI

Once Zen master Yunju said, "If you want to realize such a thing, you must be such a person; once you are such a person, why worry about such a thing?" Hearing this, Daopi was spontaneously enlightened.

It is not known where Daopi came from. He studied with Zen master Yunju, became his attendant, and spent years there. One time Yunju said in a lecture, "Zen Buddhists should have a reason when they speak. Don't be careless. What place is this? How can you take it easy? Whenever you ask about this matter, you should have some knowledge of right and wrong. . . . Above all, don't cling—if you cling, that's not it. . . . Someone who knows the truth will naturally know how to preserve it. Such a one is never hasty or careless—when he has something to say, nine times out of ten he remains silent. Why so? Because it may be of no benefit. Someone of thorough realization has a mind like a fan in winter, and cobwebs grow on his mouth because he hardly ever speaks out. This is not forced, it naturally happens so. If you want to attain such a thing, you must be such a person; once you are such a person, why worry about such a thing?"

Hearing how difficult it is to realize this matter, Daopi understood and finally finished with his life's concern. Later he became a teacher and richly expounded the Zen way of Yunju.

Once a monk asked, "How can one stop taking the reflection for the head?" Daopi said, "Who are you talking to about it?" The monk asked, "What should I do?" Daopi said, "If you seek from another, you'll be all the farther from it." The monk asked, "How about when I don't seek from another?" Daopi said, "Where is your head?" The monk asked, "What is the style of your school?" Daopi said, "The golden hen, embracing its young, returns to the blue sky; the jade rabbit, pregnant, enters the purple dusk." The monk asked, "When a guest comes, how do you treat him?" Daopi said, "The golden fruit is

picked by monkeys early in the morning; jade flowers are brought by phoenixes at night."

Having first understood the true state through his teacher's indications, in expressing the style of his school Daopi said, "The golden hen (the sun) returns to the sky, the jade rabbit (the moon) enters the purple dusk." And when helping people, "Golden fruits are picked every day, jade flowers are brought every night."

Although there is no superiority or inferiority among stories for Zen study, you should thoroughly comprehend the ones just brought up. Why? If you want to attain such a thing, you must be such a person. Even if you can't find your head and come looking for it, it's still your head. As Dogen said, "Who says 'I'? It is 'I' who says 'who.' "

So when the professor Liangcui called on Mazu, Mazu shut the door when he saw him coming. Liangcui knocked on the door, and Mazu said, "Who is it?" Liangcui replied, "Liangcui," and as soon as he called out his name he was suddenly enlightened. He said, "Master, don't fool me. Had I not come to see you, I would probably have been cheated by the scriptures all my life." Mazu then opened the door and had him tell of his enlightenment. When Liangcui returned to his lecture hall, he dismissed his students, telling them, "What you know, I know; what I know, you don't know."

In truth, this realm "does not let the wind through." So when you penetrate thoroughly you find you have always been complete, never lacking. Even if you figure by means of thought, it is your self, no one else. Though you "shine alone," it is not discrimination. It too is yourself. It is not new.

That is to say, using your eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet, it is all your self. Fundamentally it is not to be grasped by the hand or seen by the eye; thus it is not a question of sound or form. It cannot be reached by ear or eye. When you comprehend thoroughly, you will know there is self. You will know there is oneself.

In order to know this, when you first put aside all affirmation and negation and don't depend on anything or get involved with others, then this mind alone is clear, brighter than the sun and moon. This mind is pure, purer than frost and snow. Thus it is not dark obscurity, being unaware of right and wrong; it is pure clarity, one's self spontaneously manifest.

So do not think that there is nothing apart from speech and silence, activity and stillness, nothing having no skin, flesh, bones, or mar-

row. And don't think it is a matter of being immobile, standing alone, not thinking of self or other, not minding anything, being like a stump, totally nonreliant on anything, being mindless as plants and trees. How can the study of the Buddha Way be the same as plants and trees? The view that there is originally no self or other, that there is nothing at all, is the same as the nihilistic view of outsiders, or the view of voidness held by those in the lesser vehicles of Buddhism. The ultimate principle of the great vehicle of Buddhism cannot be the same as the lesser vehicles or outsiders.

When you fully arrive and truly come to rest, it cannot be said to be a state of existence, because it is empty and clear; yet it cannot be called a state of nonexistence, because it is luminous and aware. This is not discerned by action, speech, or ideas, nor by mind, intellect, or consciousness.

How can we convey this principle?

With empty hands seeking on one's own,  
 Coming back with empty hands;  
 Where there is fundamentally no attainment,  
 After all one attains.



## TONGAN

Tongan studied with Zen master Daopi, whom he asked, "An ancient said, 'I don't care for what people of the world care for'—what do you care for?" Daopi said, "I have already gotten to be thus." Tongan was greatly enlightened on hearing these words.

Not much is known about Tongan, except that he studied with Zen master Daopi and had profound realization of Zen. When Daopi was about to die, he went into the teaching hall and said, "One of the Buddha's disciples stood out; what about the case of the Zen founder?" He said this three times, but no one responded. Finally Tongan came forth and said, "They stand in ranks outside the crystal curtain; for ten thousand miles there are songs of peace." Daopi said, "Only this ass could say that." After that Tongan became the teacher in the hall.

"One of Buddha's disciples stood out" refers to when Shakyamuni Buddha and Kasyapa first met, whereupon the truth was communicated. After that Kasyapa practiced austerities and later assisted Buddha in teaching. Although Kasyapa was not present at the meeting that took place at the time of the Buddha's death, all the followers were entrusted to Kasyapa. When Daopi was about to die, to reveal his successor he said, "What about the case of the Zen founder?" He said it three times but no one understood, so no one answered.

The polar mountain juts out immutable beyond all other mountains; the orb of the sun shines bright before myriad forms. Therefore "they stand in ranks outside the crystal curtain." Really there is nothing to compare to it. Because the whole being is independent, there is no second person. Thus there is not a mote of dust for ten thousand miles. Where are cunning ministers and fierce generals now? Singing hallelujah, everyone is at peace.

Tongan was an extraordinary Zen monk. In Zen study you must reach this state before you can succeed.

Such was his outstanding practical application and extraordinary attainment of Zen. He had revealed his excellent achievement earlier. This is why he said, "I don't care for what worldly people care for"—what do you care for?" "What people of the world care for" means that they love themselves and others. This care gradually increases. Then they care about their surroundings and subjective states. This care gets deeper and more attached. Adding fetters to bonds, they then care for Buddhas and Zen masters. In this way, attachment becomes more and more contaminated. Finally the causes of people's habitual actions become continuous; they are originally born from lack of freedom, and die in lack of freedom. This all just comes from attachment.

Therefore discrimination between sentient beings and Buddhas, between male and female, between animate and inanimate beings, is attachment to forms. You should get rid of this attachment right away. When there is no rule, no thing, and you don't discern what it is, so you are entirely unknowing and nondiscriminating, this is attachment to formlessness; so don't linger here.

Even when you're attached to forms, once you become inspired to transcend them you can naturally attain to truth. But if you grasp the view of formlessness and fall into the immaterial realm, unfortunately after eons have passed and your life in formless heaven expires you will fall into uninterrupted hell. This is what is called mindless annihilation of thought. Form and formlessness are both objects of attachment for worldly people. In the midst of forms you see yourself and others, while in formlessness you forget yourself and others. Both are wrong.

So Zen students should not have the attachments of worldly people. First you should free yourselves from all erroneous views discriminating between right and wrong, good and bad, male and female. Then you should not dwell in nondoing, unconcerned, formless quiescence. If you want to realize this, don't seek from others, don't search outside yourself. You should look into the state before you were embodied—there will be no difference or distinctions.

But don't plunge into darkness, don't be as though in a ghost cave in a black mountain. This mind is originally wondrously bright and shining, not dark; this mind is clear and open, wholly luminous. Here there is no wearing of skin, flesh, bones, or marrow, no sense organs or objects, no delusion or enlightenment, no defilement or purity.

The Buddha has not preached anything for you, and there is noth-

ing for you to ask a teacher. Not only have sound and form not been distinguished, there are not even any ears or eyes. And yet the mind-moon shines round and bright; the eye-blossom blooms, its pattern fresh and clear. You should go all the way to reach this realization.

How can you understand this principle? I'll add a saying in your behalf—quickly set your eyes before being:

The mind-moon and eye-blossom have fine bright color—  
Opening beyond time, who is there to enjoy them?

## LIANGSHAN

Liangshan studied with Zen master Tongan, who asked him, "What is the business under the patchwork robe?" Liangshan had no answer. Tongan said, "In studying Buddhism, if you don't reach this state, that is most miserable. You ask me and I'll tell you." Liangshan said, "What is the business under the patchwork robe?" Tongan said, "It is within." Liangshan was thereupon greatly enlightened.

It is not known where Liangshan was from. He studied with Tongan and served as a personal attendant for four years, taking care of his robes and bowl. One time as Tongan was going up into the hall for the morning congregation, at which it is usual to wear the patchwork robe, Liangshan brought the robe for Tongan. As Tongan took the robe he asked, "What is the business under the patchwork robe?" Liangshan couldn't answer; when Tongan answered for him, he was greatly enlightened. Liangshan prostrated himself, so moved that his tears wet his robe. Tongan said, "Now that you are awakened, can you answer?" Liangshan said he could. Tongan said, "What is the business under the patchwork robe?" Liangshan said, "It is within." Tongan said, "Inner being—it exists within."

After that Liangshan often spoke of inner being in his teaching, and after he became an abbot many people asked him about "the business under the patchwork robe." Once when a student posed this question, he said, "Even the saints don't reveal it."

Another time a student asked, "When it is impossible to guard the home against thieves, then what?" Liangshan said, "If you recognize them, they won't be enemies." The student asked, "How about after recognizing them?" Liangshan said, "You'll exile them to the land of nonorigination." The student said, "Isn't that where they settle and live?" Liangshan said, "Stagnant water doesn't hide a dragon." The student asked, "What is the dragon in living water?" Liangshan said, "It makes waves without making a ripple." The student said, "How

about when the waters are emptied and the mountains leveled?" The master got down from his seat, grabbed the student, and said, "Don't wet the corner of my robe."

Once a student asked, "What is the student's self?" Liangshan said, "In the heartland, the emperor; beyond the borders, the general." In this way, whenever he taught people he presented inner being to them.

In the story mentioned first, Zen master Tongan said, "In learning buddhahood, if you don't reach this state, that is most miserable." How true are these words! Even if you sit still until your seat breaks through, even if you persevere mindless of fatigue and even if you are a person of lofty deeds and pure behavior, if you haven't reached this realm you still can't get out of the prison of the world. Even if you are extremely eloquent and skillful in preaching, if you haven't reached this state the king of death has no fear of your words. Even if you are trained for many years and your thoughts are ended and your feelings are settled, your body like a dead tree and your heart like cold ashes, your mind never stirring in the face of events, even if you finally die sitting or standing and seem to have attained freedom in life and death, still if you haven't reached this realm it is all of no use in the house of the enlightened ones. Therefore an ancient said, "The past adepts all considered this business to be the one matter of importance."

Once Zen master Liangshan asked a monk, "What thing in the world is most miserable?" The monk replied, "Hell is most miserable." Dongshan said, "No. What is most miserable is to wear this vestment and fail to clarify the great matter."

Dongshan's great disciple Yunju quoted this saying to his disciples and said, "My late teacher said that hell is not what is really miserable—to wear this vestment and yet not understand the great matter is what is really miserable. You should exert yourselves more. Don't weary of your journey for enlightenment, don't violate the ways of the Zen community. An ancient said, 'If you want to be able to carry this matter through, you must stand atop the highest mountain and walk on the bottom of the deepest sea—only then will you have some life.' If you haven't comprehended the great matter, for the time being you should walk the mystic path."

Furthermore, in the introductory chapter of the Lotus Scripture, about Shakyamuni and all the Buddhas, it says, "The Buddhas only



appear in the world for the cause of one great matter. That is to reveal the knowledge and vision of buddhahood, and to enable people to realize and enter it."

Indeed, to clarify this one great cause is considered the great matter. There is nothing to be delighted about in just being a Buddhist initiate in form—if you do not understand this matter, after all you are no different from worldly people. Why? Because you are no different in seeing with your eyes and hearing with your ears; and it is not only in relating to outside objects—you cannot forget thoughts about objects either. In this case, even though you may have become a monk or a nun, it is only a change in appearance—ultimately you are no different from people of the world. After all when your breath stops and your eyes close, your spirit will be impelled by things and flow in the world; though it seems there is a difference in class between being born a while in the human world and in a celestial realm, cyclic change will continue indefinitely, like a wheel going round and round.

What is the original purpose of making people leave their worldly attachments and be free from passions? It is just to allow them to arrive at the knowledge and insight of buddhahood. The reason for taking the trouble to establish Zen communities and assemble ordained and lay people is just to reveal this matter. That is why the meditation hall is called the place for selecting Buddhas. The leader is called the guide: it is not a matter of arbitrarily gathering people and making a fuss; it is only for the purpose of making people understand themselves. Therefore, even if you are formally a monk and a member of a monastery, if you don't understand this matter you are just toiling without accomplishing anything.

Especially in this degenerate age, this sick society, even if new students try to train their bodies and minds according to the guidelines of past enlightened ones, if their characters are crooked and devious they cannot succeed in Zen study. Monks of recent times are not settled in their actions, and do not try to learn all the greater and lesser refinements of behavior as well as the inner and outer mental techniques. For this reason it is as though there were no monkhood.

Yet even if your behavior and mental training are like those of ancient times, if you don't clarify the basis of mind this training will only result in elevated human states and will be involved with attachment. Furthermore, if you don't clarify the basis of mind and

your behavior is unruly too, you are receiving the offerings of the faithful in vain. People like this are all bound for hell.

Yet an ancient worthy said, "Society has declined and people are lazy, but even if your behavior and mental discipline are not like that of the ancient sages, if you carefully and thoroughly clarify the one great matter, perhaps you will be no different from the Buddhas in this. The Zen masters and past sages will be your siblings. Fundamentally there is no world to leave—are there indeed any realms of being through which to transmigrate?" So meditate carefully, study meticulously, and clarify the matter under the patchwork robe.

In this great matter, there is no separation between eras of truth, imitation, and dereliction; and the various countries are no different. So don't lament that it is a sick society where Buddhism is degenerate. Don't regret that you are people of a remote country. So far as this matter is concerned, even if a thousand Buddhas all came at once and tried to give it to you, even the power of the Buddhas wouldn't suffice.

Therefore this is not a path that can be handed on to one's children, not a path that can be received from one's parents. One can only practice it oneself, realize it oneself, and attain it oneself in one's own being. Even though there be countless ages of practice, self-realization happens in an instant. Once you are inspired, not even heaven and earth can be found. Once you reach this place, eternity is illumined—how could there be anything given by the Buddhas?

So if you want to fully arrive at this place, first you must give up everything. Don't even seek the realm of buddhahood or Zen mastery. How much less should you have any self-love or dislike of others! Without arousing any intellectualization, just see directly—there is definitely something that has no skin or flesh; its body is like space, with no particular form or color. It is like pure water, being clear through and through. Empty and clear, it is just a matter of being completely aware of it.

How can we reveal this principle?

The water is clear to the very depths;  
It shines without needing polish.

## DAYANG

Dayang asked Zen master Liangshan, "What is the formless site of enlightenment?" Liangshan pointed to an icon of the Bodhisattva of Compassion and said, "This was painted by Mr. Wu." Dayang was about to say something, when Liangshan grabbed him and demanded, "This is the one with form—which is the formless one?" At these words Dayang attained enlightenment.

This dialogue took place when Dayang first called on Liangshan, after having studied the Scripture of Complete Enlightenment and subsequently gone on a study pilgrimage. Upon awakening, Dayang bowed and stood there; Liangshan asked him, "Why don't you say something?" Dayang said, "I don't refuse to speak, but I'm afraid it would get onto paper." Liangshan laughed and said, "These words will be inscribed on stone yet." Then Dayang presented a verse:

In the past, as a beginner, I studied Zen in error,  
 Traveling over myriad rivers and mountains seeking knowledge.  
 Clarifying the present, comprehending the past,  
 After all it is hard to understand—  
 Even if you speak of no mind, there's even more doubt.  
 The teacher has pointed out the ancient mirror  
 In which I see reflected the time before my parents bore me.  
 Now having learned, what is attained?  
 Release a blackbird by night,  
 And it flies covered with snow.

Liangshan said, "The school of Dongshan will rest on you."

Dayang became famous all at once. When Liangshan died, he went to another monastery, where the abbot turned the leadership over to him. Thenceforth the school of Dongshan became popular, with many people coming to study this way.

Dayang had an extraordinary presence and was very dignified. Even

from childhood he only ate once a day. As a monk, he took the bequest of the ancient worthies seriously and neither left the sanctuary nor lay down to sleep. He continued in this way even when he was over eighty years old. Finally he took leave of the community one day and died.

In truth, that which is to be considered most essential in Zen study is this "formless site of enlightenment." It has no shape or form, it bears no name. Though it therefore has nothing to do with words, nevertheless there is after all definitely a place that is clearly apparent. This is what is called the appearance before birth.

In order to show this realm, Liangshan pointed to an icon of the Bodhisattva of Compassion painted by a Mr. Wu. It was just like pointing to a mirror. This is what is known as "having eyes yet not seeing, having ears yet not hearing, having hands yet not grasping, having a mind yet not cognizing, having a nose yet not smelling, having a tongue yet not tasting, having legs yet not walking." It is as though the faculties were all useless, the whole body useless furniture. It is like being a wooden man, an iron man. At this time seeing form and hearing sound have been escaped.

As Dayang was about to say something further at this point, Liangshan, to prevent him from remaining pinned down, quickly grabbed him and said, "This is the one with form—which is the formless one?" By means of the unused, he made him aware of the faceless. It was like recognizing oneself by looking in a mirror.

In ancient times there was a mirror in which one could see all the internal organs of the body, each of the thousands of pores and hundreds of bones.

The point where you have eyes and ears but do not use them is where you see the realm where there is no body or mind. It is not only breaking through all forms; the darkness of mindless nondiscrimination is broken through, heaven and earth are not separated, myriad forms do not sprout up. This state is perfect and complete.

Actually it is not only that the school of Dongshan came to flourish all at once after Dayang reached this realization—in fact all the Zen masters saw in this way.

After Dayang had understood this essence, a monk asked him, "What is your family style?" Dayang said, "The full pitcher, though overturned, does not pour; there are no hungry people in the whole world." The reality of this state is such that you cannot expel it even

though you overturn it, and it does not give way even though you push it. You cannot pick it up even though you pull at it, and no trace is left even though you touch it. Therefore it is not within reach of ear or eye. Though it comes along with speech and silence, action and stillness, it has never been obstructed by action or stillness. It is not only the Zen masters who have this thing—everyone in the world has it. That is why Dayang said there are no hungry people in all the world.

Now that you have encountered the way of the ancient Buddhas, investigate exhaustively and continuously, until you realize your self before you were born, before form and void came to be, reaching the point where there is no form or description at all, seeing where there is absolutely nothing outside, where you cannot grasp the elements of body or mind even if you grope forever. If you can realize the point where there's never been any lack, then you'll be a true descendant of the Zen masters.

Now how can we convey this principle?

The round mirror hung high, it clearly reflects all;  
Colored paints in all their beauty cannot depict it completely.



## TOUZI

Touzi studied with Zen master Fushan, who told him to contemplate the story about the outsider who said to Buddha, "I do not ask about the spoken or the unspoken," to which the Buddha replied with silence. Touzi spent three years on this story, when one day Fushan asked him, "Do you remember the story? Try to quote it." As Touzi was about to reply, Fushan covered his mouth; Touzi was thereupon awakened.

Touzi was unusually sharp; he left home to enter a monastery when he was only seven years old. He took examinations in the scriptures and became ordained when he was fifteen. He studied Buddhist philosophy, but before long he lamented, "Three incalculable eons, said to be the time required for perfect enlightenment, is a long road to travel. Even if one wears oneself out, what benefit is there?"

So he went to the ancient capital and attended lectures on the Flower Ornament Scripture. The doctrines expressed there seemed like stringing pearls. Once when he read a certain set of verses in that scripture, coming to where it speaks of "the inherent nature of mind itself," he reflected deeply and said, "The truth is beyond written words—how can it be made the subject of a lecture?" So he gave up academic studies and began to visit Zen teaching centers.

At that time Zen master Fushan was an outstanding public teacher. One night he dreamed he was raising a green hawk, and took this to be an auspicious omen. The very next morning Touzi arrived, and Fushan politely welcomed him. Fushan had Touzi contemplate the story of the Hindu questioning Buddha, and Touzi finally became enlightened.

On awakening, he bowed to Fushan, who said, "Do you realize the mystic potential?" Touzi said, "Even if it exists, it too should be ejected." An attendant standing by at the time said, "Today Touzi is

like a sick man who has finally broken out in a sweat." Touzi turned to him and said, "Shut up—if you rattle on, I'll puke."

Three years after this, Fushan brought out the teaching of the Dongshan lineage and taught it to Touzi, who accorded with it in every way. Fushan handed on to him the symbolic relics that he had received in trust from Dayang—a portrait of Dayang, a pair of leather shoes, and Dayang's ceremonial robe. Fushan told Touzi, "Continue the way of that school in my stead. Don't remain here for long. You should keep it well." Finally he wrote a verse to send him off:

The polar mountain stands in space,  
 Sun and moon around it.  
 Myriad peaks gradually approach it,  
 The white clouds are always changing.  
 The way of the Zen founder flourishes,  
 The screen over the cave of Zen is lifted.  
 A golden phoenix lodges in a dragon's nest;  
 The moss in the imperial garden is not to be trampled.

The Buddha's wheel of true teaching was communicated intimately from west to east; in China, five schools of Zen flourished, each one using different devices, so that the styles of the schools were somewhat different. There were phoenixes, there were dragons and elephants; they didn't group together, but none of them was inferior to another.

Touzi accorded with Dayang in word and deed, so he should be called a descendant of the Dongshan school. Zen master Fushan succeeded to Shexian, so he was a descendant of the Linji school. A phoenix is not to be lodged in a dragon's nest, so Fushan sent Touzi to master Yuantong Xiu.

When Touzi got to the assembly of Yuantong, he never called on the master or asked any questions; he just used to sleep a lot. One of the functionaries reported this to Yuantong, saying, "There is a monk in the hall who just sleeps every day. You should enforce the rules." Yuantong said, "Don't do anything yet; let me handle it."

Yuantong then took his staff and went into the hall, where he saw Touzi sleeping. He hit the seat and scolded him, "I have no extra rice here to give you so you can just eat and sleep." Touzi said, "What would you have me do?" Yuantong said, "Why don't you ask about Zen?" Touzi said, "Fine food is not for a satisfied man to eat." Yuan-

tong said, "What about the fact that many people do not agree with you?" Touzi said, "What would be the use of waiting for them to agree?" Yuantong said, "Who have you seen?" Touzi said, "Fushan." Yuantong said, "I had marveled at such stubborn laziness," and they both laughed. Henceforth Touzi became famous.

This is what is recorded in the *Five Lamps Merged in the Source*. In the *Continued Record of Sayings of Ancient Adepts* it says, "Zen master Touzi got the teaching from Zen master Fushan. Fushan had spent time with the great teacher Dayang, and they were in complete accord. Dayang ultimately transmitted the teaching of his school to Fushan, and wanted to hand on his shoes and robe to Fushan, but Fushan refused, saying that he had already gotten the transmission from another teacher. When Dayang lamented that there was no one to transmit his branch of Zen, Fushan said, 'The style of the school of Dongshan has come to an end and will be difficult to revive. You are advanced in years, so if there is no one to transmit it, then I will keep the robe of faith and hand it on to another in your stead, so that this way will continue.' Dayang allowed this and said, 'I'll write a verse and leave it with you for you to use as a proof.' Then he wrote:

The grass on Dayang Mountain  
 Depends on you for its value to be great.  
 Where unusual sprouts grow in profusion,  
 Deep and dense, the spiritual roots are made firm.

In the end he said, 'The one who receives this teaching should remain hidden in the community for ten years before bringing it out.' "

Later Touzi and Fushan met, and Fushan entrusted him with the teachings of the Dongshan school, giving him the portrait of Dayang, the robe of faith, and Dayang's verse. He said, "You inherit the way of Dayang in my stead." Subsequently it actually turned out that Touzi finally appeared in the world as Dayang's successor after the passage of ten years. In Dayang's verse, the place "where unusual sprouts grow in profusion" refers to Touzi, while "the value becoming great" refers to Fushan.

Just as had been foretold, Touzi finally appeared in the world as a public teacher. Offering incense, he said, "Do you know where this stick of incense comes from? It is not produced by sky and earth, it is not made by yin and yang. Anterior to the prehistoric Buddhas, it does not fall into any rank. Transmitted from the Burning Lamp Bud-

dha through the Seven Buddhas of antiquity, it finally came to the Sixth Founder Huineng, and divided into seven streams in China. In the year 1065 I personally received the transmission and verse of the school from Zen master Fushan, being given thorough confirmation of my understanding. He told me to continue the teaching of Dayang in his stead. Although I didn't know Zen master Dayang, in Fushan's teaching he was able to recognize who could succeed to that way. So I don't dare be ungrateful to Fushan's bequest and the mission he entrusted to me; I respectfully offer this incense to the great master Dayang. Why? Because one's parents and the Buddhas are not dear—it is the truth that I consider dear."

Thenceforth Touzi expounded the Zen way of Dayang, and had Zen master Furong Daokai as his successor.

Zen master Fushan was a seventh-generation successor of master Linji and the direct successor of master Shexian. He had left home to follow a Zen teacher while still a boy. A monk came for an interview with that teacher and asked him about the story where an ancient master said the living meaning of Zen was a cypress tree. Watching the teacher press the monk with questions, Fushan became enlightened. Later he visited several teachers and reached accord with all of them. He called on Zen masters Fenyang and Shexian, and received the seal of approval from both of them; finally he became the heir of Shexian. He also called on Dayang and reached accord with him too.

Thus when Dayang wanted to hand the teaching of his school over to Fushan, Fushan declined, saying he already had attainment elsewhere. Because Dayang ultimately was left without any living successors, even though he didn't accept the transmission himself, Fushan was entrusted with it so that the transmission wouldn't be cut off. Later he found the appropriate person and secretly handed it on. At this point it should be realized that the lineages of Qingyuan and Nanyue are basically not separate.

In fact, Fushan transmitted the Zen teaching of Dayang in his stead because he lamented the fact that the whole school of Dayang was about to die out. But followers of our school say that the school of Nanyue is inferior to that of Qingyuan; while followers of the Rinzhai school say that the teaching of Dongshan had died out and was helped by the Linji school. Both of these groups seem ignorant of the essence of Zen. Whether in our school or another school, if there is a true person no one in either school should doubt.



As for the story mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a Hindu said to Buddha, "I don't ask about the spoken or the unspoken." Because it is the path that does not fall within the scope of speech or silence, the Buddha did not say anything. This is not concealing or revealing, it is not self or other, it has no inside or outside, no absolute or relative. As the Buddha indicated that it is like space, like the ocean, the Hindu suddenly understood. He bowed and said, "The Buddha, most kind and compassionate, has cleared away the clouds of my delusion and allowed me to enter truth." Then he left. Truly he had attained a state where he was like the clear sky without a fleck of cloud, like a still ocean without wind or waves.

But Buddha's disciple Ananda didn't know this, and asked the Buddha, "What did the Hindu realize, that he said he had gained entry?" Buddha said, "Like a good horse, he goes as soon as he sees even the shadow of the whip." This is truly the working of the enlightened teachers—in opening the treasury, not a single device is employed, not a word spoken, yet here awakening is realized, like reaching the right road upon seeing the shadow of the whip.

So do not stay in the realm of nonthought—see beyond this. Do not stay in the realm of inexplicability—clarify your mind further. Many people misunderstand the Buddha's silence. Some say, "Without a single thought being born, the whole being appears: it manifests alone, apart from words, like the mountains appearing when the clouds are gone; one stands out relying on nothing, just like this." If you compare this to former exercise of intellectual understanding and outward seeking, it seems as if one has come to rest to some extent, but still skin and flesh are not yet shed and the cluster of consciousness is not yet gone.

If you want to unite with this realm, you must stop your breath and cut off your deepest attachments to life, then look—what appears? Would you say it is nonthinking? Since it cannot be named or identified, how could you say it is silence? It is not just the breath ceasing and the eyes closing—look at where the bones are scattered and there is no trace of skin or flesh left: there is one thing that does not belong to light or darkness, that is not male or female.

How can we convey this principle?

A steep mountain miles high—birds can hardly cross;  
Who can walk on thin ice or the blade of a sword?



## DAOKAI

Daokai studied with Zen master Touzi. He asked, "The sayings of the Buddhas and Zen masters are everyday affairs—is there anything else to help people?" Touzi said, "You tell me—do the emperor's commands in his own realm depend on the ancient kings?" As Daokai was about to speak, Touzi hit him with a whisk and said, "The minute you intended to come here, you already deserved a beating." Daokai was enlightened at this.

Daokai liked peace and quiet ever since youth, and secluded himself in the mountains. Later he went to the capital city and registered in a monastery. He passed the ordination exam in the Lotus Scripture and was ordained as a monk. He called on Zen master Touzi, and was ultimately enlightened. Upon awakening at the foregoing dialogue, he bowed and set off, but Touzi said, "Come here a minute!" Daokai didn't even look back. Touzi said, "Have you reached the realm where there is no doubt?" Daokai covered his ears.

Later Daokai became the chief cook in Touzi's community. Once Touzi said to him, "It is not easy to manage the affairs of the kitchen." Daokai said, "I don't presume so." Touzi said, "Do you boil the gruel, do you steam the rice?" Daokai said, "Helpers clean the rice and light the fire; workers boil the gruel and steam the rice." Touzi said, "What do you do?" Daokai said, "The teacher has kindly let him go free."

One day Daokai accompanied Touzi on a stroll in the garden. Touzi handed his staff to Daokai, who took it and went along. Touzi said, "In principle it should be thus." Daokai said, "It is not out of place to carry the teacher's shoes and staff." Touzi said, "There is still another one accompanying." Daokai said, "That person doesn't take orders." Touzi stopped.

That evening Touzi said to Daokai, "Our earlier talk is still unfinished." Daokai said, "Please say it." Touzi said, "The sun rises at dawn, the moon rises at dusk." Daokai then lit a lamp. Touzi said,

"Your comings and goings are not in vain." Daokai said, "As long as I am with the teacher, in principle it should be thus." Touzi said, "In whose house are there no servants?" Daokai said, "You're old—you shouldn't be without them." Touzi said, "You are so thoughtful." Daokai said, "I am repaying my debt."

In this way Daokai thoroughly and meticulously clarified "that one experience." What about the meaning of his first question, "The sayings of the Buddhas and Zen masters are like everyday affairs—is there anything besides these to help people?" He meant, "Is there anything that the Buddha and Zen masters taught besides the present everyday activity?" It seems indeed as if he was presenting his understanding. But then Touzi said, "You tell me, do the commands of the emperor in his realm depend on the kings of old?" In truth, giving orders in the present does not depend on the authority of ancient kings. It is just that when one person is benevolent, myriad people naturally benefit from it.

In the same way, even if Shakyamuni Buddha were to appear in the world, and even if great master Bodhidharma were still alive, people shouldn't rely on their power—one can only attain enlightenment through one's own acceptance and personal realization. Therefore when you explain a principle and add flavor, this is still looking to another—you have not gotten free from intentional striving. That is why Touzi hit Daokai when he was going to speak further.

At this, to point out the fact of fundamental completeness that lacks nothing, Touzi said, "The minute you intended to come here you already deserved a beating." This is not a testimony of enlightenment. As soon as one begins to seek to find out what mind is, what Buddha is, one has already turned away from oneself and turned toward another. Even if you can say on your own that everything is revealed and naturally clear, and can talk of mind, nature, Zen, and the Way, none of this is free from striving. If there is any striving, there are clouds for ten thousand miles—you have already been long astray from yourself. Even if you were beaten for a thousand lives for myriad years, you could not escape from this mistake.

Therefore Daokai was enlightened at Touzi's words; he bowed and immediately set off, without even turning his head. As Touzi asked if he had reached the point where there is no doubt, what further doubtlessness was there to reach? To say there is would already be ten thousand miles from home. That is why as soon as the words of

the Buddhas and Zen masters enter your ears, they have already defiled your ears. Even if you wash them for a thousand lives, ten thousand years, you cannot get them clean. That is why Daokai covered his ears and didn't let in a single word.

Because Daokai had seen this point completely, when he was the head cook he also said, "He is set free." "He" is not that which cooks rice, not the one who picks vegetables. Therefore carrying firewood and hauling water is all the activity of the worker and servant, ultimately not the part of the head cook. Though it seems as if the pot washer never rests twenty-four hours a day, ultimately he does nothing and touches nothing. Therefore Daokai said, "He is set free."

Even though Daokai had attained such insight, in order to ripen it Touzi handed him his staff when they went into the garden; Daokai took it and went along. Touzi said, "In principle it should be thus," letting him know that this is not something for the teacher to carry, that there is one who does not carry things. At this point Daokai saw through, so he said, "It is not out of place to carry the staff and shoes for the teacher."

At this, Touzi's "toes moved inside his shoes," and while he knew that Daokai had "taken up the staff," yet he had some suspicion that Daokai still had the understanding that any activity is not out of place, so he tested him again by saying, "There is still another accompanying." It is not merely not knowing the name in spite of having always lived together—it is an old geezer whose face is unknown; this is the one accompanying. Daokai had already seen this long before, so he said, "That person doesn't take orders."

Yet Daokai still had a shortcoming. Why? Because even if you know there is "that person" who does not accompany activity and is not involved or affected, if you only know it exists in this way there is still something doubtful. So at this point Touzi stopped without pursuing the principle to the end. That night he said to Daokai, "Our earlier talk was not conclusive." Then Daokai, in order to indicate that he already knew of the existence of the transcendent without doubt and thus had no shortcoming, said, "Please say it, teacher."

So then Touzi said, "The sun rises at dawn, and moon rises at dusk." The night air gone, the stars have moved, the moon is dim; the white clouds lie across the green mountain, not yet unveiling it. But this is yet a sun that rises unaccompanied, unique and alone. When the sun sinks below the mountains to the west, myriad forms

are unseen; with no one coming or going, though the road is not distinguished still there is something that is not emptied. Therefore it gives rise to the moon.

In this realm, even though all becomes one, with no other thing mixed in, and you see no "other," there is a state that is of itself spiritually shining—its illumination breaks up all darkness. This is why Daokai lit a lamp. Truly he had fully arrived and clearly seen. Thus Touzi said to him, "Your comings and goings are not in vain." Having become familiar with this realm, twenty-four hours a day he had no idle time. Therefore he said, "While I'm with the teacher, it logically should be thus."

Although Daokai had perceived thoroughly, it seemed that he was understanding in terms of function, so Touzi, to test him again, said, "In whose house are there no servants?" Who has no servants? Daokai said, "You are old—you shouldn't be without them." There is one who is venerable and great and is never apart from oneself. That is why Daokai said to Touzi, "You are old and shouldn't be without them." Since Daokai perceived so thoroughly, Touzi said, "You are so thoughtful."

For ages and ages it has supported us, never leaving—we have been receiving the power of its grace for a long time. Even the polar mountain and the mountains that surround the world are not a fit comparison for the magnitude of this grace; even the oceans and continents are not a fit comparison for this virtue. Why? Because the mountains, sun, moon, oceans, and rivers all go on moving and changing with time, but the benevolence of this "old teacher" is ultimately not in the realm of becoming and decay. Therefore we are always receiving its grace. If we live and die in vain, never having once bowed to that venerable countenance, we will be eternally sunk in the sea of birth and death as disrespectful people. If we are diligent and careful, once we manage to see it, that great benevolence of myriad ages will be requited all at once. That is why Daokai said, "I am repaying my debt."

Having thus seen so completely, Daokai became a teacher himself. One day a student asked, "The tune of a foreign pipe does not fall within the range of the musical scale; its rhyme goes beyond the blue sky. Please play a song." Daokai said, "a wooden rooster crows at midnight, an iron phoenix cries at dawn." The student said, "If so, there is a one-phrase song in which the rhymes of a thousand ages are



contained; all the students in the Zen hall recognize the tune." Daokai said, "A tongueless child can continue the harmony."

As he had matured thoroughly in this way, there were no "green mountains" blocking his eyes, no "clear stream" to wash his ears. So he looked upon fame and gain as putting rubbish in the eye; seeing form and hearing sound were to him like planting flowers on a rock.

Therefore Daokai never left the sanctuary, and vowed never to go to feasts. He didn't mind if people came, he didn't mind if they left; his community was of no fixed size. They had one bowl of gruel daily, and if there was not enough rice to make gruel, they would just have hot rice-water. The school of Dongshan flourished with his teaching.

Because his perception was intimate and his practical application was unerring, Daokai didn't forget the bequest of the sages of old. Even though he followed the teachings of the ancient Buddhas in this way, he still said, "I am ashamed to be a monastery abbot, inasmuch as there is nothing in my practice worth taking as an example. How can I sit here wasting the monastery supplies, abruptly forgetting the trust of the sages of yore? Now I am emulating the example of the ancient leaders. . . . Whenever I talk about the practices of the ancient sages, I feel there is nowhere to place myself. I am ashamed at how soft and weak the people of later times are."

Now, as his religious descendant nine generations later, I am immaturely preaching the way of the school; my actions are not worthy of being taken as examples or models by succeeding generations. My application of mind is not direct and straightforward. How can I presume to face three or five students and make up a saying or two? We should be ashamed—we should beware and be humble before the illuminating awareness of our spiritual ancestors and the hidden perceptions of the ancient sages.

Yet even so, you students are luckily descendants of Zen master Daokai, being the family of the school of Dogen. You should clearly discern the mind ground, concentrating carefully. With no thought whatever of fame or profit, without pride or conceit, stabilize your mental technique, tune your bearing precisely. Reach what you should reach, investigate what you should find out, take care of the task of your life's study; never forgetting the bequest of our spiritual ancestors, following in the footsteps of the sages of yore, look the ancient Buddhas in the eye. Even if this is a degenerate age, you



should be able to "see a tiger in town." There may well be those who "find gold under their hats." This is my ultimate wish and hope.

Now how can I bring out the preceding story?

Even without rouge, ugliness cannot show—

Naturally lovely, the lustrous radiance and jade powder.

## DANXIA

Danxia asked Zen master Daokai, "What is the one statement that all the sages have handed on from time immemorial?" Daokai said, "If you call it a statement, you are in danger of burying the Way of Zen." At these words Danxia was greatly enlightened.

Danxia left home to become a monk at an early age. He became enlightened under the tutelage of Zen master Daokai. In his first inquiry he asked, "What is the one statement that all the sages since antiquity have handed on?" Although the successive enlightened ones have changed in appearance, there is always that which is handed on, which has no front or back, no above or below, no boundaries, no self or other. This is called the nonempty void. This is the true ultimate for all people; it is inherently complete in everyone.

Yet many students erroneously think of it as original nothingness, declaring that there is nothing further to say and nothing to know. The ancients called such people outsiders fallen into empty nothingness. They never become really free.

So you must be thoroughgoing and continue until all is exhausted and even emptiness is empty; yet there is still something that cannot be emptied. Investigating thoroughly, once you manage to see it, you will be able to make a statement. Therefore Danxia called it the statement that has been handed down.

At that time, Daokai pointed out to him, "If you call it a statement, you are in danger of burying the Way of Zen." Really this realm shouldn't be called a statement—this is a misnomer. It is like bird tracks in the snow; that is why it is said, "Where you hide there are no traces." Once perceiving and knowing have ceased, and skin, flesh, bones, and marrow are gone, what could be left as a trace? If you can succeed in not making any tracks at all, this will become manifest as a result. Yet when this realm is realized, it is called "communicating

mind by mind." This is called the union of the ways of lord and minister; it is "subtle inclusion of both absolute and relative at once."

Now tell me, what do you think the form of this realm is?

The pure wind circling may shake the earth,  
But who will pick it up and show it to you?

## WUKONG

Wukong studied with Zen master Danxia. Danxia asked him, "What is the self that is before the eon of emptiness?" As Wukong was about to reply, Danxia said, "You're still noisy—go away for a while." Then one day when Wukong climbed up to the mountain peak, he was greatly enlightened.

Wukong lectured on the Lotus Scripture when he was only eighteen years old. After being ordained as a Buddhist monk he went to western China and studied the scriptures and treatises, comprehending their great meaning. Then he left western China and went to study with Zen master Danxia.

After his sudden realization, Wukong came back from the mountain peak and stood by Danxia. Danxia slapped him and said, "I thought you knew it exists." Wukong joyfully paid his respects. The next day Danxia went up to lecture in the hall and said, "The sun illumines the solitary peak, green; the moon faces the valley stream, cold. The wondrous secret of the enlightened ones should not be placed in a little heart." Then he got down from the high seat. Wukong came directly forward and said, "Your lecture today can't fool me anymore." Danxia said, "Try to quote my lecture." Wukong was silent. Danxia said, "I thought you'd gotten a glimpse." Wukong then went out.

Later Wukong journeyed to the sacred mountain Wutai, and thence to the capital. From there he went downriver to Changlu, where he called on Zen master Zuzhao. They reached accord as soon as they spoke to one another; Zuzhao had Wukong be his attendant, and made him assistant teacher after a year. Before very long Zuzhao retired due to illness and had Wukong succeed to the abbacy there at Changlu. Students came to him like rivers flowing into the ocean. Around the year 1130 he traveled to eastern China and became abbot

of a famous monastery there. Subsequently he was appointed abbot at six great public monasteries.

Wukong was truly extraordinary, yet when he set his mind to Zen study he still worked especially hard. Thus when he was asked about the self before the empty eon he tried to reply. Danxia didn't approve, and sent him away for a while. Then one day he climbed the mountain peak and found "the ten directions without walls, the four quarters without gates." Having reached this point where the ten directions were right before his eyes, he attained understanding. Therefore he came back and stood by Danxia without saying a word. Danxia, realizing that Wukong knew "it exists," said, "I thought you knew it exists." Then Wukong joyfully paid his respects. Finally Danxia publicly acknowledged Wukong's enlightenment in a lecture.

Later when Wukong became a teacher he said, "At one slap from my teacher my cleverness was exhausted and I couldn't find any way to open my mouth. Is there anyone here who is always joyfully alive? If you would avoid biting a bit and carrying a burden, each of you settle yourself."

In truth, where enlightened people meet each other they walk in the realm before time and make manifest the scenery of the fundamental ground. If you haven't seen this realm, even if you sit silently for thousands of years, immobile as a dead tree, like cold ashes, what is the use?

And people often form a mistaken idea when they hear of the self before the empty eon—they think it means there is no self, no other, no before, no after, no birth or death, no sentient beings or Buddhas, that it cannot be called one or two, it cannot be understood as sameness or difference. Evaluating and thinking in these terms, they think as soon as you say a word you've already missed it, as soon as you give it a thought you immediately turn away from it; so they mistakenly stick to the state of a lifeless ghost and are like zombies.

Then again, some think it is not opposed to anything, so that one can call it mountains and be right, one can call it rivers and be right, one can call it self or other and be right. Others also say that mountains are not mountains and rivers are not rivers, it is just that "this is a mountain, this is a river." So they say; but what is the use? All of them have gone on false paths. Some are attached to forms, some have the same view as nihilists.

But this realm does not rest within the province of being or noth-



ingness, so there is nowhere to stick your tongue in, nowhere to revolve your thoughts. And it doesn't rest on heaven and earth, or on before or after. Look and see where there is no place to tread under your feet—then you will have some realization of it.

Some say it nullifies guidelines and examples, some say it conveys not a breath; but these are both matters pertaining to intentional approach, and after all have turned away from the self. All the more so if you talk about it as the moon, the snow, the water, the wind—probably you all have cataracts in your eyes and are suffering from optical illusions.

What can you call "mountains"? Ultimately there is not a single thing to see. What can you feel as cool or warm? Ultimately there's not a single thing to give you. That is why you cling to things. If you sweep away both worldly phenomena and Buddhism all at once and then see, finally you will not doubt.

Don't look inside, don't seek outside. Don't try to quiet your thoughts or rest your body. Just know intimately; understanding intimately, cut off all at once, sit for a while and see. Though you may say there is no place in the four quarters to take a step and no place in the world to fit your body, ultimately you should not depend on the power of another.

When you see in this way, there are no skin, flesh, marrow, or bones set out for you; birth and death, coming and going, cannot change you. Having shed your skin completely, one true reality alone exists. It shines throughout all time, with no distinction of measure or time. Is this only to be called "before the empty eon"? This place is totally beyond distinctions of before and after.

If you want to know the reason why, it is because this realm is not affected by becoming, subsistence, decay, and annihilation. How can selfhood and otherness be considered causeless? When you have forgotten outside objects and abandoned conditioned thought within, and "even the clear sky gets a beating," you are clean and naked, bare and untrammelled. If you perceive minutely, you will be empty and spiritual, clear and sublime.

If you are not careful and thoroughgoing, you cannot reach this state. In reality, to clarify the issues of countless ages is a matter of an instant—with no feeling of hesitation, without producing intellectual interpretations, just see immediately and directly; then you will be free and independent.

So Zen students doing mental gymnastics are already proceeding wrongly. You should know you can never rest if you deviate even slightly. Meditate thoroughly and fully arrive. Without relying on others you will open up into enlightenment, vast and open as space.

Now tell me, how can we convey a bit of this principle?

The ancient stream, the cold spring—no one looks in;  
It does not allow travelers to tell how deep it is.

## ZONGJUE

Zongjue was an attendant of Zen master Wukong for a long time. One day Wukong asked him, "How is your view these days?" Zongjue said, "I must say it is 'thus'." Wukong said, "Not yet—speak again." Zongjue said, "How is what I said not right?" Wukong said, "I don't say that what you said is not right, but that you have not yet realized the transcendent." Zongjue said, "I can express the transcendent." Wukong said, "What is the transcendent?" Zongjue said, "Even if I can speak of the transcendent, I can't bring it out for you." Wukong said "Actually you cannot yet express it." Zongjue said, "You please say it." Wukong said, "You ask me and I'll tell you." Zongjue said, "What is the transcendent?" Wukong said, "I must say it is 'not thus'." Hearing this, Zongjue was enlightened; Wukong then confirmed his realization.

As Wukong's longtime attendant, Zongjue studied with him day and night, approaching Zen from every angle, never relaxing. When Wukong asked him one day how his view was and he said, "I should say it is 'thus,'" Wukong said, "Not yet—speak again." Actually he says now "it is thus," but there is something lacking. That is to say, although he knows how to be "thus," he doesn't know there is one that is "not thus."

Yet the whole of being was manifest to him, concealing nothing, so he wondered what could be lacking. He asked, "How am I not yet right?" People who understand like this may realize the state of "the green mountain towering alone after the white clouds have dispersed," but they don't yet know that there is a "mountain" even higher than this mountain. So Wukong said, "I don't say that what you said was wrong, just that you haven't penetrated the transcendent." Although all this study of his was the transcendental matter, he still had the fault of not knowing it exists. That is why Wukong said, "You still can't express it."

Still, speaking and thinking, even though one says "thus," one falls into the secondary and tertiary. He knew there is a place where nothing can be applied, and that is why he said, "Even if I can speak of the transcendent, I can't bring it out for you." He still didn't know his own self, and was still stuck in distinction and division. Therefore Wukong said, "You really can't say it." At that point his breath was ended, his strength exhausted. He asked, "What is the transcendent?" Wukong said, "I must say it is 'not thus'." This and the previous statement are further apart than sky and earth, than water and fire. Zongjue thought the whole thing was manifest to him, but Wukong didn't agree. Zongjue only said, "It is thus"—he was only like a solitary light shining clearly. But then he finally saw his mistake and came to realization, whereupon he received confirmation of his enlightenment.

Subsequently Zongjue became a teacher. A student asked him, "What is the Way?" He said, "Stop standing at the crossroads looking into the distance."

Once in a lecture he said, "Walk in the realm before time; free your body outside the world. Sublime realization cannot be reached by means of ideation; true enlightenment cannot be conveyed by words. Just being empty and serene, the spirit tranquil, the white clouds end at the cold cliff, the spiritual light breaks through the darkness, the bright moon follows the night-faring boat. At such a time, how can you act? Absolute and relative have never left the fundamental state; what has complete freedom to do with circumstances of speech?"

Really there are no bounds in empty tranquility; even if you talk about it you are not separated from it. To know the transcendent you must be like this. Still, to speak of "mind" and "essence" is not the transcendent at all. People also think that saying "mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers" is the transcendent, but this is mistaken. Dongshan said, "Only when you have realized that which transcends Buddha will you be able to speak at all." A student asked, "What is speech?" Dongshan said, "When it is spoken, you don't hear."

Zen master Banshan also said, "The unique road of transcendence has not been transmitted by the sages." And it is not "roaming freely according to one's nature," as you often say.

Another student asked Zen master Wukong, "What is the transcendent?" Wukong said, "The subtlety is before a single bubble has arisen—how could it admit the eyes of even the sages?" The "bubble"

he refers to means the appearance of one's personal being. Before appearance is called the transcendental.

Therefore Zen master Gumu, another true heir of Daokai, said in a lecture, "When you know there is something transcending Buddha, then you can talk. Zen students, tell me—what is beyond Buddha? This person doesn't have the six senses or seven consciousnesses—he is an incorrigible, with no buddha nature. When he meets a Buddha he kills the Buddha, and when he meets a Zen master he kills the Zen master. Neither heaven nor hell can contain him. Do you know this one?" After a pause, he said, "Face to face, yet unaware—much slumber, excess sleep-talk."

In truth, when it comes to that which transcends Buddha, even Buddhas lose their lives, even Zen adepts are shattered: try to go to heaven, and heaven crumbles away; turn toward hell, and hell breaks apart. What place can you consider heaven, what place hell? What do you call myriad forms? All along there have been no traces or tracks. It's like when asleep—you don't even know yourself, so how could others discern? It is just clarity, with no such phenomenon as "enlightenment." These are indeed the words of an exalted master.

If you know the transcendent, the eye on your forehead will open, and at this time there will be some realization. But tell me, what is this principle like?

It's just like wedges above and below—  
You can't push them in or pull them out.



## ZHIJIAN

One day in an address Zen master Zongjue quoted, "Buddha had a secret saying; Kasyapa didn't conceal it." Hearing this, Zhijian suddenly realized the mystic meaning. He wept as he stood there, unconsciously blurting out, "Why haven't we heard this before?" After the lecture, Zongjue summoned Zhijian and asked him why he had been weeping in the teaching hall. Zhijian said, "Buddha had a secret saying, but Kasyapa didn't conceal it." Zongjue gave him approval and said, "You must be the one Yunju predicted long ago."

Zhijian was a disciple of Zen master Zhenxie at Changlu monastery when Zongjue was the senior monk there. At that time Zongjue saw that Zhijian had the capacity for Zen. Later Zhijian went into seclusion in the mountains, and no wild beasts could bother him. He became enlightened in the middle of the night, and sought confirmation from Zen master Yanshou. Then he went back to see Zongjue, who by then was abbot at another monastery. Zongjue appointed him to the post of scribe. Then one day he quoted the aforementioned saying.

This saying comes from the Nirvana Scripture: "At that time Kasyapa said to Buddha, 'According to what you say, the Buddhas have secret sayings, but this is not true. Why? Because the Buddhas only have esoteric sayings, not a secret canon. Take, for example, the case of a magician's robot: though people see it move, they don't see what it is inside that makes it move. Buddha's teaching is different—it lets everybody see and know all. How can it be said that the Buddhas have a secret canon?' Buddha praised Kasyapa, saying, 'Very good. As you say, the Buddha has no secret canon. Why? Like the full moon appearing in the autumn sky, clear and unobscured, which everyone can see, so are the words of the Buddha—they are open and clear, pure and without obscurity. Ignorant people don't understand and say it is a secret reserve. The wise understand and do not call it a reserve.'"

This saying has long been used in Zen schools. Thus in this case too, Zhijian, hearing it quoted, became enlightened—truly it hides nothing. When you hear words, you should understand the heart of the matter—don't get stuck on the words. Saying "fire" is not fire, saying "water" is not water. That is why your mouth doesn't burn when you speak of fire and doesn't get wet when you speak of water. So we know that water and fire are in reality not words.

Zen master Shitou said, "When you hear words you should understand the source—don't set up rules on your own." Zen master Yaoshan said, "You should see for yourself. Don't eliminate words; I am using these words to reveal the unspoken for you. What originally has no ears or eyes?" Zen master Changqing said, "The ancestors of Zen all spoke of transmitting mind, not of transmitting words."

Great master Yunmen also said, "If this matter were in words, well, don't the canonical teachings contain words? Why would we speak of a special transmission outside of doctrine? If you go by learned understanding and intellectual knowledge, even the sages of the tenth stage, though they can expound the teaching like rain-giving clouds, still are criticized because their perception of essence is still like looking through gauze. Thus we know that all states of mind are far from reality. Even so, if you have realization, speaking of fire cannot burn your mouth; you can talk all day without anything sticking to your teeth and lips, and you will not have spoken a single word."

Therefore you should know that there is something that not only is speechless but doesn't even have a mouth. Indeed, not only has it no mouth, it has no eyes either, no physical elements, no sense faculties—fundamentally there is not the slightest thing to it. Yet though it is so, this is not void, it is not nothingness. It means that even though you see things and hear sounds, it is not these eyes seeing, not ears hearing. This is the way the faceless one is.

Your coming into being as a body-mind is the doing of this faceless one. Therefore this body-mind is not something created. If you haven't reached here, you think it is the body arising from the relation of your father and mother, or that it is the body born of the results of actions. Therefore you think it is the body that comes from sperm and ovum, that it is the body covered with skin and flesh. This is all because you don't understand yourself.

Therefore, to let people know this realm teachers use unlimited

expedient methods to cause the senses to stop, making everything cease. At this point, there is something that cannot be obliterated, there is something that cannot be destroyed. When you get to know this, it is not emptiness or existence, it is not light or dark. So it is impossible to say that one is deluded or enlightened. Therefore we can't even call this realm buddhahood, and we can't call it truth, we can't call it mind or nature. It is just a bright, clear light. So we can't call it the light of fire or water—it is just empty, clear, and bright. Therefore though we try to look into it, it can't be seen through, and though we try to grasp it, it can't be grasped. It is just clear awareness.

Therefore, when the three disasters of flood, fire, and gales arise and the world is destroyed, this "thing" is not destroyed. When the various realms and forms of existence come into being and myriad forms and appearances are undeniably there, this "thing" does not change. Therefore even the Buddhas can do nothing about it, nor can the Zen masters.

If you want to reach this point, for the time being close your eyes—where the breath ends and this body ends and there is no house to protect you, all function is unnecessary, and you are like the blue sky with no clouds, the ocean without waves—then you'll be somewhat in accord with it.

At this point, though there is nothing you can do, there is yet a light: this light is not like the sun or moon—the whole sky is a moon, so there is nothing to illumine; the whole world is a sun, so there is nowhere to shine. You should realize this thoroughly. If you cannot see this point, you will not only be confused by monks, nuns, men, and women, you will transmigrate through the various states of being in the worlds of desire, form, and formlessness. Even though you be Buddhist monks in form, you'll still be caught by the king of the underworld—won't that be shameful?

Buddhism fills the whole universe—there is nowhere it does not reach. If you try to reach it, how could you fail? This human body is not easily obtained; it is received due to the power of past virtues. If you once reach the point I have been describing, you will all be liberated. It is not male or female, not spirit or ghost, not ordinary or holy, not ordained or lay: there is no place to contain it, and when you try to see it your vision cannot reach it.

If you manage to arrive at this point, though you be a monk you are not a monk, and though you be a layman you are not a layman.

You will not be confused or deluded by your senses, nor compelled by perception and consciousness. If you fail to arrive, you will go on being deluded and trapped by them. Isn't that too bad? If you can arrive at your fundamental completeness by effort, you should do so. Indeed, since people lack nothing, it is a pity that they wander so much in illusion once they have been deluded by their perception.

Just forget senses and objects, do not depend on mind or consciousness. Be diligent in this and you will surely arrive. But this is not gradual attainment; you must rouse yourself powerfully all at once to succeed. Without giving rise to partial understanding or interpretation, directly perceiving the fundamental source, you should thus reach it. Once you have arrived, you will be firmly grounded and unshakable.

An ancient said, "Studying the Way is like drilling for fire; don't stop when you see smoke." When you use all your strength at one stretch, you get fire. What stage does "seeing smoke" refer to? When you meet the skillful technique of an enlightened teacher and reach the stage where not a single thought is born, this is the time when you "see smoke." If you linger here and rest a while, this is like stopping at warmth; you should go on to see fire. This means to know that which is able to not produce a single thought. If you do not know yourself, even though it may seem that you're at rest for the present, and though you may thus be like a dead tree, you are just a corpse whose spirit has not yet dissolved.

Therefore, if you want to personally experience this realm I have elucidated, you must penetrate thoroughly. It doesn't depend on sitting meditation or on clam-talk. What is this principle of the secret saying not concealed?

We could call it the indestructible immanent body;  
That body is empty, clear, and luminous.

## RUJING

Rujing studied with Zen master Zhijian. Zhijian asked him, "How can you purify what has never been defiled?" After more than a year Rujing was suddenly awakened and said, "I've hit upon that which is undefiled."

Rujing gave up doctrinal studies and went into Zen when he was nineteen years old. He joined the community of Zen master Zhijian and spent a year there constantly sitting in meditation, which he did more than the others. At one point, when he asked to be put in charge of cleaning the latrines, Zhijian asked him, "How can you clean what has never been dirty? If you can tell me, I'll put you in charge of cleaning." Rujing was at a loss; even after two or three months had passed he still didn't know what to say.

Once Zhijian called him to the abbot's room and asked him if he could say anything about this issue. Rujing hesitated. Zhijian said, "How can you purify what has never been defiled?" Rujing passed another year and more without being able to answer. Zhijian asked again, but Rujing couldn't give a reply. Then Zhijian said, "If you would get out of your old nest you would find a way. Why can't you say?" After that Rujing was strengthened and worked on meditation with determination.

One day Rujing was suddenly enlightened. He went to the abbot's quarters and said, "I can say it." Zhijian said, "This time say it." Rujing said, "I've hit upon that which is undefiled." Even before he finished speaking, Zhijian hit him. Rujing broke out in a sweat. Then he bowed, and Zhijian approved him.

Later, at another monastery, Rujing worked as the latrine cleaner, as a way of requiting the circumstances of his enlightenment. Once as he was passing in front of the shrine of saints, a strange monk there said to him, "Cleaner of the monastery, you requite the Way, you requite the Teacher, you requite the Community," and then disap-



peared. The prime minister of China heard about this and interpreted it to mean that the sages would approve of Rujing being abbot at that monastery. Later it actually turned out that way. People everywhere said that Rujing's virtue of requital was truly consummate.

After he made his determination at the age of nineteen, Rujing stayed in monasteries, never returning to his native place. Not only that, he didn't even talk to people from his homeland. He never visited any of the rooms of the monastery, and didn't even speak to those who sat by him in the monk's hall. He just sat. He vowed that he would sit through even a seat of diamond. Once his flesh became ulcerated from so much sitting, but he still didn't stop. From his first inspiration through his last abbacy there wasn't a single day or night that he didn't sit.

Throughout his abbacy at several public monasteries, Rujing's self-discipline was different from others, in that he was committed to being the same as the monks. Although he had the patchwork robe handed down from Zen master Daokai, therefore, he didn't wear it. During his lectures and individual guidance he just wore a black surplice and robe. Although he was given a purple vestment of honor and a master's title by the emperor of China, he formally declined them. Furthermore, he kept his succession a secret, not revealing it all his life; only at the end did he formally acknowledge the teacher from whom he had inherited the teaching. This was not only to put off worldly craving for fame, but also out of deference for the good name of Zen. Truly his virtue was unequaled in his time, his discipline peerless in ancient or modern times.

He used to declare of himself, "The Way of the Zen founders has died out this last century or two. Thus there has not appeared a teacher like me for the last hundred or two hundred years." Therefore the abbots in all quarters were awed by him. He never praised any of them. He used to say, "Since I made up my mind to go traveling at the age of nineteen, I have found no one imbued with the Way. Many of the monastery abbots just deal with visiting officials and pay no mind to the monks' hall. They always say, "Each of you should understand on your own," and so saying they do not develop the people. Even the abbots of great monasteries now are like this. They think having nothing on the mind is the Way, and don't demand intensive Zen concentration in association with a teacher. Where is there any Buddhism in that? If it is as they say, why would there be old-timers

persistently seeking the Way? What a laugh—they haven't so much as dreamed of the Way of the Zen founders."

Among the many virtues of Rujing recorded in the diary of one of his attendants, it is said that he didn't say a word when a certain government official asked him to speak at the yamen, and he returned ten thousand pieces of silver that had been presented to him. When he didn't say anything, he not only did not accept the offerings of others, he did not accept fame or profit. So he didn't associate with rulers or politicians, and didn't even receive the greetings of traveling monks from various quarters.

Rujing's virtues were truly extraordinary. It was for this reason that a certain Taoist elder and five of his followers joined Rujing's community, pledging not to return to their native place without mastering Zen. Rujing was delighted at their determination and allowed them individual guidance without requiring them to formally convert to Buddhism. In the arrangement of the assembly he put them after the nuns. This was something quite unusual.

There was also someone named Shanru who vowed he would stay in Rujing's community all his life and never take a single step south. There were many who likewise determined never to leave the master's assembly. Pu the gardener was totally illiterate and didn't begin to study Zen until he was over sixty years old, but Rujing still developed him carefully, so that he finally became enlightened. Though he was a gardener, from time to time he used to utter extraordinary and marvelous sayings. Once Rujing said in a lecture that the abbots throughout the country were not equal to gardener Pu. Later Rujing assigned him to keep the library. Truly, in an assembly where there is the Way, there are many people imbued with the Way, many people with the heart of the Way.

Rujing always used to exhort people just to sit. He would say, "Burning incense, doing prostrations, reciting Buddha names, performing repentance ceremonies, and reciting scriptures are not needed—just sit." He only made them sit. He always said, "The beginning of Zen study is to have the heart of the Way." Truly, even if they have some knowledge or understanding, those who lack the heart of the Way cannot keep their understanding and eventually fall into erroneous views and become wild—they are outsiders sticking to Buddhism.

Therefore, good people, first of all don't forget the heart of the Way.

Develop your mind fully, concentrate only on truth and don't follow the fashions of the time—go forward to emulate the Way of time immemorial.

In truth, if you are this way, even if you don't attain understanding you will be an originally undefiled person. If you are undefiled, this is being originally clean and pure. Thus: "There has never been defilement—what would you purify? If you can get out of your old nest you will find a way."

The teachings devised by the enlightened ones of old did not cause people to produce fragmentary knowledge and understanding—having them cultivate refining practice, setting their wills on the ultimate truth, they are without partiality. This is how one may at all times be free from the views of purity or defilement, and be undefiled oneself.

But so long as he still hadn't escaped the view of defilement, Rujing had an eye to use a means of cleaning: having passed more than a year without understanding, once he got so that there was no skin to strip off, no body or mind to shed, he said he had hit upon what has never been defiled. Yet even so, already he had a spot on him—that is why it says his teacher hit him even before he had finished speaking. At that point his whole body broke out in a sweat—having let go of his body, he attained power. So we know that original purity has never been subject to defilement at all. Therefore Rujing always used to say, "Zen study is the shedding of body and mind."

Now tell me, what is the undefiled?

The breeze of the Way, blowing far,  
Is harder than diamond;  
The whole earth is supported by it.

## DOGEN

Dogen studied with Zen master Rujing. Once during meditation sitting late at night Rujing said to the assembly, "Zen study is the shedding of mind and body." Hearing this, suddenly Dogen was greatly enlightened. He went right to the abbot's room and lit incense. Rujing asked him, "What are you burning incense for?" Dogen said, "My body and mind have been shed." Rujing said, "Body and mind shed, shed body and mind." Dogen said, "This is a temporary byway—don't approve me arbitrarily." Rujing said, "I'm not." Dogen said, "What is that which isn't given arbitrary approval?" Rujing said, "Shedding body and mind." Dogen bowed. Rujing said, "The shedding is shed."

At that time Rujing's attendant said, "This is no small matter, that a foreigner has attained such a state." Rujing said, "How many times has he been pummeled here—liberated, dignified, thunder roars."

Dogen was a ninth-generation descendant of Emperor Murakami. He was born in the year 1200. A physiognomist looked him over and said, "This child is an infant sage. His eyes have double pupils. He will surely be a great man. In an ancient book it says that when a sage is born among men, his mother is in danger. This child will surely lose his mother when he is seven years old." Hearing this, his mother was not disturbed or afraid. She loved and honored him all the more. And as it turned out, in his eighth year his mother died. Everyone said that although there was a discrepancy of a year, after all it accorded with the physiognomist's statement.

In the winter of his fourth year, Dogen first learned to read Chinese poetry at his grandmother's knee. At the age of seven he presented his father with a collection of poems he had composed himself in Chinese. At that time all the elders and famous Confucian scholars declared him a prodigy.

When he lost his mother at the age of eight, Dogen's grief was most profound. As he watched the smoke of the incense rising at her

funeral, he realized the transience of life, and from that point on he determined to seek enlightenment. In the spring of his ninth year he first read Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosha-shastra*. The old Buddhist priests said he was as bright as Manjusri, the embodiment of wisdom, and had genuine potential for universalist Buddhism. Dogen, mindful of such words even from youth, studied hard.

At that time Fujiwara Moroie, the regent and chief adviser to the emperor of Japan, a peerless model for rulers and ministers, took Dogen as an adopted son. He passed his secrets on to Dogen and taught him the essentials of political affairs. When Dogen was thirteen, the regent had him make his debut with the intention of having him become a courtier. Dogen, however, secretly left the manor and went to Mount Hiei, the center of the Tendai Buddhist school.

At the time there was a high priest named Ryokan, a master of the exoteric and esoteric teachings, who was also Dogen's maternal uncle. Dogen went to him and asked to be ordained as a monk. Ryokan was very much surprised. He asked, "But your elder brother and your foster father will be angry—what about that?" Dogen said, "When my mother was dying she told me to leave home and study the Way. And I also think I should do so—I don't want to be involved in the futilities of the mundane world. I just want to leave home and be a monk. I want to become a monk to requite my debt to my mother and grandmothers." Ryokan wept and took him in as a student.

At the age of fourteen Dogen finally had his head shaved, submitting to the authority of the high priest Keon. The next day he received the universalist precepts and became a monk. After that he learned the stopping and seeing practices of the Tendai school, as well as the esoteric teachings from southern India. By the time he was eighteen he had read the entire Buddhist canon.

Later Dogen went to the high priest Koin, another one of his uncles and an outstanding sage, to ask about the main issue of the religion. Koin told him, "What you are in doubt about is the ultimate point of our religion. This is something that has been passed on by word of mouth over the generations, since the time of the founder of the Tendai school. I cannot clear this doubt up for you. I have heard that a great master named Bodhidharma came from India to China transmitting the Buddha seal. His sect has now spread all over and is called the Zen school. If you want to settle this matter, go to the high priest



Eisai at Kennin monastery and ask him about it, or go abroad to see the Way."

So in the fall of his eighteenth year Dogen joined the community of Eisai's successor Myozen at Kennin monastery and was initiated. When Eisai was the abbot at Kennin and Buddhist priests came to study with him, he would let them become Zen monks only after three years, but Dogen was permitted to don the garb of a Zen monk the same season. In late fall he was given the major robe and regarded as a vessel of the Way.

As for Myozen, he transmitted the three sects of exoteric, esoteric, and mind Buddhism. He was the designated successor of Eisai. In the annals of Kennin monastery it said, "The treasury of the teaching is entrusted to Myozen alone. Those who would seek the teaching of Eisai should ask of Myozen."

So Dogen studied with Myozen, from whom he again received the universalist precepts. He was given the robe and bowl symbolic of Zen tradition, and also received secret teachings of esoteric rituals. He studied the canon of monastic regulations as well, and also studied stopping and seeing. For the first time he heard about the way of Rinzai Zen, and, receiving the transmission of the true lineage of the three sects—exoteric, esoteric, and Zen—he became the sole heir of Myozen.

At the age of twenty-four, after about seven years of study with Myozen, Dogen left Kennin and headed for China. The first of the various teachers he visited in China was Rutan, who asked him, "When did you arrive here?" Dogen said, "Four months ago." Rutan said, "Did you come this way following a group?" Dogen said, "How is it when one comes thus, not following a group?" Rutan said, "This is still coming this way following a group." Dogen said, "Since this is coming thus following a group, what is right?" Rutan slapped him and said, "This talkative priest!" Dogen said, "Not that there is no talkative priest, but what is right?" Rutan said, "Stay for some tea."

Dogen also met master Sicho, whom he asked, "What is Buddha?" Sicho said, "The one in the shrine." Dogen said, "If it's the one in the shrine, how can it pervade the universe?" Sicho said, "Pervading the universe." Dogen said, "Fallen in words."

Having thus engaged in dialogue with various teachers, Dogen became very conceited and thought there was no one in Japan or China equal to himself. As he was about to head back to Japan, someone

told him, "The only one in China with the eye of the Way is old Rujing—you will surely benefit by seeing him." Even so, it was over a year before he had the opportunity to call on Rujing.

At that time Zen master Rujing had just become abbot at a certain public monastery, replacing the recently deceased former abbot. Considering circumstances meet, Dogen went to him to resolve his doubts. At the very outset his attack was blunted, and hence he became a disciple of Rujing. Intending to complete his studies, he presented a letter saying, "I have set my heart on enlightenment since youth, and though I have sought the Way from various teachers in my own country and came to know something of the basis of cause and effect, I still didn't know the ultimate goal of Buddhism and lingered in the understanding of the externals of names and forms. Later I entered the room of Zen master Eisai and first heard the way of Rinzai Zen. Now I have come to China with master Myozen, and have gotten the opportunity to join your congregation. This is the luck of a past blessing. Now I pray that in your great compassion you will allow a foreigner, an insignificant man from a distant place, to freely come to your room to ask about the teaching, without question of time or manner. Please be so merciful and kind as to permit me this." Rujing permitted Dogen to call on him day or night, saying he would be like a father forgiving his son's lack of manners.

After that Dogen met with the teacher day and night, personally receiving the true secret. At one point Dogen was chosen to be one of the teacher's attendants, but he declined, saying, "I am a foreigner; if I were to become an attendant in a major monastery of this great country, there would be a lot of suspicion and criticism in the monastic community. I only want to meet with the teacher morning and night." The teacher said, "What you say is truly humble and not without reason." So he just engaged in dialogue with the teacher and received instruction.

Then one night during sitting meditation in the latter part of the night, Rujing came into the hall and admonished the group for sleeping, saying, "Zen study is a matter of shedding body and mind. It does not require incense burning, prostrations, recitations of Buddha names, repentance ceremonies, or scripture reading. You accomplish it by just sitting." Hearing this, Dogen was suddenly enlightened.

Since the time he met Rujing, Dogen worked on the Way day and night, never slacking off for a moment. Therefore he never lay down.

Rujing used to say to him, "You have the discipline of the ancient Buddhas—you will surely spread the Way of Zen. My finding you is like Shakyamuni Buddha finding Kasyapa." So in 1225 Dogen was formally recognized as a successor to the teaching. Rujing instructed him, "Return to your native country and spread the Zen Way. Live in obscurity deep in the mountains and mature your enlightenment."

Dogen also saw succession documents of the five schools of Zen while he was in China. At first he met Zen master Weiyi, who told him, "Ancient writings worth seeing are valuable treasures for people. How many have you seen?" Dogen said he hadn't seen any, so Weiyi told him he had one he would show him. When he brought it out it turned out to be a succession document of the Fayan lineage. It was not his own; Weiyi said that he had found it among the effects of an old adept.

Later the chief monk at the monastery where Dogen studied under Rujing showed him a succession document from the Yunmen lineage. Dogen asked him, "Why are there differences among the five schools of Zen? If the succession is continuous from India to China, how could there be differences?" He said, "Even if the differences are enormous, you should just learn that the Buddhism of Yunmen is thus. Why is Shakyamuni Buddha respected? Because he was enlightened. Why is Zen master Yunmen respected? Because he was enlightened." From this Dogen got some perspective on the matter.

There was also a librarian who had a succession document that he showed to a Japanese monk who had taken care of him when he was sick, saying, "This is something difficult to get to see, but I will let you look at it." Six months later, that Japanese monk entreated the librarian to show it to Dogen also; it was a succession document of the Yangqi lineage of the Linji school of Zen. Dogen also saw the succession documents of two other Zen masters.

Thus having received the permission of several teachers and gotten Rujing's recognition, having mastered the great concern of a lifetime and received the teachings of the Zen founders, Dogen returned to Japan in 1227.

After that Dogen looked for a beautiful place to live unobtrusively. He looked over thirteen places offered by patrons, but none of them suited him. He stayed for some time at a temple on the outskirts of the ancient capital of Kyoto; by then he was thirty-four years old. Monks gradually gathered, seeking the Way, eventually numbering

over fifty. Ten years later he moved to the remote countryside and founded what is now Eihei monastery deep in the mountains.

To penetrate Zen, first one must clarify the mind. In the story of Dogen's enlightenment, we hear that Zen study is the shedding of body and mind. In truth, in Zen study we must relinquish attachments to body and mind. If one is not yet free from body and mind, it is not the Way. It is thought that the body is skin, flesh, bones, and marrow, but when you receive minutely you cannot apprehend the slightest substance.

The mind as spoken of here is of two kinds. One is thinking and discriminating; this perceiving and distinguishing consciousness is thought to be the mind. This second is silent and still, with no knowledge or understanding; here the profound stillness of spiritual brightness is thought to be the mind. What people don't realize is that this is still the root of discriminating consciousness. The ancients called this the place where the spiritual brightness is unmoving. Don't dwell in this, thinking it to be mind.

When we see in detail, there is a threefold distinction: mind, cognition, and consciousness. "Consciousness" is the mind that likes and dislikes, affirms and denies, approves and disapproves. "Cognition" discerns distinctions such as coolness and warmth, pain and itch. "Mind" does not distinguish right or wrong, or feel pain or itch; it is like a wall, like a stone. You think this is really still and silent; it is as though this mind had no ears or eyes. Therefore when speaking on the basis of this "mind" one is like a wood or iron mannikin; though having eyes you don't see, though having ears you don't hear. At this point no words or ideas can convey it. Though this state is mind, yet this is the seed of awareness of distinctions. Cognition and consciousness are based on this, so don't consider it the original mind.

We say that study of the Way must be apart from mind, cognition, and consciousness: these are not to be thought of as the body-mind. There is beyond this a single spiritual light that is eternal and stable. If you observe carefully and thoroughly you will surely reach it. If you can clarify the mind, there is no body or mind to be found, no things or self accompanying it. This is why it is said that body and mind are shed.

Reaching this point, when you observe closely, even if you use a thousand eyes you do not find a particle of anything that can be called skin, flesh, bones, or marrow; there is nothing to divide into mind,



cognition, and consciousness. How can you know coolness and warmth, how can you distinguish pain and itch? What would you affirm or deny, what like or dislike? Therefore it has been said, "When you see, there is not a single thing." Having reached this point, Dogen expressed it by saying he had shed body and mind. Rujing then acknowledged him, saying, "Body and mind shed, shed body and mind." And finally he said, "Shedding is shed."

Once having reached this state, one will be like a bottomless basket, like a perforated cup—no matter how much you put into it, it is never filled. Reaching this is called "the bottom falling out of the bucket." If you have any thought at all of having some enlightenment or attainment, it is not the Way—it will just be a livelihood of exercising the spirit.

Comprehend thoroughly, investigate and penetrate completely, and you will know there is a body that has no skin, flesh, bones, or marrow. This body cannot be shed even though one tries to shed it; it cannot be abandoned even though one tries to abandon it. Therefore this realm is referred to by the expression, "When all is exhausted, there is a place that cannot be emptied."

If you can understand thoroughly, you won't doubt what the Zen masters and Buddhas say. What is this principle?

Clear as pure light, no inside or outside—  
Is there any body or mind to be shed?



## EJO

Ejo studied with Zen master Dogen. One day in the course of inquiries he heard the saying, "One hair goes through myriad holes," and all of a sudden realized enlightenment. That evening he went to Dogen and said, "I do not ask about the one hair—what about the myriad holes?" Dogen smiled and said, "Gone through." Ejo bowed.

Ejo was from a noble family. He became a monk at the age of eighteen, under the tutelage of a high priest. He studied elementary Buddhist philosophy, then learned the methods of stopping and seeing according to the Tendai school of Buddhism. In the course of his study he realized that it is worthless to learn Buddhism for the sake of honor and gain. Within himself he conceived the determination for enlightenment, although for the time being he followed his teacher's will and worked at formal studies for the sake of progress.

Once when he went to his mother's place, she said to him, "My intention in having you leave home was not that you would have a high rank and mix with the nobles, but that you would refrain from studying for the sake of fame and profit and become a black-robed outcaste with your rain hat behind your back, just going along on your travels."

Ejo agreed. He changed his vestments and never went back to Mount Hiei, the Tendai center. He then studied the teachings of the Pure Land school. Later he went to Kakuen, a Zen master preaching the doctrine of seeing essence, and studied more energetically and thoroughly than all the others there.

Once there was a discussion of the Heroic March Scripture. Coming to the point where it says in the metaphor of the pot that the emptiness inside the pot cannot be increased by adding emptiness or decreased by taking emptiness away, Ejo had a profound realization. Kakuen said, "How could it be that the roots of evil and the barriers of confusion that have been there since beginningless time have all

melted away and you have become completely liberated from all pain and misery!" At that time there were more than thirty students in the group; they all thought Ejo most remarkable, and all paid respect to him.

In 1227, when Zen master Dogen had just come back from China, he was staying in Kennin monastery refining his practice. At that time it was said that he had brought the true teaching from China and inwardly intended to spread it. Hearing of this, Ejo thought to himself, "I already have some realization of the source of the three kinds of stopping and three kinds of seeing taught in the Tendai school, and I have mastered the essential practice of the Pure Land teaching. What is more, I have studied with Kakuen and have a profound realization of the meaning of seeing essence and realizing buddhahood. What could it be that this Dogen has brought?"

To find out, Ejo went and called on Dogen. When they first talked, for two or three days Dogen's understanding was just the same as Ejo's; they talked about the spiritual knowledge of seeing natural reality, and Ejo happily concurred, all the more respectful because of his feeling that his own attainment was genuine. But after several days Dogen revealed some very unusual understanding. Ejo was startled, but as he began to challenge Dogen, he found that Dogen had a truth quite different from and beyond his own.

Thus Ejo's inspiration was renewed, and he sought to study with Dogen. Dogen told him, "I am transmitting the source teaching and want to spread it in Japan. Although I may as well stay here in Kennin for the time being, I want to find another place to live. If I find a place and build a hut, then you should come see me. It is not suitable for you to follow me here in this monastery." So Ejo awaited the proper time, in accord with Dogen's will.

Later Dogen built a hermitage next to a temple on the outskirts of Kyoto and lived there alone. For two years not a single person came, until Ejo showed up in 1234. Dogen gladly allowed Ejo to receive personal guidance, discussing the Way of Zen day and night. After three years, Dogen brought up the saying about one hair passing through myriad holes. That is to say, "One instant is ten thousand years; one hair goes through myriad holes. To pass the test is up to you; to surpass the crowd is up to you." Hearing this, Ejo became enlightened. After receiving Dogen's acknowledgment and approval, Ejo followed

him continuously for twenty years, never leaving his presence even for a day, like a shadow following a form.

No matter what other job Ejo held, he always served as Dogen's attendant as well. When his tasks were done, he would go back to the attendants' quarters and stay there. Therefore I always used to hear Ejo say, "Although Myozen had numerous disciples, only master Dogen finished his studies there; and while Dogen had many disciples, I walked alone in the abbot's room. Therefore I heard things others did not hear, while there was nothing others heard that I did not."

After he became the successor of the school, Ejo was always highly esteemed by Dogen, who had him take charge of all the Buddhist services at Eihei monastery. When Ejo asked him the reason, Dogen said, "I will not live very long, and you will outlive me; it will certainly be you who will cause the Way to spread. Therefore I esteem you for the sake of the teaching."

Dogen's attitude toward Ejo was almost like that of a student to a teacher. The paths of teacher and apprentice joined, the lights of their minds and eyes merging, like water in water, like space meeting space. With no disagreement at all between them, only Ejo knew the mind of Dogen, which was beyond the knowledge of others.

As for the meaning of "one hair going through myriad holes," Ejo said, "I don't ask about the one hair—what about the myriad holes?" There is not so much as a single atom that can be established; nothing can be produced at all. Therefore an ancient said, "In the sphere of true reality not so much as a single atom can be accommodated. "In the single expanse of pure emptiness, nothing so much as a fine hair is produced. When Ejo had understood in this way, Dogen approved of him by saying, "Gone through." Actually hundreds of thousands of inconceivable meanings and infinite avenues of teaching were all strung on a single hair. Ultimately there is not a mote of dust that comes from outside.

So there are no boundaries in the ten directions, no differences in the past, present, and future. Crystal clear, bright and radiant, this realm is even brighter than a thousand suns shining together—even if a thousand eyes looked it over, they couldn't find its limits. Yet no one doubts that it is clearly comprehended when one is awakened; therefore it is not something extinct. It is not of the character of dis-

inction; it has no movement, no stillness, no hearing, no seeing. Have you reached it in every way, thoroughly realized it in this way?

If you haven't attained this point, even if you practice virtuously for tens of thousands of years and meet innumerable Buddhas, this is all fabricated practice, and you do not understand anything about the Way of Zen. Therefore you cannot avoid the miserable routines of the three realms and will not cut off the flow of birth in its various forms.

If you formally model yourselves on the Buddha and make use of the endowment of the Buddha but have no realization of the Buddha's enlightened mind, you are not only deceiving yourselves at all times, but are also repudiating the Buddhas. Therefore you cannot destroy the ground of ignorance and wander around in the cluster of habitual consciousness. Even if you experience states of felicity by the power of virtue and proudly enjoy this conditional happiness, this is just like the wheel of a cart that sometimes goes through wet places and sometimes goes through dry places—endlessly, beginninglessly, you will just be sentient beings experiencing the results of habitual action.

So even if you have mastered the canonical teachings of Buddhism and can expound their doctrines, this is after all just like a cat watching a rat—even though you outwardly seem to be quiet, your mind is still restlessly seeking. And even if your cultivation of practice is closely refined, your mind ground is never really tranquil, and so your doubts and hesitations are not yet cleared up. This is like a fox that runs fast yet makes slow progress because it keeps looking back. This is a life of playing with the spirit, the life of a foxy devil whose changing apparition has not ceased.

Therefore you should not be fond of academic learning. All you should do is arouse your will for the moment, even for an instant, so that it is like a great fire in which nothing can remain, like open space to which nothing can be affixed. Then even if you think, you will definitely reach the point where thought cannot reach; and even if you don't think, you will definitely reach the point that cannot be emptied. If you have such a true determination, once this will is solidified you will penetrate through to a realization no different from that of the Buddhas of all times.

Dogen said, "When people seek the Way, they should do so with the same determination as worldly people have when they seek to meet a beauty, to overcome a powerful adversary, or to conquer a



fortified citadel. Once they have such a profound determination, they will surely overcome this adversary, meet this beauty, or conquer this citadel. Now if you apply this mind to the Way, everyone should attain enlightenment." The Way is the formless teaching of universalist Buddhism. You should not think that it necessarily makes a distinction among potentialities, or that beginners cannot reach it. Here there is no sharpness or dullness at all; there is nothing whatsoever to work at. Burst forth once, and you should have profound realization.

Now tell me, what is this principle? I have already told you: space has never admitted so much as a needle, in the vastness there is nothing to rely on—who is there to discuss it? When you arrive at this realm, you do not establish even the name of a single hair, much less the myriad holes. Nevertheless, there is something that myriad things cannot hide, and even when everything is done away with, there is still something you cannot get rid of. It stands out clearly of itself; empty and open, it is fundamentally radiantly aware. Therefore it is called "clean and naked, bare and free." It is also called being clearly awake, everything obvious; and it is called radiant brightness. There is not a trace of doubt or thought, nor any floating dust at all. It is brighter even than a billion suns and moons.

But you cannot call it white, you cannot call it red. It is like waking up from a dream—it is only alive and active. We call this living: to be awake means having awakened and being alert; being clear means being bright and lucid. You should not say that there is no inside or outside, you should not say that it extends through the past or reaches the present. So do not say that one hair goes through myriad holes—what going through could there be? If you call it a hair, this is what Ejo already realized; then what is the substance of the hair?

Space has never admitted even a needle;  
 In the vastness there is nothing to rely on,  
 So who is there to discuss it?  
 Do not say one hair goes through myriad holes—  
 The bare, clean ground hasn't a trace.





UNLOCKING THE ZEN  
KOAN

*A New Translation of the Zen Classic*  
Wumenguan



## INTRODUCTION

*Unlocking the Zen Koan* is a new translation of *Wumenguan*, a classic collection of comments on Chinese Zen koans, symbolic stories designed to map the Zen Buddhist way to enlightenment. Koans are the most sophisticated of Zen devices, used effectively even by novices. This book unravels the secrets of this popular collection of koans, revealing them as tools for opening up the inherent genius of the mind.

Zen awakening liberates the mind from the limitations and burdens of narrow views, dogmatic assumptions, and circular thinking habits. This is figuratively called "taking off the blinders and unloading the saddlebags," in reference to the process of shedding binding fixations and clarifying the mind, "becoming bare and untrammelled, radiantly bright."

Zen is the heart of Buddhism, which is traditionally likened to a chariot running on two wheels, wisdom and compassion. The combination of these two qualities is customarily symbolized by a lotus blooming in a fire, representing the freedom of the liberated mind in the midst of the mundane world, transforming ordinary experience into extraordinary enlightenment.

The soul of Zen wisdom is called the heart of nirvana, which is the quintessential realization of dispassionate objectivity. The spirit of Zen compassion is called knowledge of differentiation, because it is based on objective knowledge of the world. In symbolic language, the experience of nirvana is called the Land of Eternal Silent Light, while the experience of knowledge of the world is called the Land of True Reward.

The harmonious union and pragmatic coalescence of these two domains of experience, Silent Light and True Reward, is the means by which complete human fulfillment in this life on earth is approached in Zen Buddhism.

The Land of Eternal Silent Light and the Land of True Reward are both symbolic and descriptive of the nature of the experiences of the two sides of enlightenment. The Land of Eternal Silent Light is the domain of essence, or what we have always been; the Land of True Reward is the domain of function, or what we can possibly be. Eternal Silent Light is the wellspring of uninhibited wisdom; True Reward is the wellspring of uninhibited compassion.

All of the Zen koans in this collection represent mental exercises for the realization of these experiences and their ultimate integration and mature development in complete consciousness. Some koans, beginning with the first, focus primarily on Silent Light or ways of arriving there; others, beginning with the second koan, focus primarily on True Reward or ways of arriving there. The most advanced koans also give techniques of integration, as do the traditional Zen commentaries on koans.

The *Wumenguan* is one of seven major Chinese collections of comments on Zen koans. It was compiled over seven hundred and fifty years ago by a distinguished Chinese Zen master, whose comments in verse and prose illuminate the inner meaning of the koans.

Formally the briefest, simplest, and most succinct of the major collections, the *Wumenguan* is popularly regarded as the most accessible of classical koan studies. To the Zen eye, however, the brevity and simplicity of its format do not indicate a rudimentary level of sophistication, but the very opposite. The text is perhaps the most intensely concentrated, and therefore supremely economical, presentation of the fullest ranges of Zen teaching that can be suggested in words.

The extraordinary density of meaning achieved in the *Wumenguan* can be glimpsed in the multiplicity of ideas conveyed in the title alone, which not only identifies the text but also describes the nature of its contents and function, and thus the purpose of its existence.

The first obvious way to read the original title *Wumenguan* is "Women's Border Pass." Women is one of the names by which the Chinese Zen master who authored the text is known. Women Huikai (pronounced Woo-mun Hway-kai) lived from 1183 to 1260. His own preface to *Wumenguan* is dated 1228, so Women's comments on the koans were delivered at the age of forty-five, when he was in the prime of life.

A Zen master in a classical book or story is not just a historical



person, but also symbolizes some aspect of Zen. Huikai, Wumen's original Buddhist name, means "Ocean of Wisdom." He acquired the name Wumen, "The Gate of No," due to his long practice of a powerful Zen exercise (taught in the first koan) to which this name also refers, as explained below.

The "Border Pass" in the title as read in this manner refers to the koans themselves, and to the process of unlocking and actualizing koans. Your understanding of the koans is your own passport across the border of mental barriers, your passage into mental freedom.

Another way to read the title *Wumenguan* is "The Border Pass Whose Doorway is No." This meaning refers to a basic Zen practice and experience, which may be described as radical disentanglement from thought and conceptualization. Here, *No* symbolizes a cornerstone of Buddhist logic as well as a fundamental Zen exercise. The logical principle is that no human conception can grasp absolute reality as it is in itself. The Zen exercise is that taught in the first koan, one by which the mind transcends subjective biases and acquired conceptions of the world, thereby arriving at direct witness of reality.

The title *Wumenguan* can also be read, "The Barrier That Has No Door," or "The Bolt on a Nonexistent Door." These meanings allude to the Zen teaching that the human mind is unnecessarily imprisoned by barriers of habit, mechanical patterns of thought and activity, routines that seem real and true only because they engage the best of our attention. Zen demonstrates the objective unreality of conceptual barriers to objective perception; the koans are a means of breaking through these mental barriers to allow the mind's eye to see through the veil of illusion to actual truth.

The title *Wumenguan* also means "There Is No Door Bolt." According to the central teaching of Buddhism, in reality nothing cloisters the mind but attachment to its own thoughts and projections. The meaning of Zen is to realize this fact in experience, in the experience of genuine freedom of the mind. Thus, summing up the essential meanings, *Unlocking the Zen Koan* represents the philosophy, practice, and realization of Zen as taught through the koans in this famous collection.

### *Zen and Koan Study*

Koan-based Zen follows the order of spiritual practice taught by Jesus: "Seek the Kingdom of God first: then all things will be added." Re-

turning to the symbolic terms introduced at the outset, it can be said that the Zen Buddhist using koans first seeks the experience of the Land of Eternal Silent Light, then from there attains direct, firsthand knowledge of the Land of True Reward. The order and content of the first and second koans in *Unlocking the Zen Koan* reflect this design, setting the fundamental pattern for working through the entire collection.

It is axiomatic that the awakening experiences and direct perceptions of Zen realization cannot be explained or understood as they really are by means of intellectual interpretation or conceptual thought, because they are not in the domain of ideation. For this reason, no theoretical discussion of koans will convey the genuine enlightenment of Zen. In order to benefit from the use of koans, it is necessary to employ them for the purpose and in the manner for which they were designed. To get the most out of this book, therefore, it is imperative to use it with the whole mind, both reading the koans *and* performing the indicated mental exercises.

Because of the pragmatic nature of koans, there is no substitute for getting directly involved with them. The following method of using this book is based on koan techniques articulated approximately one thousand years ago in the Zen tradition taught by Wumen. These techniques range from elementary initiatory methods for practical introduction to Zen experience, all the way to integrative methods of attaining the highest ranges of Zen realization.

### *Applying Zen Koans*

The most basic traditional application of a Zen koan has two aspects. First is the simple act of calling a koan to mind from time to time, in all sorts of situations. Persistent repetition of this practice fosters the ability to engage an extra dimension of attention at will, a capacity that can be useful for enhancing general effectiveness in life through increasing the scope and fluidity of awareness.

The second aspect of this basic koan practice is developed and fortified in the process of calling koans to attention. As the mind gradually becomes steeped in the pattern of the koans, they reveal themselves as guides to specific exercises in Zen perspective and perception. Now the power of mental command developed in the first

stage of deliberate recollection of koans is applied to consciously exercising the special perspectives represented by the koans.

Many people have found it useful to stand, sit, walk, or lie in a very quiet state while trying to solidify their koan recollection or perspective, but to really master Zen it is imperative to develop the capacity to practice Zen in the course of all activities. One of the major functions of koan practice is to empower Zen in action, so that the development of higher consciousness can continue uninterrupted regardless of whether there is calm or disturbance in your thoughts or surroundings. This is the beauty and grace of koans, one of the underlying reasons for their perennial attraction.

The first two koans in this collection afford the most basic illustrations of the meeting point of these two aspects of elementary koan practice. All of the other koans are either alternative methods or advanced refinements of the exercises and experiences indicated by the first two koans. By putting the first two koans into practice, therefore, it is possible to obtain experiential insight into the keys of all the other koans.

According to Zen teaching, there is really no way to comprehend koans except through themselves. Although the actual experiences of koans open up intellectual understanding, intellectual understanding alone does not open up the actual experiences of koans. As maps, koans show something: Just reading the map is not making the journey, but without reading the map there is no direction. The ordinary mind has no real conception of mental freedom as it is experienced in Zen, so the koan seems impenetrable until we follow its guidance.

In the first koan, the question is posed, "Does a dog have Buddha-nature?" The answer given is "No." The rudimentary exercise of this koan is simply to bring this question and answer to mind from time to time. The exercise is also traditionally performed by just bringing the answer *No* to mind.

In the second koan, the question is posed, "Are greatly cultivated people still subject to causality?" The answer is given, "They are not blind to causality." The quintessential point of this exercise may also be invoked by simply recollecting, "Not blind to causality."

These basic exercises may be carried on at any time, but it is particularly effective if you take care to call the koan to mind on two specific occasions: whenever you notice you have forgotten about it; and whenever you notice your mind wandering, or seeming to be full

of thoughts or feelings. Do this without disrupting accurate awareness of the environment, or of the task at hand.

The very act of bringing up a koan at such times asserts the original freedom and independence of the mind, and thus its attentive practice prevents forgetfulness or preoccupation from monopolizing and controlling the mind. The accompanying acts of recollection and self-monitoring also break the habit of negligence, a self-defeating human weakness that can manifest itself in any form of activity.

The cultivated capacity to assert this power of independence and to bring enhanced attention to bear on any object at will gradually develops into a spontaneous ability to direct attention autonomously. The fortitude of heart this produces cannot be duplicated by fabricated meditation procedures involving self-hypnosis or autosuggestion. When thus empowered, the mind is not obstructed by ordinary affairs, but can manage them with freedom of choice. This happens because the ability to direct and employ the mind deliberately has been built up through persistent exercise of independent will in addition to, not in opposition to, the current of ordinary affairs.

Koans also provide means of focusing the gathered attention on universal principles and objective reality as whole experiences, rather than training the attention on a limited object. Reflecting coherent perceptions within their structures, when correctly understood, koans impart essential meaning and direction to enhanced concentration and awareness.

This meaning and direction depends, naturally, on proceeding to the second stage of basic koan work, linking it to the first. This can again be explained with reference to the first and second koans of this collection as models of the basic genera of exercises of which all other koans represent variations, refinements, combinations, and diagnostic analyses.

The practice of the exercise of *No* taught in the first koan means bringing *No* to mind continuously until habitual wandering thought stops and consciousness is calmed and clarified. In Zen Buddhism this is sometimes called realization of nirvana, or emptiness. The practice of the exercise of *Not blind to causality* taught in the second koan involves observing the processes of events. In technical terms, this is often called arrival at realization of suchness, or being-as-is.

These two aspects of Zen experience have to be integrated to produce wholeness of consciousness. Unless perception of suchness is



exercised, the experience of nirvana can deteriorate into quietism instead of the purifying elixir it should be; without nirvanic exercise, perception of reality is hampered by subjectivity and internal chatter. Together these two categories of exercise produce calmness and insight, clarity and precision, wisdom and compassion: Once developed in concert, these qualities then indicate their own unending applications and effects in the life of the individual.

Zen koans are also used for purposes of testing and examining states of mind. Zen teachers use this function of koans to determine students' progress in development of consciousness; Zen students use this function to see teachers and to uncover hidden biases and fixations subconsciously limiting their own minds. Thus koans can help stimulate the process of growth by revealing the limitation of thoughts and ideas based on subjective assumptions.

This use of koans to test mentalities requires a certain degree of Zen psychological knowledge to apply, but parallel examples of its operation can be obtained with familiar materials. A simple method uses the prejudices of the environment, casually providing appropriate stimuli to observe whether an individual or group is infected with the habitual prejudices of the cultural environment, or whether evidence is shown of capacity for independent thought and perception.

In a Western milieu, for example, environmental prejudice is easily elicited by reference to Islam. When people with no knowledge of the Koran or usages of the Prophet are ready to offer opinions on Islam as fact, this represents the working of conditioned bias, not the operation of independent cognition. The inclination to accept unverified opinion simply because of currency or familiarity is a dangerous human weakness that is instrumental in self-deception, and easily exploited for the deception of others. Zen study exposes such fallacies of thought in order to liberate the mind from bondage to the views and attitudes they produce.

The purpose of Zen is to free the mind from the illusion that automatic thinking, the operation of environmentally conditioned prejudices, is real consciousness. Zen does not work in this way, however, when it has itself been subjected to the limitations of biased thinking. Popular Western conceptions of Zen koans as illogical or paradoxical, for example, create an environment of increased susceptibility to con-



fusion and misdirection in those who have imbibed these notions, even subconsciously.

Because the external appearance of Zen symbolism covers an enormous range of imagery, from sublime beauty all the way to violent brutality, it is crucial for the reader to understand that the language of koans is symbolic. Its meanings are not defined by individual items of its surface content, but by the relationships patterned in its underlying structure. Far from being illogical, Zen koans are paragons of logic. This is not always evident to Westerners, however, because the logic of Zen koans is Buddhist logic, which is more experientially oriented than Western philosophy.

Some barriers of environmental prejudice about Zen are extremely tenacious even in Far Eastern cultures, not just in Western cultures. The essential reason for prejudice about Zen, other than misinformation, is simply that its central experience is outside the domain of all acquired conditioning. This ungraspable quality frustrates the compulsion of the ego to identify or associate the self with something, so the threatened ego reacts against its own paranoid conception of the Zen experience.

This psychological resistance to opening up to Zen is quite human and not peculiar to Western people alone. It may appear in any culture, in many different guises: The gap between the culturally conditioned mind and the liberated Zen mind is such that almost anything from the inventory of habit can be interposed between the inner mind and Zen understanding.

This foible of the human mentality is not brought out into the open by Zen technique in order to criticize and chastise people, but to allow the individual mind to observe directly the mechanism of fixation that holds it back from enlightenment; because it is only by unmasking the inner tyrant that we can ultimately become free.

### *How to Read This Book*

The text of *Unlocking the Zen Koan* consists of several tiers of working material. The first tier is a symbolic story of an ancient Zen master. This is followed by a brief comment by Wumen, the later Zen master who compiled these koans in thirteenth-century China. Then there is a final remark by Wumen, in verse. The original Chinese text consists of forty-eight sets of story, comment, and verse.

To augment and further illuminate the bare original text, I have also included translations of comments on the same koans by other great masters of Chinese Zen tradition from the eighth to the sixteenth centuries. Some of these are in prose, many are in verse; all of them bring out the inner designs of the koans to make them easier to use.

In a Western cultural milieu where there is no common intimacy with the original Zen ideas or practices, most of the meaning and sense of koans are ordinarily imperceptible, as a matter of natural course. To the translations I have therefore added explanations of the principles and practices, the exercises in perspective and perception, that are indicated in the structure and symbolism of each koan, comment, and verse.

In order to derive maximum benefit from reading this book it must first be understood that Zen texts need to be read several times, in different states of mind, to achieve the degrees of absorption and penetration required to produce the optimum effect. Zen koans are not like ordinary literature and do not yield their enlightenment to emotional or intellectual modes of understanding. A simple program of classical methods for reading this book in a manner consistent with the aims of Zen may be outlined in the following steps.

#### STEP ONE

Read only the original koans, statements, and verses through, in order. Do not read the translation explanations. Do not try to interpret or remember anything you read. Do not bother making any personal judgments or comparisons.

Note that this manner of reading, far from being the simpleminded mechanical performance it would appear, is itself a fairly difficult Zen exercise in mastery of attention: Therefore it is useful to carry it out with care even if the final purpose and meaning are not immediately evident.

One meaning of this admonition is that it is definitely counterproductive to expect to understand everything at once. Koans are geared to incite feelings of frustration in the arrogant, impatient, possessive part of the psyche, in order to expose the doings of this inner tyrant.

Fortunately, Zen practice provides something much more positive than confusion and worry. As you read the koans and comments,

when thoughts occur to you, whether they be random, confused, or insightful, immediately think “No!” and do not pursue them. This is the traditional Zen initiatory exercise of the first koan, which you are now setting in the total design of the whole mandala of koans by viewing them all in this particular manner.

Try to read two koans per day in this way, one in the morning and one at night, calling *No* to mind as you read the koans, and also from time to time throughout the day. (Note that due to the possibility of distraction or oblivion in those who have not yet mastered attention, this particular exercise is not well suited for beginners when involved in hazardous tasks, such as operating heavy machinery; the second koan is much better in such cases.) At this stage, read the koans in the order they are presented in the book, pairing successive koans in daily readings.

#### STEP TWO

Now, instead of recalling *No!* practice focusing attention on the total perception of the immediate present: Take in the whole scene before you at once, again without making any judgments or comparisons, just as if your mind were simply a mirror impartially reflecting whatever comes before it. This is basic concentration on *Not blind to causality* according to the second koan.

Read through the koans again, as described in the first step, but this time switch the mind to focus on the immediate present whenever you notice thoughts arising. *Not blind* may be used even in the course of intricate or dangerous tasks, provided you get the proper focus: Make sure you can do it in simple activities before you try it during more complex occupations.

#### STEP THREE

Returning to the recollection of *No!* for home base, read through the koans again in the same order and manner, but this time with the explanations. Try to work through all the perceptual shifts and other exercises outlined, immediately remembering *No!* whenever you lose the thread.

## STEP FOUR

Repeat step three, using the recollection of *Not blind* for home base. Read the koans, comments, verses, and explanations, using *Not blind* to reorient yourself whenever necessary as you work through the exercises.

## STEP FIVE

Read the book freely now, shifting back and forth between *No* and *Not blind* fluidly and accurately according to the emphasis of each koan, to which the foregoing readings are calculated to have sensitized your mind. The purpose of this final step is to cultivate the ability to experience the consciousness of *No* and *Not blind* simultaneously, yet to also be able to shift back and forth at will to focus on either one, according to need: the purifying and awakening function of *No*, or the clarifying and enlightening function of *Not blind*.

*Summary Remarks*

Three elements are traditionally deemed necessary for successful application of koans to the process of awakening Zen enlightenment: faith, doubt, and resolution.

Faith is needed because the experience of Zen is inconceivable to the ordinary mind and cannot even be imagined until it happens. Therefore faith in the natural possibility of enlightenment is necessary in order to take practical steps toward the unknown.

Doubt is unavoidable because the inconceivable nature of Zen enlightenment necessarily keeps the seeker in a state of suspense, which is of indefinite duration and intensity.

Without the first element of faith, this suspense is humanly unendurable; combined with faith, it enables the individual to question objectively the circumscribed habits of feeling and thought to which he or she tends to return again and again.

According to Zen teaching, the inclination to become engrossed in subjective habits of thought and feeling is precisely what inhibits the human mind from realization of enlightenment. This inclination is so strong that it ordinarily fills any lull, gap, or opening in the contin-

uum of mental habit in an automatic manner. The Zen doubt, buffered with the Zen faith, is a powerful tool for overcoming this limitation of the human mentality; and the Zen koan is an extremely powerful tool for creating and sustaining the Zen doubt.

The final element of resolution is also indispensable, because transcendence of automatic mental habits and consequent freedom and independence of mind are not easy to attain in reality; they require a lifetime of grooming even after awakening to the practical possibility of doing so.

It takes determination simply to recollect Zen koans, let alone carry their mental exercises through; and Zen masters have said that in complete perfect enlightenment there are eighteen major awakenings, and countless minor awakenings. A proverb says, "Those in a hurry do not arrive."

In the final analysis, koans are infinitely rich in existential meaning, but the quality and degree to which their powers to awaken the mind are experienced and lived out depends upon the attention of each individual to his or her own enlightenment.



*Unlocking the Zen Koan*



[ 1 ]

## ZHAOZHOU'S DOG

*A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does even a dog have Buddha-nature?"  
Zhaozhou said, "No."*

WUMEN SAYS,

To study Zen you must pass through the barrier of the masters; for ineffable enlightenment you need to interrupt your mental circuit. If you do not pass through the barrier of the masters, and do not interrupt our mental circuit, then your consciousness will be attacked to objects everywhere.

But tell me, what is the barrier of the masters? This one word *No* is the unique lock on the door to the source; so it is called the "Barrier of *No* Locking the Door of Zen."

Those who can pass through the barrier not only see Zhaozhou in person, they will then be able to team up with the Zen masters of all time, and be on a par with them, see with the same eye and hear with the same ear. Would that not be joyous?

Isn't there anyone who wants to pass through the barrier? Arouse a mass of doubt with your whole body, inquiring into this word *No*, bringing it to mind day and night. Do not understand it as nothingness, do not understand it as the nonexistence of something.

It will be like having swallowed a hot iron pill, which you cannot spit out no matter how hard you try. Washing away your previous misconceptions and misperceptions, eventually it becomes thoroughly familiar. In a natural manner, inside and outside become one; like someone without the power of speech who has had a dream, you can only know it for yourself.

When you suddenly break through, startling the heavens and shaking the earth, it is as though you have obtained a great warrior's sword: meeting Buddhas, you kill the Buddhas; meeting Zen

masters, you kill the masters. On the shore of life and death, you attain great independence; in the midst of all sorts of conditions and states of being, you remain perfectly focused even while roaming freely about.

But how do you bring it to mind? Using all of your day-to-day energy, bring up this word *No*. If you do not allow any gap, you will be like a torch of truth that lights up the moment fire is set to it.

#### WUMEN'S VERSE

A dog's Buddha-nature  
Presents the true directive in full:  
As soon as you get into yes and no,  
You lose your body and forfeit your life.

#### ZEN MASTER WUZU'S VERSE

Zhaozhou shows a sword  
Whose cold frosty light blazes;  
If you go on asking how and what,  
It cuts you up into pieces.

#### ZEN MASTER SUSHAN RU'S VERSE

"A dog has no Buddha-nature"—  
Kind compassion, deep as the sea.  
Those who pursue words and chase sayings  
Bury the hearty mind.

#### TIANTONG RUJING SAID,

When thoughts are flying around your mind in confusion, what do you do? "A dog's Buddha-nature? No." This word *No* is an iron broom: Where you sweep there is a lot of flying around, and where there is a lot of flying around, you sweep. The more you sweep, the more there is. At the point where it is impossible to sweep, you throw your whole life into sweeping.

Keep your spine straight day and night, and do not let your courage flag. All of a sudden you sweep away the totality of space, and all differentiations are clearly penetrated, so the source and its meanings become evident.

*Translator's Comments*

Zhaozhou (pronounced Jow-joe) was born in 778 and lived to be one hundred and twenty years old, finally passing away in 897. An exceptionally high-minded master, Zhaozhou was first awakened in the Zen way at the age of eighteen, but he did not open a teaching center until he was eighty years old.

In this koan, the dog represents the state of the unenlightened person, while the Buddha-nature refers both to the essence of enlightenment and the possibility of realizing enlightenment. In this context, enlightenment means full awakening of higher faculties of mind, ordinarily lying dormant beneath subjective preoccupations with thoughts and things.

At the most elementary level, the Zen master's statement that a dog has no Buddha-nature simply draws a distinction between the animal nature and the enlightened nature in humankind. The animal nature is not fully conscious; it reacts to things by instinct and habit, without understanding why. The enlightened nature is the essence of consciousness itself: it sees and understands most directly.

The consciousness of a nonhuman animal is traditionally said to resemble that of the dream consciousness of a human. By a similar analogy, the relationship of ordinary human consciousness to enlightened consciousness is also said to be as that between dreaming and awakening.

The central Zen question is this: What is it that dreams and awakens? The final answer is a realization that can only be found by the individual, in direct experience. The temporary answer is that whatever you may think or imagine this is, that idea or image is a product of mind, not the essence of mind. The significance of this distinction between image and essence is that without direct experiential grounding in the essential nature of consciousness, it is impossible to evaluate the reality of anything that consciousness perceives or conceives.

A concept about consciousness is itself a product of consciousness, not the experience of consciousness in itself. The question in the story at hand can in one sense be paraphrased, "Is it possible to be fully awake while habitual and random thoughts still ramble through the mind?" Here the Zen master says *No*. As we shall see later on, this is not a simple negation, for what the Zen master says in effect



is this: In order to see for yourself whether or not it is possible to wake up right in the middle of confusion, first of all stop idle thought and speculation. The *No* is for the questioner, not for the question itself.

Wumen's prose commentary is an attempt to describe a process of using *No* as an intensive concentration device for clearing the mind and achieving what Buddhists call "stopping" or "cessation." In the full experience of cessation, not only are random thoughts stopped; the whole world view, one's personal idea of reality, is suspended. This is done as an expedient, to free the mind from the limitations of fixed ideas and compulsive habits of thought.

The kind of *No* practice Wumen is talking about was brought to the forefront of popular Zen by the extraordinary master Dahui (pronounced Dah-hway), a couple of generations before Wumen himself. Dahui emphasized this practice in response to the growing complexity of society, because it can help people to cut through mental complications with relative facility.

At the entry level, this exercise is done as follows: Watch what your mind does, and each time you notice "dog" thinking rambling on, bring *No* to mind.

Sound simple? Just try it.

But don't try *too* hard until you have read the rest of this book and learned all about the place of this exercise in the total design of comprehensive Zen Buddhist teaching.

This warning is traditional, because like any tool, it is possible to misuse *No*. You can slip and cut off your head without even knowing it.

A basic form of abuse of *No* is to interpret and practice it in a negative way, using it to make the mind blank and shut out reality instead of using it properly to make the mind clear and open to reality.

This advice is repeated several times in the commentaries of Wumen and the other Zen masters, to which I will now return in order to set *No* into the overall context of Zen practice.

In Wumen's prose commentary, he says, "Do not understand it as nothingness, do not understand it as the absence of something." In practical terms, other Zen masters describe these misunderstandings as the belief that it is necessary to erase all objects from awareness in order to realize the essence of mind and the objective emptiness of

subjective projections. In simple terms, neither the practice nor the realization of *No* is a blackout, or a state of consciousness in which no objects are apparent.

Some systems of Buddhist meditation include concentration with no mental object, but this expedient is properly a means of transcending the feeling that our subjective experience of perception corresponds to its objective reality. Thus objectless meditation is only a temporary expedient, and if overused may result in what is known as "intoxication by the wine of absorption," a pathological condition of illusory liberation caused by mental anesthesia.

Wumen's verse comment also repeats this warning by saying that we lose our liveliness if we get into "yes and no." If we get involved in ideas of "yes and no," then "no" becomes negative, the opposite of "yes."

The "true directive" by which Wumen refers to *No* means absolute reality, the ultimate truth, which Buddhists say is beyond thought and ideation: Zhaozhou's *No* means that ultimate reality is not like anything we can imagine; yet that does not mean there is no ultimate reality. If we only follow thoughts coming and going, that is "getting involved in yes and no," frittering away time and energy going back and forth. According to traditional Buddhist yoga, in order to witness absolute reality it is necessary to detach from our conceptual description of reality: that nonattached relationship is neither clinging nor denying, not getting involved in yes and no.

The use of *No* as an instrument is also emphasized in the verse of Zen master Wuzu (pronounced Woo-dzoo), who likens *No* to a sword with which to cut through mental tangles and errant thoughts. Just as Wumen warns against getting involved in "yes and no," Wuzu advises people not to think about *No* conceptually, for that would only lead to fragmentation of mind, not concentration.

The verse of Zen master Sushan (pronounced Soo-shahn) points up the essentially positive intent of the *No* exercise. At the same time, he reiterates the warning against its misapplication, especially through misunderstanding based on superficial literal interpretation.

In the first two lines, Sushan equates *No* with profound compassion, in the sense of release *from* doggishness. The second two lines warn that a literal negative interpretation of *No* does not liberate the mind, but rather inhibits its free functioning. By contrast, therefore, *No* also properly means release of the "hearty mind."

One particularly sticky form of doggishness, or the doggedness of self-deception, is that of compulsive rationalization. This is in reality one form of superficial literalism, even if it deals primarily with concepts rather than written words *per se*.

Some people today, for example, understand the question about a dog's Buddha-nature as a metaphysical question about animals. Since Buddhists have always recognized that all living beings are conscious, his question would not arise in a literal sense; it is a purely symbolic representation of a human problem. It is misleading to treat this question as a metaphysical or moral problem; it is simply an immediate alert system within a very direct Zen technique whereby human beings can clear their own mental vision. The commentary of Zen master Tiantong (pronounced Tyen-toong) illustrates this practical function in a manner somewhat similar to that of Wumen.

Some translators do not grant any semantic value to the reply *No*, but render it as if the master in the story had answered with an inarticulate utterance, which they generally say is *Mu*, a Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese *wu*. This reflects a practice of using this meaningless syllable as a kind of mantra or concentration spell to clear the mind of thoughts and detach it from the world of objects.

The original saying was in fact articulate and meaningful, and its original use in meditation was not as a spell. The mental and verbal repetition of *Mu* seems to have been invented in Japan around the year 1900 by an eccentric monk who used it to popularize Zen, which he saw to be on the verge of extinction and in need of emergency measures. Relics of that movement later produced attempts at popularizing "instant" or "jet-age" Zen by throwing people into trances, or driving them to distraction, in highly pressured intensive sessions lasting several days to a week or more at a time.

The general drawbacks of this technique are those of all incantational practices, deriving from the dangers inherent in its effect on unprepared minds. The specific flaw of the *Mu* repetition practice is that it tends to produce a counterfeit experience of emptiness, one that is only an altered state and does not cut through the root of the ego. As the Buddhist giant Nagarjuna wrote, "Emptiness wrongly seen destroys the weak-minded, like a mishandled snake or a misperformed spell."

I have written at length about the first story because of the importance given to it by Wumen and later Zen tradition. In particular,

I have reported the traditional warnings of the masters concerning misapplication of this koan because classical lore is full of these caveats, and because such abuse still happens. Today some people still deceive themselves and others by malpractice of this koan, believing themselves to be Zen masters, and trying to teach others to do likewise.

## THE WILD FOX

*Whenever Master Baizhang held a meeting, an old man used to listen to the teaching along with the assembly. When the people of the assembly left, the old man would also leave.*

*Then one day the old man stayed behind, and the master asked him who he was.*

*The old man said, "I am not a human being. In the past, in the time of a prehistoric Buddha, I used to live on this mountain. As it happened, a student asked me whether or not greatly cultivated people are also subject to causality. I said that they are not subject to causality, and I fell into the state of a wild fox for five hundred lifetimes. Now I ask you to turn a word in my behalf, so that I may be freed from being a wild fox."*

*Then the old man asked, "Are greatly cultivated people still subject to causality?"*

*The master said, "They are not blind to causality."*

*The old man was greatly enlightened at these words. Bowing, he said, "I have shed the wild fox body, which remains on the other side of the mountain. I am taking the liberty of telling you, and asking you to perform a monk's funeral."*

*So the master had one of the group hit the sounding board and announce to the community that they would send off a dead monk after mealtime.*

*The community debated about this, wondering how it could be so, seeing that everyone was fine and there had been no one in the infirmary.*

*After the meal, the master led the group to a cave on the other side of the mountain, where he fished out a dead fox with his staff. Then he cremated it.*

*That evening the master went up in the hall and recounted the foregoing events. Huangbo asked, "An ancient who gave a mis-*



*taken answer fell into the state of a wild fox for five hundred lifetimes; what becomes of one who never makes a mistake?"*

*The master said, "Come here and I'll tell you."*

*Huangbo then approached and gave the master a slap.*

*The master clapped and said, "I thought foreigners' beards were red; there is even a red-bearded foreigner here!"*

#### WUMEN SAYS,

If not subject to causality, how could one degenerate into a wild fox?  
If not blind to causality, how would one be liberated from being a wild fox? If you can set a single eye here, then you will know how the former resident of the mountain gained five hundred lifetimes of elegance.

#### WUMEN'S VERSE

Not subject, not blind—

Two faces of one die.

Not blind, not subject—

A thousand errors, ten thousand mistakes.

#### ZEN MASTER GAOFENG MIAO SAID,

The former's "not subject," the latter's "not blind"—is there any gain or loss?

If there is no causality, how can there be subjection and release?

If there is, try to come forth and express it clearly.

Is there? Is there?

#### ZEN MASTER LINGYUAN'S POEM

Clearly saying "not subject," when was the old man ever mistaken?

Pointedly saying "not blind," how did Baizhang ever understand?

Nonunderstanding with nonmistaking together express subtle awareness;

Nonsubjection and nonblindness distinctly represent the true state.

The causes and effects of the whole potential have reasons:

Rising and sinking in the totality, there is nothing taboo.

"Wrong" is its own wrong; "right" is whose right?  
 Distracted from the source at the spoken word, one gave rise to  
 deliberation;  
 Questioning again, he had it brought up once more.  
 Secretly watching the rousing of wind and thunder underneath  
 it all,  
 With an opposing wind he shouted him around, so the thunder's  
 rumble died.  
 Shutting up, the fox returned to his home to hide his disgraceful  
 ineptness;  
 Baizhang lifted the autumn moon all the way up over the peak.

#### ZEN MASTER BAIZHANG ZHENG'S VERSE

An artist draws a picture of hell,  
 Depicting hundreds and thousands of scenes.  
 Setting down his brush, he looks it over,  
 And feels a shiver run through him.

#### *Translator's Comments*

The Zen master Baizhang (pronounced Bye-jong) is supposed to have lived from 720 to 814. He is especially honored for having drafted fundamental guidelines for Zen communes; thus he is the perfect icon to illustrate a point about causality, the principle that every act is a cause that inevitably has a corresponding effect. This principle underlies all reason and morality. In Zen schools it is traditionally stated in terms of a famous saying of Baizhang himself: "A day without work is a day without food."

In one sense, this koan of the wild fox is aimed directly at the negative tendencies into which the practitioner may fall through incorrect or imbalanced practice of the *No* meditation described in the first story.

According to classical records, one of the most common negative tendencies is to mistake ignorance (or ignoring) for transcendence. The first essential point of this wild fox story, then, is to make it clear that the practice and experience of the Zen Buddhist *No* does not negate causality, reason, or morality; the real meaning of *No* is to penetrate the veil of subjective ideas and imaginings that blind us to objective causal relationships.

Thus Zen practice does not exempt us from what is actually happening; it frees us to see what is really happening.

What Zen exempts us from is the compulsive need to assure ourselves that the world is as we have learned to assume it is. Zen frees us from the mesmerism of wishful and fearful thinking. Emptiness is not nothingness; it is the open door to reality.

The great master Dahui, mentioned in the translator's commentary to the first story, described the effects of mistaken *No* practice as "denying effects of causes and thus becoming crude and careless." A lot of decadent quasi-Zen derives from this form of malpractice.

In the second half of the story, one Huangbo (pronounced Hwongbwaw) "slapped" the Zen master. Huangbo was a spontaneously enlightened man, but he also apprenticed himself to Zen master Baizhang. This "slap" symbolizes the dismantling of the framework of the teaching event once the point had been made. This is a classical Zen maneuver aimed at inducing the seeker to relinquish attachment to temporary means, such as the didactic story of the old man and the fox in this particular koan.

The phantasmagoric nature of the event in Baizhang's story symbolizes the expedient nature of the teachings. According to a Zen proverb, the student must ultimately transcend the teacher for the transmission of Zen to go through. This proverb also represents transcendence of temporary means, and its message is symbolized in the koan here by the apprentice Huangbo striking the teacher Baizhang.

Recognizing his apprentice's enlightenment, Zen master Baizhang exclaims, "I thought foreigners' beards were red; there is even a red-bearded foreigner here!" In Zen idiom this means, "I know what Zen masters are like; here is another Zen master!" This was Baizhang's recognition of Huangbo's mastery, as illustrated by the apprentice's ability to digest the story of the fox and conclude it in the Zen manner of transcending temporary expedients.

In his prose comment, Wumen says, "If not subject to causality, how could one degenerate into a wild fox?" This rhetorical question is not a philosophical problem; it refers to accurate us of the *No* practice to eliminate the effect of internal talk by stopping its cause. Wumen continues, "If not blind to causality, how would one be liberated from being a wild fox?" This has two meanings. First, it means that in order to be liberated it is necessary to be "blind" in the special sense of not seeing things through the eyes of bondage, or not paying

attention to falsehoods and superficialities. Second, it also means that once you are no longer blind to actual reality, you need more than vision; you need cleverness, craft, and wit in the positive senses of these words.

Wumen goes on to say that the ideal integration is not in the position either of the old man or the Zen master; it is in fact up to you: "If you can set a single eye here, you will know how the former resident of the mountain gained five hundred lifetimes of elegance." If bondage and liberation are viewed as ultimately separate from each other, the foxy old man seems to have fallen into bondage because of his attachment to liberation: He would seem to be bound by his very denial of causality. This is a dualistic eye, not a single eye.

In contrast, when it is seen that there is no duality between emptiness and being, the old man would seem to have plunged into bondage as an act of freedom: Freedom became the freedom to take up responsibility, *freely*. In this sense, denying subjection to causality does not mean escapism, but denial of the reality of limitations psychologically imposed by fixation on imagined or fabricated causal chains. This is a single eye, in which freedom of will and responsible involvement are united.

In simple terms, a positive interpretation of the old man's denial of subjection to causality means artful and creative participation in the world, by free will rather than compulsion. This is what Wumen refers to as "five hundred lifetimes of elegance."

Wumen concludes, "Not blind, not subject— / A thousand errors, ten thousand mistakes." In colloquial Chinese, to "meet a mistake with an error" means to make the best out of a bad situation. Here it means that the ordinary world is ongoing, and one is not blind to it; and since nothing is absolutely fixed, there is always potential for creativity in the very process of change. Thus while nothing in the world is ever perfect, with awareness and autonomy one goes on using imperfect expedients to deal with imperfect situations.

In the verse of Zen master Gaofeng Miao (pronounced Gow-fung Myow), the first line denies the presumption that it is possible to attain real liberation by denying causality, and the assumption that recognition of causality means loss of freedom.

The second line further underscores this by recalling the underlying fact that both subjection and release are predicated on causality, and both obey causal principles.

The third and fourth lines remind us that this is not a theoretical or philosophical discussion, but a matter of our actual experience. What are the causes and effects in your life?

The poem of Zen master Lingyuan (pronounced Ling-ywen) summarizes and expounds upon these pivotal points line for line.

"Clearly saying 'not subject,' when was the old man ever mistaken?" On one level, this means that while it is not possible to escape causality itself, it is possible to avoid specific causes. The essential point is to distinguish between the necessary and the possible.

On another level of interpretation, "not subject" stands for "non-subjective," which means clear vision. When is that ever mistaken?

"Pointedly saying 'not blind,' how did Baizhang ever understand?" To say that Baizhang's statement is "pointed" means that Zen attention to causal processes is deliberate, focused, concrete, and practical. To question the possibility of even understanding refers to the ultimate infinity of reality, and the consequent need for perpetually ongoing awakening. Reality is infinite in both scope and detail, so the development of Zen consciousness in the total sense is a never-ending path.

"Nonunderstanding with nonmistaking together express subtle awareness." "Nonunderstanding" means not making up arbitrary rationalizations; "nonmistaking" means seeing things just as they are. These expressions illustrate awareness more subtle than conceptualization.

"Nonsubjection and nonblindness distinctly represent the true state." "Nonsubjection" here means not being subjective in one's judgments; "nonblindness" means being objective in one's perceptions.

"The causes and effects of the whole potential have reasons." One whose potential is liberated by Zen is able to operate the laws of causality deliberately and intelligently.

"Rising and sinking in the totality, there is nothing taboo." "Rising" means transcendence, "sinking" means return to the world: Those who are fully enlightened are said to be free to come or go, to act in the world or desist, to rise above everything or to get involved in anything. "There is nothing taboo" refers to the completeness of liberation.

"'Wrong' is its own wrong; 'right' is whose right?" Arbitrarily



labeling anything as "wrong" in itself is itself a "wrong" judgment; arbitrarily affirming anything as "right" in itself is a subjective assessment. In order to understand the real meaning and value of such judgments and assessments, it is essential to see them in context and understand the underlying assumptions and premises upon which they are based.

"Distracted from the source at the spoken word, one gave rise to deliberation." This refers to the old man in the story at the time in the remote past when he was questioned by a student about whether or not greatly cultivated people are still subject to causality. The old man was "distracted from the source" by an either/or question, and showed this distraction by an apparently one-sided answer.

"Questioning again, he had it brought up once more." This line refers to the old man bringing up the same question to ask Zen master Baizhang.

"Secretly watching the rousing of wind and thunder underneath it all." This describes the Zen master observing the questioner in order to see what his underlying assumptions are.

"With an opposing wind he shouted him around, so the thunder's rumble died." This is the Zen master's demolition of attachment to a one-sided view of things.

"Shutting up, the fox returned to his home to hide his disgraceful ineptness." The old man stopped doubting and speculating, giving up his conceptual clinging.

"Baizhang lifted the autumn moon all the way up over the peak." Autumn symbolizes the withering and dying of subjective illusions; the moon represents Zen awakening. Baizhang lifted the moon "all the way up over the peak," showing how the ultimate freedom and enlightenment of Zen transcends rigidly divisive either/or thinking in terms of yes and no.

Where did Baizhang lift the moon? Where he liberated the foxy old man? Where he enlightened his students with this story? Where he conceded to his successor Huangbo? All of the above? Try to see both sides of each event, then rise "all the way up over the peak" to a perspective that takes in all views and yet is above them.

## ONE FINGER

*Whenever Master Judi was questioned, he would just raise a finger. Later a servant boy would also raise a finger when outsiders asked him what the master taught.*

*When Judi heard of this, he cut off the boy's finger with a knife.*

*The boy ran out screaming in pain, but Judi called him back. When the boy turned his head, Judi raised a finger. Suddenly the boy attained enlightenment.*

*When Judi was about to die, he said to a group, "I attained my teacher Tianlong's one-finger Zen, and have used it all my life without exhausting it." So saying, he passed away.*

## WUMEN SAYS,

The enlightenment of Judi and the boy is not in a finger. If you can see here, then Tianlong, Judi, the boy, and you yourself will be skewered on the same stick.

## WUMEN'S VERSE

Judi makes a dunce of old Tianlong;  
The sharp blade held up alone tests the little boy.  
The great spirit lifted its hands, without much ado,  
And split apart the millions of layers of Flower Mountain.

*Translator's Comments*

Zen master Judi (pronounced Jyw-dee) lived in the ninth century. Little is known about him, except that he was called Judi because he always recited a *dharani*, or meditation spell, by that name. This spell, or concentration formula, is one of those associated with Guanyin (pronounced Gwahn-yin), an essential Buddhist icon representing the activity and efficacy of infinite compassion.

As an otherwise unknown master, Judi is the perfect icon for this koan, because it represents absorption in total unity of being, absorption to the point where there is no longer any subjective feeling or idea of unification itself. At this point, as an earlier Zen master described it, "when you have shed your skin completely, there is only one true reality."

On the primary level of interpretation, therefore, when Zen master Judi would raise a finger, he was simply pointing, both symbolically and directly, to the one true reality that is beyond personal conceptions and judgments. He himself awakened when his Zen teacher Tianlong (pronounced Tyen-loong) simply raised a finger in response to a Zen question.

The story of one finger also carries an important practical teaching. One level of this is signaled by Judi's identification as a devotee of the practice of meditation through the use of a spell. As many people know, the original meaning of "spell" in this sense in English is to render stationary, to fix or train on one point. Thus a spell is a concentration formula repeated to focus the mind steadily. This is analogous to a function of what Indian Buddhists call a *dharani* or a *mantra*.

Some people think that spells are nonsense formulae whose content has nothing to do with their effect. It is true that there do exist nonsensical formulae, with which it is possible to produce nonsensical concentration. One of the surest signs of a degenerate religious order is belief in mumbo jumbo. Buddhist spells, in contrast, are meaningful to the greatest imaginable degree. This is reflected in Buddhist Chinese, where spells are called "holders of the totality" and "true words."

One of the traditional cautions regarding the use of spells is they can be very dangerous for the inexperienced or ill prepared. The danger stems from the fact that repetition of spells can produce absorption so quickly that intense concentration may develop prematurely, without refinement of character or clarification of perception. The result of this imbalance is that personality flaws and subjective biases are actually magnified by concentration, notwithstanding the fact that the practitioner feels fine.

From this perspective, it is easy to see the danger in using "Mu" as a spell. To say that one cannot imagine the perils to which one exposes oneself thereby is nothing but a mathematically precise description of the plight of one "spelled" by a nothing-word. This is one of

the best reasons for the ancient doctrine that study of Buddhism after the death of Buddha should ultimately be based on the whole teaching and not a partial teaching.

The sole general exception to the grave cautions and warnings traditionally attached to the use of spells in Buddhism are those spells used to bring to mind the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life. That Buddha represents the reality of universal and cosmic compassion, or objectively real compassion, presiding over a state of being called the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss. The reason for the exception generally accorded these Pure Land compassion spells is their association with something that is purely benign, an ineffable experience of unconditional mercy and relief.

Nevertheless, the traditional guidelines for successful use of spells do apply to Pure Land spells as well, even if the latter may ordinarily be exempt from the worst perils associated with misuse of spells in general. The benign but relatively ineffective is not as good as the benign and thoroughly effective. The guidelines for genuine efficacy in Buddhist spells are none other than the total design of the whole Buddhist teaching.

This particular koan about one finger makes two essential points about practice, in a typical Zen manner. In the figure of the boy seemingly punished for imitating master Judi is the principle that ignorant imitation, or repetition of superficial forms received at second hand, is not the Way to direct experience of reality. Judi was not imitating his own teacher, who did not raise a finger to every question. Judi had been blasted to kingdom come by his teacher's spontaneous gesture, and spent the rest of his life just pointing to *suchness*. The boy saw Judi raise a finger to every question; had he absorbed the master's message, he would have been able to point to suchness another way, and would not have just mimed the master.

There is another way of looking at this koan. A Zen proverb says that when someone points to the moon, the intention is for others to see the moon, not to have them look at the pointing finger. The purpose of an exercise, such as reciting a spell or raising a finger to see how people understand, is solely to obtain the effect, not to become a slavish devotee of that particular exercise. From this perspective, "cutting off" the boy's finger is not punishment; it symbolizes graduation.

In the graphic terminology of Taoist spiritual alchemy, an ancient

cousin of Zen, when the peak effect of an exercise is obtained, it is necessary to "remove the fire" from under the "elixir" to prevent the medicinal ingredients in the elixir from getting "stale." Buddhist scriptures and Zen teachings also speak figuratively of discontinuing the medicine once the sickness is cured, lest "the medicine itself cause an illness."

In the relatively simple methodology of some of the ancient Zen schools, the cutting off of an observance in which one has become totally absorbed could be something of a shock, as represented here by the screaming boy. But now the teacher calls attention to the effect of the teaching, attention that had hitherto been focused on the teaching as a cause. The sudden shift from absorption in practice to absorption in realization is represented as the boy suddenly attaining enlightenment.

Wumen's prose comment starts out by saying in effect that the pointing finger is not the moon, the signpost is not the destination. Then he invites us to see the moon of reality ourselves, to which all the players in this koan are pointing. He says we are all "skewered on the same stick," showing us ourselves in the context of the totality of everything.

In his verse, Wumen begins by saying that Judi makes a dunce of Tianlong. This alludes to his deathbed remark that he got his "one-finger Zen" from Tianlong. Wumen reminds us not to take this kind of talk literally to mean the transmission of a certain form or habit, and to remember that real Zen masters do not deal in secondhand realizations.

The second line of Wumen's verse speaks of the "sharp blade" of Judi "testing" the boy; this represents penetrating insight into absolute reality admitting of no comparison or likeness, making us shed the habit of fixating on secondary things as if they were ultimately real.

The last two lines of Wumen's verse allude to an ancient Chinese legend about a giant spirit splitting a huge mountain. This is simply used as a colorful metaphor describing what Zen Buddhists call "direct pointing" employed as a means of cutting through a mass of random imaginings. By his action, Judi first cut through a mountain of subjective thoughts and concepts, then shattered the monolithic perspective of oneness.

In this way, unity and differentiation are both one and yet distinct:



The particulars of the many are all part of one whole, the one whole is comprised of the many. This koan focuses on unity; differentiation is eclipsed, except for the obvious warning that undifferentiated unity is an illusion produced by freezing the mind.

The whole koan may be summed up with a verse on this koan by the great Zen master Yuanwu (pronounced Ywen-woo). This humorous verse summarizes the points raised by the koan, and also reminds us to see Judi's way of teaching in its proper context and not to imitate it blindly:

How could it be easy to reply  
 To the causal conditions of question and answer?  
 It's hard to be really stylish if you have no money.  
 There's something in his heart, but he cannot say it;  
 In his hurry he just holds up a finger.

"How could it be easy to reply / To the causal conditions of question and answer?" Here Yuanwu takes up the position of pleading Judi's case, saying it cannot be easy to give an answer; the intricacy and scope of total reality are ultimately infinite. No one can encompass the whole truth in words. This is why Judi simply sums everything up in one.

"It's hard to be really stylish if you have no money." Playfully chiding Judi for being simplistic and crude, in reality Yuanwu is repeating the traditional Buddhist teaching that complete enlightenment includes skill in devising means of helping and liberating others, here represented by "money."

"There's something in his heart"—Judi was undeniably enlightened in the sense of his realization of the ultimate truth—"but he cannot say it"—ultimate reality cannot, by its very nature, be expressed in words; so "in his hurry he just holds up a finger"—his simplicity is not a reduction, but an affirmation of the infinity of reality and the teachings it contains.

A popular Zen meditation theme says, "All things return to One; where does the One return?" This is the way to work on the koan of Judi's finger.

THE FOREIGNER HAS NO *Whiskers*

*Huo-an said, "Why has the Foreigner from the West no whiskers?"*

## WUMEN SAYS,

Study must be genuine study, enlightenment must be real enlightenment. This foreigner must be seen in person before you understand; but when you talk about a personal meeting, there's already a dichotomy.

## WUMEN'S VERSE

In the presence of an ignoramus,  
Do not talk about a dream.  
The foreigner having no whiskers  
Adds obscurity to awareness.

*Translator's Comments*

"The Foreigner from the West" refers to the Indian Buddhist master Bodhidharma, who is regarded as the founder of Zen in China. He is traditionally depicted as having a heavy beard.

Zen master Huo-an (pronounced Hwaw-ahn) lived in the late twelfth century, near the time of Wumen himself. Huo-an was a high-minded individual who did his utmost to avoid notoriety. Very little is known of this master other than a few stories and poems attributed to him.

In this koan, Huo-an asks why the bearded founder of Zen has no beard. Like other koans, this is not an illogical, whimsical bit of word play, but a symbolic reminder of an aspect of reality.

The figure of the Zen founder is ordinarily used to represent the real self or the essential mind, as understood in Zen experience. This self is called a Foreigner because it is unfamiliar to the culturally

conditioned mind. To say that the Foreigner has no beard is to say that the real self or essential mind is not identical to the superficial aspects of personality or outward appearance.

In his prose comments, Wumen underscores the importance of setting aside superficial appearances to get at realities when he says that it is necessary to study reality by means of reality itself. He goes on to highlight the need for direct personal experience rather than secondhand theory; "this foreigner must be seen in person before you understand."

Wumen's prose remarks conclude with a reminder that the Zen founder is none other than one's real self, which has been there all along: "When you talk about a personal meeting, there's already a dichotomy." This means that Zen awakening does not come through trying to assimilate to an image, but through spontaneous realization of the fundamental essence of awareness underlying all appearances.

In his verse comment, Wumen aims the thrust of this koan at the use of the koan itself, warning the onlooker not to approach it through its superficial appearance. The question in the koan is deliberately contrived to elicit a certain way of seeing; but to someone who sees only the obvious conundrum, the outward form of the koan causes confusion.

This is one of many examples where Wumen's comments mainly serve to set up a signpost pointing out a pitfall for the unwary.

## UP IN A TREE

*Master Xiangyan said, "Suppose someone is up in a tree, holding on to a branch by his teeth, his hands without a grip on a limb, his feet without a toehold on the trunk. Someone under the tree asks about the meaning of Zen. If he does not answer, he is avoiding the question; but if he does answer, he loses his life. At just such a time, how would you reply?"*

### WUMEN SAYS,

No matter how eloquent you are, it is of no use at all, even if you can explain the whole Canon, it is still of no avail. If you can give an answer here, you will bring to life your previous road of death, and kill your previous road of life. Otherwise, if not, just wait for the future, to ask the Buddha Maitreya.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

Xiangyan is truly inept;  
His vile poison is limitless.  
He silences Zen students' mouths,  
So demon eyes squirt out from all over their bodies.

### ZEN MASTER BAIYAN SAID,

Xiangyan made the whole earth into a glowing furnace, its fierce flames reaching through the sky: even iron and steel melt at once.

### ZEN MASTER FENYANG'S VERSE

Xiangyan grips the tree with his teeth, showing many people:  
He wants to lead his peers to the fundamental reality.  
Try to deliberate, and you are grasping from words;  
Countless are those who have lost their lives.

I will open a way through the confusion for you:  
 When the clouds have dispersed in the eternal sky, sun and  
 moon are new.

ZEN MASTER YUELIN'S VERSE

Xiangyan climbs a tree—  
 Stop, stop, stop, stop!  
 If you try to ask about—  
 Complications and clichés.

*Translator's Comments*

Zen master Xiangyan (pronounced Shyahng-yen) lived in the ninth century. He was especially noted for his unusual poetry. In Zen lore, Xiangyan is represented as having formerly been an intellectual who failed to realize the essence of mind because of his preoccupation with intellectual exercise. Frustrated by this failure, he eventually gave up his studies and secluded himself to meditate on the original mind. Then one day he suddenly awakened to the truth of Zen when he heard the sound of pebbles striking a clump of bamboo.

Like the previous one, this koan takes the form of a question deliberately constructed to elicit a specific insight. The image of the man holding onto a tree branch with his teeth symbolizes the attachment of a conditioned mind to the fragment of reality perceptible through the worldview to which the mind is habituated by personal and cultural history. Xiangyan himself was quite familiar with this state, having spent so many years in trying to grasp Zen through intellectual exercise.

In order to realize Zen enlightenment, it is necessary to be able to stand apart from the worldview or mind-set to which one has been conditioned, yet without warping the mind's capacity for constructive organization. Thus Xiangyan's man in the tree has to let go of his precarious grip with his teeth in order to "answer a question about Zen," meaning that he must give up his intellectual fixations to realize Zen; yet he must not allow this detachment to make him an ineffective escapist and thus "lose his life."

Wumen's prose comments begin by stressing the point that this koan is not a riddle to be solved by intellectual exercise. He goes on



to say that proper work with the koan will "bring to life your previous road of death," meaning that it will awaken hitherto dormant insight; and it will "kill your previous road of life," meaning that it will free you from compulsive habits of thought.

Wumen concludes his prose remarks by reminding us not to get tangled up in the facade of the koan itself. If you cannot find the answer, he says, "wait for the future, to ask the Buddha Maitreya." Maitreya is the name of the mythological Buddha of the Future, who is to come at the end of the present eon to rescue those as yet unable to attain enlightenment. Thus Wumen says in effect that it is necessary to be infinitely patient and wait out confusion, rather than exacerbate it by tangling with this koan on a merely intellectual level.

Wumen begins his verse commentary by calling Xiangyan "truly inept." This means that he has attained true Zen "ineptness," which is a humorous way of representing transcendence of the "cleverness" of idle intellectualism.

Wumen then qualifies his statement by saying that Xiangyan's "vile poison is limitless." Zen teaching is often called "vile" and "poisonous" in that it drives off delusions and "kills" false thinking. Xiangyan's "poison" is "limitless" in that his device does not accommodate any subjective ideas or admit of any theoretical solutions.

In the last two lines of his verse, Wumen summarizes the intended effect of Xiangyan's device in very colorful terms. He "silences" the "mouths" (quiets the talking minds) of Zen seekers, so that "demon eyes squirt out all over their bodies"—intellectual fixations and arbitrary ideas fall away from the purified consciousness, having no inherent reality to sustain them without the support of compulsive habits of thought.

The comment of Zen master Baiyan (pronounced Byeyen) graphically illustrates this functional aspect of Xiangyan's device. The image of the "glowing furnace" is a classical Zen symbol of a state of mind so focused on the ineffable that no random thought or imagination can linger. Idle thoughts become like snowflakes falling onto a blazing fire, evaporating at once. Baiyan extends this metaphor to the greatest degree of intensity, saying that "even iron and steel melt at once," to illustrate the potency of Xiangyan's device as a tool for stilling the wandering mind.

The verse of Zen master Fenyang (pronounced Funiyang) makes it clear that the point of Xiangyan's device is not in the surface expres-

sion. He says that the point is in stopping subjective thinking in order to let reality become apparent of itself; therefore he cautions the onlooker not to grasp for the meaning from the words, for that would lead to a dead end.

Fenyang concludes by describing the actual experience of resolution of this koan, which is by nature inconceivable and ineffable; it cannot be expressed directly, so poetic imagery and symbolism are used to allude to the experience. The "clouds" represent delusions, the "eternal sky" represents the true mind; the "sun and moon" stand for knowledge of absolute and relative realities, being "new" stands for immediacy and spontaneity. When the mind is freed of delusions, rational and intuitive cognition both attain more intimate relationship with objective reality.

Finally, the verse of Zen master Yuelin (pronounced Yweh-lin) highlights the contrived character of the setup of the koan and reminds us not to get enmeshed in the external appearance, and not to go on thinking about it conceptually. The second line, "Stop, stop, stop, stop!" is both a warning not to pursue thoughts and a signpost saying that at bottom "stopping" the wandering mind is what this koan is all about. As Yuelin concludes, if you don't "stop," but go on posing the question as an intellectual conundrum, all you will come up with are "complications and clichés."

## BUDDHA PICKS UP A FLOWER

*In ancient times, at the assembly on Spiritual Mountain, Buddha picked up a flower and showed it to the crowd.*

*Everyone was silent, except for the saint Kashyapa, who broke out in a smile.*

*Buddha said, "I have the treasury of the eye of truth, the ineffable mind of nirvana, the most subtle of teachings on the formlessness of the form of reality. It is not defined in words, but is specially transmitted outside of doctrine. I entrust it to Kashyapa the Elder."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

Gautama Buddha acted shamelessly; he pressed the free into slavery. Hanging out mutton, he sold dog meat, as if it were so wonderful.

Suppose everyone had smiled at that moment? How could the treasury of the eye of truth be transmitted? And if Kashyapa had not smiled, how could the treasury of the eye of truth be transmitted?

If you say there is any transmitting the treasury of the eye of truth, Buddha is fooling villagers; if you say there is no transmitting it, why does he only approve of Kashyapa?

### WUMEN'S VERSE

When he picked up the flower,  
The tail was already showing;  
Kashyapa broke into a smile,  
People and spirits were at a loss.

### ZEN MASTER SONGXIAN SAID,

One's garbled words disturb the crowd, another took up the empty and accepted the false. Both of them were seeing ghosts

in front of their skulls. Too bad none of them at the meeting were robust; as a result the chase still goes on.

ZEN MASTER SONGHUA SAID,

When Buddha held up the flower, he was "so concerned for his children that he was unconscious of being unseemly." When Kashyapa smiled, he "stuck his brains in a bowl of glue."

### *Translator's Comments*

Spiritual Mountain is a place where Buddha taught on certain occasions. It is also called Vulture Peak. According to Buddhist lore, this is where a hitherto unknown dispensation in Buddhism called the *Lotus Scripture* was revealed for the first time in the present eon; and it is the site of a fundamental schism between universal and sectarian Buddhists, which legend says took place on the very occasion, and for the very reason, of the revelation of the *Lotus Scripture* by the Buddha. This koan is a recapitulation of that monumental event, performed in the austere style of the Linji school of Zen Buddhism, to which master Wumen and most of the other commentators in this volume belonged.

The *Lotus Scripture*, and this Zen koan, are about what Indian Buddhists call *tathatā*, which means "thusness" or "suchness," meaning the way things are in objective reality, without subjective distortion. This experience of reality is also called *yathābbūta*, which means "being-as-is," reality as it is perceived after the mind is freed from the limitations of its own conceptual attachments.

In practical terms, the scripture and the story are about realization of what Buddhists call the identity of samsara and nirvana. Samsara means routine existence, birth and death, the arising and passing away of thoughts and feelings; in very general terms, samsara means the world and all that it is and all that goes on in it. Nirvana literally means extinction, in reference to the stilling of compulsive behavior, including compulsive thought, and the attainment of complete peace of mind.

Realization of the unity of samsara and nirvana is a critical issue in Buddhism, one of those in which the greatest hopes are reposed at the very same time that the gravest warnings are posted around it.

The good news is that the union of samsara and nirvana is accessible, in the direct experience of suchness. The bad news is that an immature understanding of the principle leads right back into a quagmire of attachment to thoughts and things, although now with the empty grace of imagining this state to be none other than ultimate reality.

The essential point of traditional warnings is that when people who are too hasty and greedy for their own good hear that samsara and nirvana are one, they decide they can choose to keep samsara just as it is and claim to have attained nirvana to boot. The practical fact of the matter is, however, that it is necessary to realize nirvana before you can understand what it actually means to say that nirvana and samsara are not separate. Only after you have cleared your mind can you see that nothing has in itself any power to confuse you; before that it is only theory and talk.

For this reason, it is said that the teachings on the unity of samsara and nirvana are elixir for those who can digest them, poison for those who cannot digest them.

The comments of Wumen and the other Zen masters are all about warding off such problems with the practice of this view. One basic problem is the temptation to identify suchness with what is perceived as ordinary reality by the conventionally conditioned mind; another is the temptation to remain absorbed either in specific manifestations of suchness (like natural scenery) or in the ineffable totality of suchness, and thus to stay at a low level of effective realization by excessive stilling of mind or fixation on a specific instance of realization. A Zen proverb says, "This is It, but as soon as you recognize it explicitly, then it's not It anymore."

When Wumen says in his prose comment that Buddha "acted shamelessly," he means that the Buddha pointed to the absolute aspect of suchness, in which all discriminatory thought is inapplicable and everything is essentially equal. To say that he "pressed the free into slavery" means that he indicated the identity of nirvana ("freedom") and samsara ("slavery"). In the total context of Buddhism revealed in the *Lotus Scripture*, nirvana is not the final goal but rather a means to open the mind to the infinity of reality.

Wumen adds that Buddha "hung out mutton but sold dog meat," an old expression for what we call "bait and switch" tactics. Buddha originally spoke of nirvana as ultimate peace to induce people to



leave their vexing and harrying mundane preoccupations aside; only after they had done this were they given to realize that this nirvana was just an expedient, designed to liberate them from the confines of subjective imagination to the infinity of the real world outside.

Wumen goes on to question us about how to distinguish between real and false understanding of the identity of samsara and nirvana in the experience of suchness. In order to answer these questions we have to examine our experience and distinguish between subjective assumptions and objective perceptions.

Finally Wumen concludes his prose remarks with a traditional Zen statement on transmission of this subtle teaching. In one sense there is no transmission of any direct knowledge or understanding from one person to another, because the teaching is reality itself and the direct knowledge and understanding of suchness must be firsthand. In another sense there is transmission, in that conscious participation in reality is not a subjective experience, but is by nature shared in common with anyone who has the same objective experience. Kashyapa was already enlightened when he met Buddha; he recognized Buddha's enlightenment, and Buddha recognized his enlightenment.

The comments of Zen master Songxian (pronounced Soong-shyen) combine description and warning in traditional Zen double-entendre style.

"One's garbled words" refers to Buddha's symbolic identification of samsara and nirvana in the experience of suchness by the act of raising the flower and associating this direct perception with the heart of nirvana. Buddha's words "disturb the crowd" in two senses. First, by speaking of unification his statement supposes separation; second, by speaking of unity his statement leaves room for misconception of subjective perceptions as objective truth.

Songxian continues, "another took up the empty and accepted the false." This refers to Kashyapa's integrated understanding of absolute reality ("the empty") and relative reality ("the false"). By appearing to chide Kashyapa, Songxian also warns people not to misinterpret; his final remark castigating the crowd indicates that everyone must personally have the direct experience of the "flower" of reality in order to understand.

The comments of Zen master Songhua (pronounced Soong-hwah) are also convert warnings about misunderstanding, couched in terms of reproof. To be "so concerned for your children that you are uncon-

scious of being unseemly" refers to the way a Buddha or Zen master bends over backward to set up devices to communicate the ineffable; the intention is not to get stuck on the appearance, just to get the point. To "stick your brains in a bowl of glue" means to remain fixed in a static realization; the point is to keep the mind open to the infinity of reality, not to congratulate yourself at having found the nose on your face.

## WASH YOUR BOWL

*A monk asked Zhaozhou, "I have just joined the community, and I request the teacher's instruction."*

*Zhaozhou inquired, "Have you had your breakfast gruel yet?"*

*The monk said, "I have had my gruel."*

*Zhaozhou said, "Then go wash your bowl."*

*That monk had an insight.*

WUMEN SAYS,

When Zhaozhou opens his mouth you see his guts, as he reveals his heart. If this monk didn't listen truly, he'd call a bell a pitcher.

WUMEN'S VERSE

Just because it is so distinctly clear,  
That makes attainment slow.  
If he had known the lamp was fire,  
The rice would have been cooked long ago.

ZEN MASTER NANTANG'S VERSE

Zhaozhou points out "Wash your bowl"—  
Zen seekers who scramble and race waste effort madly:  
They don't even know where to look for everyday affairs;  
They are clearly told, but are as blind and deaf.

ZEN MASTER HUGUO'S VERSE

Finding out the principles of things makes up the livelihood of  
the house;  
When you're able to meet the opportunity of the time, then you  
know the heart.  
Let us give thanks to the impartiality of the spring wind;  
The peaches and plums of the poor houses also create shade.

*Translator's Comments*

This is the same Zhaozhou as in the first koan. This story, like the preceding one, can be read as a symbolic demonstration pointing to direct experience of immediate reality without conceptual adornment, the initiatory experience of Zen.

Furthermore, when "breakfast" is understood metaphorically to mean this very experience itself, the story also points to the next step, of transcending the subjective register of initial realization so as to "clean the vessel" for yet further enlightenment.

Wumen's prose comment begins by acknowledging Zhaozhou's demonstration of "suchness" as an illustration of the broadest common denominator of Buddhist experience. He concludes by warning us not to let the unifying perspective of suchness blur authentic distinctions within the totality.

Wumen's verse on this koan is one of my very favorites. Zen masters often chide seekers for searching in recondite places for truths that can be seen near at hand in everyday life. The verse of Zen master Nantang (pronounced Nahn-tahng) also underscores this point, in an even more explicit manner.

The verse of Zen master Huguo (pronounced Hoo-gwaw) begins by returning to the matter of "not mistaking a bell for a pitcher," or clarifying knowledge of differentiation within the total unity of suchness. The last two lines refer to the living meaning of suchness itself, describing it as the "impartiality of the spring wind," and speak thereby of the effectiveness and meaningfulness of things just as they are, the "peaches and plums of the poor houses," unadorned by grandiose illusions.

## THE WHEELMAKER

*Master Yue-an asked a seeker, "The original wheelmaker made wheels with a hundred spokes. If you take away both sides and remove the axle, what does this clarify?"*

WUMEN SAYS,

If you can understand directly, your eyes will be like a shooting star,  
your mind like a flash of lightning.

WUMEN'S VERSE

Where the wheel of potential turns,  
Even experts are bewildered:  
All around the compass, zenith and nadir,  
South, north, east, west.

### *Translator's Comments*

Yue-an (pronounced Yweh-ahn) was a later Zen master who flourished not long before the time of Wumen himself. He is historically obscure, and no other Zen masters besides Wumen and Wumen's teacher Yuelin wrote verses on this Zen koan constructed by Yue-an.

In the koan, the wheels of a hundred spokes represent the conceptual structures we use to explain the world in everyday life. The axle is the basic mind. The wheels move, the axle does not; but the wheels cannot move without the axle.

The mental exercise of dismantling structures, taking the "wheels" off the "axle," is not a destruction or rejection of rationality, as some Zen popularizers have claimed; it is a means of getting to the source of mental construction, the basic mind itself. Accordingly, another classical version of this story has the Zen master conclude by drawing an empty circle—the traditional Zen symbol for the basic



mind in its pristine innocence—and saying, “Don’t stick to the zero point of the scale.” Not “sticking to the zero point of the scale” means realizing not only essence but also function; it is the unification of *nirvana* and *samsara*.

This koan is all in the doing, not the discussing, so Wumen’s comments are extremely brief. In his prose remarks he says that if you understand this koan *directly*, then “your eyes will be like a shooting star, your mind like a flash of lightning.” These images of light and speed allude to the instantaneous understanding of the special knowledge Buddhists call *prajna*, which is direct insight into the essence of things.

Wumen also begins his verse by affirming that *prajna* is not ordinary conceptual knowledge: “Where the wheel of potential turns,” he says, referring to the activation of the dormant faculty of direct understanding, “even experts are bewildered.” The image of the “expert” symbolizes the conceptual mind that thinks it knows everything through its ideas. Perceiving immediate reality as it is in the process of becoming is an experience that by its very nature baffles the conceptual process, which is inherently retrospective in that it functions by selecting and assembling recollections, not by dealing directly with *suchness*. When you experience the world in the immediacy of present becoming through the unopened eye of Zen, everything is fresh and new, everything is unique and unimagined. In his final lines, Wumen simply gasps in awe as he observes the light of his enlightenment pervading everywhere.

As I mentioned before, very little can be profitably said about this koan, and most of the later masters are silent about it. There is a verse by Wumen’s teacher Yuelin, however, that encapsulates the whole matter:

The ocean god knows it’s valuable, but doesn’t know its price;  
Left in the human world, its light illumines the night.  
The founder of Zen smiles and nods his head;  
Who knows the action hasn’t a seam or gap?

The “ocean god” symbolizes oceanic consciousness, which is like the all-encompassing light of immediate awareness engulfing everything. The “value” of this koan is in its effect; the “price” is its outward form: To know the value but not the price means to get the real

point of the koan and not be concerned with its superficial appearance.

What is "left in the human world" is the potential for this Zen awakening, and tools like this koan for fostering and reflecting Zen awakening. The "light" of the enhanced awareness released by this exercise "illuminates" the "night" of ignorance, bringing the joyful recognition of the basic mind, which is the real "founder of Zen." In this realization there is no room for doubt or speculation, so there isn't "a seam or gap," and since you are one with the realization itself, "who knows?"

## THE BUDDHA CAPABLE OF GREAT PENETRATING KNOWLEDGE

*A monk asked Master Rang of Xingyang, "The Buddha Capable of Great Penetrating Knowledge sat on the site of enlightenment for ten eons, but the realities of enlightenment did not become apparent to him, and he was unable to fulfill the way of Buddhahood. Why was that?"*

*The master said, "Your question is quite clearly to the point."*

*The monk said, "Since he was sitting on the site of enlightenment, why was he unable to fulfill the way of Buddhahood?"*

*The master said, "Because he did not fulfill Buddhahood."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

I only admit the old barbarian knows; I don't admit the old barbarian understands. If ordinary people know, they are sages; if sages understand, they are ordinary people.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

How is mastering the body as good as mastering the mind?  
When you have mastered mind, the body is no worry.  
If body and mind are both perfectly mastered,  
Why should spiritual immortals also be entitled as lords?

### GUSHAN'S VERSE

Planting grain does not produce beans;  
Can boiling sand make a meal of rice?  
The Buddha Capable of Great Penetrating Knowledge  
Only saw one side of things.

### Translator's Comments

Master Rang (pronounced Zrahng) of Xingyang (pronounced Shing-yahng) is a shadowy figure of the ninth to tenth century, one of the masters of the high-minded Gui-Yang school (pronounced Gway-Yahng).

This koan refers to a story in the famous *Lotus Scripture*, which has already been mentioned in my comments on the sixth koan, "Buddha Picks Up a Flower." In this popular story, a prehistoric Buddha sat perfectly still for ten eons, but did not yet awaken to Buddhahood. Only after having sat through further eons of "showers" of heavenly rain did that Buddha actually realize Buddhahood.

The lesson taught in the scripture is to go beyond the quiescence of nirvana, realizing that the peace of nirvana is just a means of gaining access to the infinite endlessness of continuous awakening to reality.

In his comments, Wumen says, "I only admit the old barbarian knows; I don't admit the old barbarian understands." The "old barbarian" stands for the ancient Buddha in the story, who at this point only had "knowledge," which here means the heart of nirvana, or the peace of the absolute, but lacked "understanding," which here means knowledge of differentiations of samsara, or the relative world.

Wumen goes on to explain, "If ordinary people know, they are sages." The penetrating insight of this special knowledge lifts the mind beyond ordinary habit-ridden conditioned consciousness. But that is not the end: "If sages understand," Wumen continues, "they are ordinary people." After Buddhists attain the penetrating insight of nirvana, then they can return freely to the ordinary world of relative reality, "not blind to causality."

In Wumen's verse comment, he says, "How is mastering the body as good as mastering the mind?" The Buddha in the story sat still in meditation for ten eons, yet still did not awaken; so Wumen says that realization of essence (mind) is better than mastery of form (body). When both mind and body are mastered, he adds, the completely enlightened individual ("spiritual immortal"), being independent and autonomous, has no need of worldly distinction ("be entitled as a lord").

The simple but charming little verse on this koan by Zen master Gushan (pronounced Goo-shahn) sums up the point very neatly.

When he says that grain does not produce beans and sand does not turn into rice, Gushan invokes a traditional Zen symbol for the objective laws of causality. In his state of absolute stillness, the ancient Buddha "only saw one side of things"—in the words of the second koan in this collection, he may have been "not subject," but he was not as yet "not blind."



## ALONE AND POOR

*A monk named Qingshui said to Caoshan, "Qingshui is alone and poor—please help out."*

*Caoshan said, "Reverend Qingshui!"*

*Qingshui said, "Yes!"*

*Caoshan said, "You have already drunk three cups of the wine of the purists of Zen, yet you still say you haven't wet your lips."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

Qingshui passed up the opportunity; what was going on in his mind?

Caoshan had eyes; he profoundly discerned the states of those who came to him.

Even so, tell me, where did Qingshui drink wine?

### WUMEN'S VERSE

Poor as the poorest,  
Brave as the bravest,  
Though he had nothing to live on,  
He dared to joust with the rich.

### ZEN MASTER FOYIN'S VERSE

Qingshui alone and poor—his mind's too coarse:  
Caoshan takes him along the road to the inn.  
Three cups of the purists' lip-wetting wine;  
Add a cup after intoxication, and all seems naught.

### ZEN MASTER HUANSHAN'S VERSE

Caoshan, used to using the Zen purists' wine,  
Pours it out entirely in front of others.

The intoxication topples Zen seekers all over the world;  
 Yet Your Reverence is still not aware.

### *Translator's Comments*

Qingshui (pronounced Ching-shway) was a disciple of Zen master Caoshan (pronounced Tsao-shahn). Caoshan was one of the greatest Zen teachers of the ninth century. He was one of the first masters to analyze koans explicitly and systematize them according to their inner structures.

When Qingshui says he is alone and poor, this means he has attained nirvana: "alone" symbolizes independence, "poverty" symbolizes freedom from attachments. He approaches a complete Zen master because he knows this is not yet ultimate enlightenment.

In response, Caoshan calls to the seeker. What the Zen master is really doing here is calling to Life as it expresses itself through this individual. When the seeker spontaneously responds, "Yes?" Caoshan tells him that *there* he has his answer.

When the Zen master chides his student for "claiming his lips were not even wet" in spite of having drunk "three cups" of the "wine of Zen," he is addressing us, as usual. To cling to the peace of individual nirvana, or "not being subject to causality," as if it were the ultimate goal, is equivalent to ignoring the unity and infinity of Life. This is represented by "claiming his lips are not even wet." The "three cups of wine," in contrast, represent complete realization of the absolute truth (nirvana), the relative world (samsara), and the way to realize their union (what Buddhists call the Middle Way). Caoshan indicates that these three realizations are inherent in the essence of mind even when it is in a nirvanic state; all that is necessary is to awaken the function in response to potential.

Wumen begins his prose comments by saying that Qingshui "passed up the opportunity," which is a classical Zen image for being stuck on nirvana and failing to come to life anymore. Wumen then goes on to praise Caoshan for his precise discernment of this state. This exact discernment of the conditions of others is an essential prerequisite for Zen teachers.

Wumen concludes his prose comments by asking us where Qingshui drank wine. "Qingshui" stands for the seeker of truth: Where is that response in us? What mind says "Yes?"

Wumen's verse comment reiterates the image of poverty, then adds the idea of bravery. According to the *Flower Ornament Scripture*, the primary text of all Buddhism, when you transcend attachment to your ego, then you become fearless. This is Qingshui reaching forward for infinite life after absolute nirvana, approaching the source of the teaching with a completely open mind. Wumen concludes, in praise of Qingshui, "Though he had nothing to live on"—he was purely nirvanic and lacked skill in handling samsara—"He dared to joust with the rich": His nirvana was so deep he could understand the rest of the truth in one encounter with a complete master.

The verse of Zen master Foyin (pronounced Fwaw-yin) also describes the relative simplicity of sheer nirvana, and how a complete Zen master takes people back to the source of both nirvana and samsara. At the conclusion of his verse, Foyin acknowledges that Qingshui was really enlightened, as Caoshan said; he is simply representing a new illuminate who has yet to realize that after complete enlightenment, enlightenment is nothing out of the ordinary.

The verse of Zen master Huanshan (pronounced Hwahn-shahn) praises the mastery of Caoshan in being able to express *suchness*, and to induce *suchness* to express itself consciously through another individual, with the simplest of devices.

The third line reminds us that the Buddha-nature, the essence of mind to which Caoshan calls, is inherently present in everyone.

The last line warns us not to act like Qingshui ("Your Reverence") pretends, clinging to a negative and solitary nirvana. As an ancient Zen proverb says, "Buddha does not remain in Buddhahood: This is called the real field of blessings."

## TESTING HERMITS

*Zhaozhou went to where a hermit was staying and asked, "Is there? Is there?"*

*The hermit held up a fist.*

*Zhaozhou said, "A ship cannot moor where the water is shallow." Then he left.*

*Zhaozhou also went to where another hermit was staying and asked, "Is there? Is there?"*

*That hermit also raised a fist.*

*Zhaozhou said, "Can concede, can deny, can kill, can enliven." Then he bowed.*

### WUMEN SAYS,

Both alike raised a fist: Why did he agree with one and not the other? Where is the riddle? If you can utter a pivotal word here, you will see that Zhaozhou's tongue has no bone, he helps up and knocks down with great freedom.

But even so, Zhaozhou was nevertheless exposed by the two recluses: If you say that either of the recluses was better or worse, you still lack the eye for Zen learning; but if you say neither was better or worse, you also still lack the eye for Zen learning.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

Eyes like shooting stars,  
Mind like flashing lightening;  
The sword that kills,  
The sword that gives life.

### ZEN MASTER YUN-AN SAID,

"A ship cannot moor where the water is shallow"—there are echoes in the words. "Can concede, can deny," and a bow—there

are barbs concealed in the statement. Old Zhaozhou may be said to have used all his magical powers; the recluses were skillfully able to sit there and observe the outcome.

Now there are those without autonomy, orphan souls who do not have the eye to penetrate the barrier: They just compare gain and loss, not only missing the point of the ancients but also burying their own selves. When you see with clear eyes, how can you suppress a laugh?

Do you understand the point? Highly refined pure gold shouldn't change color.

ZEN MASTER TONGXUAN SAID,

The two recluses that keep the ultimate treasure hidden in their chests, waiting for the right people. Zhaozhou, moreover, is an ocean-faring merchant; rare are those who know the appropriate price.

### *Translator's Comments*

The Zen master here is the same Zhaozhou already met in the first koan (*No*) and the seventh koan ("Wash Your Bowl"). This "Testing Hermits" is a very important koan; it is generally considered notoriously difficult for the uninitiated to see into it.

To begin with, it is essential to understand the meaning of being a hermit in the context of Zen Buddhism.

As usual, this meaning is multifold. One point must be stressed in distinguishing the use of the term "hermit" in this Zen tradition from the way it is used in some other traditions, including secular traditions of common parlance.

A Zen hermit in the classical sense is not someone who wants to avoid the problems of the world and drops out of society.

In the outermost meaning of the technical language of ancient Zen, hermits were illuminated graduates of Zen schools who isolated themselves for a period of time in order to develop their transcendental insight and practical knowledge in such a way as to prepare them to reenter the ordinary human world in a very special state of balance. To be complete Zen masters, they needed to be effective communicators at some common level in order to contact society; yet they also



needed to be free from personal nostalgia for the human condition in order to contribute to society a range of knowledge genuinely beyond the fluctuating and vulnerable subjectivity of ordinary human psychology with all of its anxieties and wishful thinking.

In spare technical terms, therefore, a Zen Buddhist "hermit" is someone who has attained nirvana and is thus inwardly beyond the world. The isolation of the hermit need not be grossly physical: "Seclusion" is a symbol and also a description of the psychological independence, both emotional and intellectual, that comes to the individual through the experience of nirvana.

So when Zhaozhou, who represents complete Zen mastery, poses the question "Is there? Is there?" to the hermits, in effect he asks them whether their nirvana is deep enough to empower them to go on the "living road" of objective reality.

Then when the hermits raise their fists, this can mean one of two things, each of which in turn may have two meanings. The reason, by the way, that koans like this may seem on analysis to have been constructed on mathematical principles is that they were indeed constructed to represent principles deriving from the same source as mathematics. *No Barrier* is one of the koan collections that shows this most clearly, although there is certainly little else but this fact being demonstrated in classical commentaries.

In any case, the reason there are two hermits in this story is to illustrate two categories of perspective. One perspective is the ineffability of the absolute: Nothing at all can really describe either nirvana or the immediate experience of suchness. In Zen jargon, this perspective is called "holding still." The second perspective is the interconnectedness of everything in a cosmic web of Life: The hermit's fist holds everything in its empty grip, because everything is in its place in one indivisible whole. In Zen jargon, this perspective is called "letting go."

The Zen master's reactions illustrate the dual level possible meaning in each perspective. "A ship cannot moor where the water is shallow," he says, indicating that it is impossible to take on samsara effectively without sufficient depth of nirvana: In Zen, peace of mind is not just for your own enjoyment, but to help you work for the world unwearied. If the hermit was indicating "holding still" in nirvana, therefore, Zhaozhou's reply means to make sure of that stillness and not rise to any bait (like the bait the master just threw him

with that question). If the hermit was indicating "letting go" in the infinite network of suchness, Zhaozhou's reply means to make sure your experience is real suchness and not a shallow subjective view of the world, which you have simply given a lofty title.

This orderly multiplicity of meaning is what Zen master Yun-an (pronounced Ywun-ahn) refers to as the "echo" in the words "a ship cannot moor where the water is shallow."

Turning to the other hermit in the koan, who naturally symbolizes another perspective or another way of looking at things, Zhaozhou says, to the same silent reply, "Can concede, can deny, can kill, can enliven." The terms "concede" and "enliven" refer to "letting go" into the infinite path of suchness, which is Life itself, set free. The terms "deny" and "kill" refer to "holding still" in the profound independence of nirvana, "not subject" to any mundane influence. These are the "barbs" in the statement, as Zen master Yun-an describes them.

In this case the Zen master says that whichever perspective you are absorbed in, it is crucial to be able to go back and forth freely in order to attain both ultimate liberation and objective compassion. Either perspective can kill you or bring you to life: The mythical "third eye" is nothing but the centered "Middle Way," a faculty of vision that so to speak hovers over the pivotal point at which one may plunge either into nirvana as such or thusness as such. This is not a one-time choice, as schismatic sectarians once believed; it takes place over and over again, even in the course of one day.

With this detailed explanation of the koan, I believe people will be able to understand the reasons for the comments made by Wumen and the other masters, in terms of the symbolism and scope of reference involved. The essential points may be summed up as follows. The "riddle" of this koan is not in a question of two anonymous but evidently specific persons winning and losing a contest of wits; it is in simultaneous perception of all the implications represented in a symbolic vignette. The point of this exercise is that this scenario contains an outline of the foundations and possibilities of conscious experience life and death. In Zen, a Buddha is called a complete human being, with a complete mind: This means someone who has completely experienced the essence of life and death and therefore knows what they really mean and what possibilities are actually open to human awareness.

Therefore Wumen warns us not to get stuck on comparing better

or worse, then also warns us not to conclude by this remark of his that there is no differentiation. As Yun-an says in the second paragraph of his comments, comparing in crude terms of gain and loss not only obscures the real point of the koan, but also occupies the mind wastefully. There are comparisons to make, nevertheless; but these comparisons cannot be resolved into a supposed choice between two individuals in a given case, as a superficial reading of the koan might suggest. The choice is among a range of fundamental possibilities, and it is a choice that is not fixed but *ongoing*, just as the four seasons are ongoing. And just like the four seasons, the totality of Zen teaching inspires and nurtures, and it also kills and reaps.

Zen is not a slapstick farce, or a competitive institution: People who take it this way show something about themselves, not about Zen. This is the point of Zen master Yun-an's "laugh" at those who "compare gain and loss." When Yun-an goes on to speak of pure gold, he refers to the purified Buddha-nature, the repository of all human possibilities, which Zhaozhou addresses in both hermits.

Zen master Tongxuan (pronounced Toong-shwen) pursues this Buddha-nature theme, showing how the story can be seen as both hermits representing one side of enlightenment, with Zhaozhou representing the "third eye" hovering over the pivotal working that can "set up" or "shut down," affirm or deny, proceed or withdraw, making deliberate choices according to needs in the course of living life through.

## CALLING THE MASTER

*Every day Ruiyan would call to himself, "Master!"*

*And he would answer himself, "Yes!"*

*Then he would say, "Be awake, be alert!"*

*"Yes."*

*"From now on, don't be fooled by anyone!"*

*"Yes, yes!"*

### WUMEN SAYS,

Old Ruiyan sells himself and buys himself, playing out so many spirit heads and ghost faces. Why? Listen!! One who calls, one who answers, one who is alert, one who is not fooled by others: If you cling to recognition, as before you are not right. And if you imitate another, everything is wild foxy interpretation.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

When people studying the Way do not perceive reality,  
It is just because they still recognize the conscious spirit;  
It is the root of infinite eons of birth and death,  
Yet the ignorant call it the original human being.

### *Translator's Comments*

Ruiyan (pronounced Zrway-yen) lived in the ninth century. According to Zen records, many extraordinary tales were told of Ruiyan in his time, but were omitted from writings about him. The koan at hand is the best-known story featuring the image of this Zen master.

Ancient records state that Ruiyan used to sit quietly on a boulder all day long, and would call to himself thus every day. Framed in this way, the koan shows that Zen meditation is not idle or undirected sitting, but has a definite aim, as illustrated by Ruiyan's calls: to

know the true self, to be awake and aware, and to be free from illusions and delusions developed by learned habits of association and thought.

Ruiyan's little drama exteriorizes the Zen quest for the purpose of illustration. Wumen's comment underscores the point that it all takes place within the self, and warns the seeker against two pitfalls. One is the danger of mistakenly recognizing the superficial personality for the real self; so Wumen says, "if you cling to recognition, as before you are not right." The other pitfall is to imitate the practice of the exercise without the inner spirit; so Wumen says, "if you imitate another, everything is wild foxy interpretation," meaning that it is just an arbitrary play of intellectual craft.

Wumen's verse comment also carries a traditional Zen caveat; in fact, it is an exact quotation of a classical statement on the subject. Here, the "conscious spirit" represents the subjective mind, which meditators who have practiced a little bit of thought-stopping may readily mistake for the real original mind of Zen.

This point is highlighted in another story about Ruiyan's Zen play. Someone came to one of the great contemporary masters and remarked, "Everyone plays with the mind, but Ruiyan is a bit better." This refers to the direct aim of the Zen effort written explicitly into Ruiyan's script.

The master rejoined, "Why don't you stay with him?" This means, in effect, "Why don't you put his method into practice?"

To this the questioner replied, "He has passed on," symbolically claiming to have himself completed and graduated from this exercise.

Zen masters don't let people make such claims without ascertaining their verity. This master asked, "Right now, can you call and get a response?" He wanted to see if the questioner had in fact embodied conscious realization of the real mind or the true self.

In the end there was no reply; the questioner had only been showing off. A later Zen master related this story and said, "All the Zen teachers in the world utter sayings on behalf of this questioner, much like neighbors helping the mourning at a funeral. But even if Ruiyan himself were to come forth, that would still be glaring eyes inside a coffin." Your answer to the Zen question, "Right now, can you call and get an answer?" has to be a genuine firsthand reflection of your own realization, not a contrived imitation of somebody else.



## DESHAN CARRYING HIS BOWL

*One day Zen master Deshan left the hall with his bowl in hand. He met Xuefeng, who asked him, "The bell and drum announcing the mealtime have not yet been sounded; where are you going with your bowl?"*

*Deshan immediately returned to his room.*

*Xuefeng told Yantou about this. Yantou said, "Even the great Deshan does not know the last word."*

*Hearing of this, Deshan had an assistant summon Yantou, whom he asked, "You don't agree with me?"*

*Yantou secretly revealed his intention, and Deshan dropped the subject.*

*The next day Deshan gave a lecture that turned out to be very different from usual. Yantou went to the front of the communal hall, where he clapped and laughed, saying, "How fortunate the old fellow understands the last word! After this no one in the world will be able to do anything to him."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

As far as the last word is concerned, neither Yantou nor Deshan had even dreamed of it. When you bring them up for examination, they're much like puppets on a stage.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

If you know the first word,  
Then you understand the last word;  
The last and the first—  
Are they not this one word?

## ZEN MASTER BAO-EN SAID,

If you accept unrealities and take in echoes, you miss Deshan. If you suppress the strong and help the weak, you bury Yantou. I tell you frankly, for an example of the proverb, "When the teacher is excellent, the apprentices are strong," credit goes to Deshan and his disciples Xuefeng and Yantou. Expertise is demonstrated in the hands of experts; who knows beyond the knowledge of connoisseurs?

## ZEN MASTER YOUKE SAID,

Those who conceal an army to fight by night do not see Deshan. Those who attack occupied territory by day can hardly know Yantou. What they don't realize is that the battle commander picks fights by day, the watch commander patrols the camp by night.

*Translator's Comments*

Zen master Deshan (pronounced Duh-shahn) lived in the ninth century. Xuefeng (pronounced Shweh-fung) and Yantou (pronounced Yentoe) were his Zen apprentices, both of whom became exceptionally great Zen masters. In Zen lore, Xuefeng ordinarily typifies diligence, while Yantou typifies spontaneity.

Japanese masters considered this one the most difficult koans. The greatest difficulty in it is that it is not what it appears to be: like the eleventh koan, "Testing Hermits," this koan is an elaborate testing device. Part of the function of the koan's structure is to arouse doubt in the mind of the onlooker, in order to examine the doubt, the doubter, and the doubting.

Some say Yantou, who was enlightened long before Xuefeng even though both were in the circle of the grand master Deshan, was provoking an incident in order to help Xuefeng wake up, or to help Deshan help Xuefeng wake up.

Keizan, a great fourteenth-century Japanese Zen master, explains the story in an interesting way: "Deshan just accepts the flow, being as is. Yantou and Xuefeng scatter rubbish in the eye; playing at being adept, they turn out inept."

The identity of the "first word" and the "last word" refers to the identity of samsara and nirvana, or the relative and the absolute, or responsibility and freedom. A genuine understanding of either implies an understanding of both, and this story represents the interaction of partial and complete realization of those two facets of the total experience of awakeness.

Wumen's prose comment affirms that this koan is a didactic "play" illustrating a pivotal point in Zen awareness. He signals to us not to be misled by random associations the outward appearance may trigger. His poem refers to both union and unity of samsara and nirvana, within which total perspective each of the adepts in the story plays out a specific role as a signpost.

The comments of Zen master Bao-en (pronounced Bow-un) and Zen master Youke (pronounced Yo-kuh) are most enlightening. In Bao-en's terms, Deshan represents complete certainty, realization of the essence of reality; he will not quibble over secondary things and superficialities. Yantou represents the inspiring function of Zen, which challenges the self-imposed limits of subjective reality. The teacher and disciples together in the total interaction represent the whole operation of Zen teaching.

Youke says that those who think in contrived and contentious terms cannot see the point of this story. As with koan number eleven, "Testing Hermits," they only think in terms of who supposedly won and who supposedly lost. Thus a wealth of subtlety is completely lost to them.

In Youke's own colorful description, the "battle commander" who "picks fights by day" is first of all Deshan when he meanders down to the dining hall with his bowl before the formal announcement of mealtime; then it is Xuefeng when he confronts Deshan, and again when he reports this to Yantou; then it is Yantou, when he completes the circle by reporting Xuefeng's comment to Deshan, who now becomes the battle commander again by confronting Yantou and then giving a lecture completely different from usual. Finally Yantou again assumes the role of battle commander picking fights by making his last remarks in order to engage the attention of everyone else in the world on the complete transcendence of Deshan.

In the same way, the "watch commander" who "patrols the camp by night" is also Deshan, then Xuefeng, then Yantou, then Deshan, then Yantou, who finally asks us to take over for them. In order to be

able to take over, we have to see for ourselves what Xuefeng was watching over, what Yantou was watching over, and what Deshan was watching over. The difficult part is that in order to do that, we need to have already accepted the night watch of calmly looking into ourselves for the firsthand experience of the essential mind that sees all independently: "Who knows beyond the knowledge of connoisseurs?"

## THRESCORE BLOWS

*When Dongshan came to study with Yunmen, the teacher asked him, "Where have you come from?"*

*Dongshan said, "Chadu."*

*Yunmen asked, "Where did you spend the summer?"*

*Dongshan said, "At Baoci monastery in Hunan."*

*Yunmen asked, "When did you leave there?"*

*Dongshan said, "August twenty-fifth."*

*Yunmen said, "I forgive you threescore blows."*

*The next day Dongshan went to Yunmen and asked, "Yesterday you forgave me threescore blows; I do not know where my error was."*

*Yunmen said, "You rice bag! Jiangxi, Hunan, and you still go on this way!"*

*At this Dongshan was greatly enlightened.*

### WUMEN SAYS,

If Yunmen had given some of his own provisions at that time, enabling Dongshan to have another road of living potential, then his school would not have become extinct.

One night Dongshan was in the ocean of right and wrong; the next morning he went again, and was given an explanation. Dongshan was immediately enlightened, but he still wasn't quick.

Now I ask you, should Dongshan receive the threescore blows, or should he not? If you say he should, then all the plants and trees should be beaten. If you say he should not, then Yunmen was talking nonsense.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

A lion teaches its cub the secret of the wanderling;  
When it tries to leap forward, immediately it's flipped.



An unexpected second try gets right to the point;  
The earlier arrow was still light, the later one went deep.

ZEN MASTER FUSHAN SAID,

Hold the universe still, and even Buddhas and Zen masters have no way to get in; throw open the rivers and seas, and fish and dragons get room to swim.

FAREN NING SAID,

Had it not been for his diligence at the end, Dongshan would have fallen into a pit of quicksand, never to get out. Then again, it was just because of his diligence at the end that Dongshan fell into a pit of quicksand, never to get out.

### *Translator's Comments*

Yunmen (pronounced Ywun-mun) died in 949. He was one of the greatest classical masters, not only profoundly enlightened but also an extraordinary genius with an amazing versatility of mind. His scope of attainment of the awakening described in the Flower Ornament Scripture, traditionally considered the original teaching of Buddhism, was truly outstanding. This Dongshan (pronounced Doongshahn) was one of more than eighty enlightened disciples of the great master Yunmen.

The koan at hand is about suchness, or being-as-is. Yunmen is a perfect icon for suchness koans, because of his dazzling expressions of the most sophisticated level of realization, known in comprehensive Flower Ornament Buddhism as simultaneous "interpenetration of all phenomena" and "noninterference among all individual phenomena." This vision cannot be completely explained in words; its effect is perception of universal harmony within the totality of the universe.

At first, Yunmen's conversation with Dongshan in this koan seems to touch on everyday matters. In Zen Buddhist iconography, everyday matters are everyday matters and also symbols of being-as-is. The distinction between everyday matters and being-as-is lies in the subjectivity or objectivity of the observer, so the Zen master needs to test to see whether the seeker's perception is conditioned

and the subjective or direct and objective; whether the seeker only sees the mundane aspect of suchness, or whether the seeker also sees the suchness of the mundane.

By the end of the third round, Yunmen and Dongshan are even. No one can tell whether the seeker only sees the sacred as mundane, or also sees the mundane as sacred. Therefore Yunmen sets another trap and "forgives him threescore blows."

The number three in Zen generally refers to three steps that lead from ordinary subjective reality to the suchness of objective reality. The first is mental detachment. This does not mean resistance or opposition to mental activities, as often imagined by intellectuals, but rather nonattachment. The purpose of detachment from mental talk is to open up a window for subtler facilities of perception that usually lie dormant behind the noisier and more colorful facade of thoughts, imaginings, and ideas.

The second step is detachment from detachment. This does not mean resumption of former habits of thought, but rather enlivening newly awakened insights and learning to relate to the world in awakened ways.

The third step is to refrain from forming conceptions of detachment or detachment from detachment, so that the process does not degenerate into an indirect intellectual exercise.

These are the "threescore blows" that Yunmen "forgives" Dongshan. The seeker who has gone through them will understand his meaning; the seeker who has not finished the last one will wonder why the teacher speaks of "forgiving," because he still has a tendency to rationalize his relationship with suchness.

As it turns out, Dongshan got "caught" by Yunmen's "hook." Nevertheless, we still cannot tell whether he is an innocent playing innocent, an imbecile being an imbecile, or a self-approved seeker claiming to spontaneous and unselfconscious union with being-as-is.

Therefore the Zen master Yunmen tests him again. Naming some areas famous for the many Zen teachers then active there—and indeed the place the seeker just said he had come from was itself a famous teaching center—Yunmen says, in effect, if you are a seeker who is claiming to have found the reality of suchness, what are you doing here? Why are you still seeking, using up the alms of the faithful, if you have in fact attained the aim?

It might be said that Yunmen wanted to see whether Dongshan

only saw the samsara or mundane aspect of suchness, or whether he also saw the heart of nirvana in that samsara. That is the criterion of real suchness. My teacher used to say that Yunmen was truly magical: At the same time as he tossed a bucket of samsara at the seeker and made it work like nirvana, he also drenched him with a bucket of nirvana while making it look like samsara.

Wumen's comments on this koan are also very clever. He says that Yunmen did not give Dongshan some of his own provisions. This means that Yunmen did not show his own realization of suchness, which would have enabled the seeker to "have another road of living potential" beyond nirvana. As it was, Yunmen simply showed Dongshan the heart of nirvana within knowledge of samsara, causing him to be greatly enlightened in this sense but not giving him any indication or guidance in matters of the higher possibilities of consciousness beyond this stage.

That is why Wumen says indirectly that Yunmen's school became extinct. Although this is historically true, and it was true of most of the exceptional classical Zen masters, the historical fact is here just a symbol; the meaning of this remark is that this koan is about seeing the heart of nirvana within samsara. Wumen's comments up to this point are not criticisms of Yunmen or his method, even though they are deliberately presented that way in order to "catch" superficial literalists for the demonstrative effect achieved thereby; Wumen's comments are a precise technical description of the specific meaning and function of this particular koan.

Turning the focus of attention to Dongshan, Wumen says that one "night," or in his state of ignorance, he was in "the ocean of right and wrong," or the abyss of subjectively biased discriminatory thinking. Wumen acknowledges that the ordinary world turned into true suchness with the dawn of his awakening "the next morning." Nevertheless, Wumen says, recalling the standpoint originally expressed by Yunmen himself, if Dongshan had really been "quick," if he actually had immediate and direct experience of suchness, he wouldn't have needed to approach Yunmen in the first place.

Finally, Wumen poses a question to the reader. We already know that the question of whether or not Dongshan deserved the blows depends on something else: Now Wumen has us look at that something else. "If you say he should, then all the plants and trees should be beaten"—when you practice the three-step Zen progression from

ordinary subjective reality to directly experienced objective suchness, the process takes in everything everywhere, at all times.

"If you say he should not," Wumen goes on, referring to the time when application of the teaching has taken effect and the resulting return to essential nature is complete, "then Yunmen was talking nonsense," because there is no sense in clinging to the means once the end is attained, provided the end is itself real. This remark contains a key to Yunmen's testing procedure as well as a typical warning to the reader not to get distracted by the superficial appearance of the procedure.

In Wumen's verse, the "lion" is a traditional symbol for enlightened consciousness. It is said that the roar of a lion bursts the brain of a jackal, meaning that enlightenment silences delusive thoughts.

The "secret of the wanderling" is the Zen question that starts off the koan, "Where have you come from?" This question is posed in every possible sense, to see the level at which an individual seeker interprets it. It is a test of whether the seeker is conscious of the ultimate source of being as well as a test of what the seeker has experienced.

"When it tries to leap forward, immediately it's flipped." Dongshan came on as if he was present in consciousness of being-as-is; Yunmen let him leap, then flipped him with talk of punishment and forgiveness.

"An unexpected second try gets right to the point." Having been flipped around like this by Yunmen, Dongshan was enabled to make a fresh approach, without presumption on conceptual clichés, trying to get to the truth directly.

"The earlier arrow was still light, the later one went deep." The first arrow was "I forgive you threescore blows," which aroused doubt and broke through complacency. The second arrow was "You rice bag!" which shot right to the heart of pride to turn it into the heart of nirvana.

I have gone into such detail with Wumen's comments on this case in particular to emphasize the point that his remark about the extinction of Yunmen's school is meant symbolically. As a point of historical fact, in spite of its extraordinary character, Yunmen's school lasted for a very long time, and after it passed out of view its teaching was inherited by another school, the Linji school. As a graduate of this latter school, Wumen here shows his ability to interpret Yunmen



teachings and even to present them in a brilliantly clever manner, as was characteristic of the lofty tone of the Yunmen school of Zen.

The comments of other Zen masters on this koan are similarly artful. Fushan (pronounced Foo-shahn) summarizes all the issues of the whole story in penetrating detail by making full use of the dual meanings in the Zen terms "hold still" and "throw open."

Fushan begins by saying, "Hold the universe still, and even Buddhas and Zen masters have no way to get in." When the expression "hold still" is taken in its sense of fixation, this saying means that when you cling to superficial appearances it is impossible to awaken to suchness as it really is. This image stands for the seeker Dongshan in the beginning, insofar as he symbolizes complacent identification of ordinary consciousness with perception of being-as-is.

In contrast, when "hold still" is taken in its other sense of remaining in the stillness of absolute nirvana, Fushan's statement means that no thoughts or conceptions apply to that state, not even ideas or images of Buddhahood or Zen mastery. This image stands for the master Yunmen reproving attachment to "suchness," turning the focus of attention to the heart of nirvana within knowledge of suchness.

Fushan then goes on to say, "Throw open the rivers and seas, and fish and dragons get room to swim." This also can have two meanings, referring to the states or principles represented by the seeker and the master.

When "throw open" is taken in the sense of conceding the all-inclusive nature of suchness, Fushan's saying represents Yunmen going along with Dongshan and "forgiving" him, letting him be as he is in order to see whether he is a "fish" (ordinary person) or a "dragon" (illuminate).

Then again, when "throw open" is taken in the sense of letting go of attachment to fixed attitudes and ideas, thus realizing the "open" or fluid nature of reality itself, Fushan's saying represents Dongshan attaining enlightenment and liberation on realizing the heart of nirvana within the experience of suchness.

The comment of Zen master Faren (pronounced Fah-zren) likens being-as-is to a "pit of quicksand," because suchness is at bottom what the clinging mind turns into the prison of the ordinary world. Dongshan's "diligence at the end" refers to his response to Yunmen's



challenge, without which doubt he would not have attained the heart of nirvana and become enlightened.

Appearing to turn things around, but simply completing the teaching, Faren adds that it is precisely by means of profound experience of nirvana that one can manage being-as-is to the furthest possible degree. This practical capacity is a representation of a major saint in Buddhism, called a bodhisattva (pronounced bode-hee-sot-twuh), or enlightening being, who keeps on transcending in order to keep up dedication, thus able to be inwardly free even while working for the liberation of the world right there in the midst of its bondage.

As for Dongshan, it might be said that his was another case of an awakening illustrated by the saying, "Had he known the lamp was fire, the meal would have been cooked already." To see the point of the "threescore blows," please reflect on this saying.

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## PUTTING ON A FORMAL VESTMENT AT THE SOUND OF A BELL

*Yunmen said, "The world is so wide, so vast; why put on a formal vestment at the sound of a bell?"*

WUMEN SAYS,

Whenever you investigate Zen and study the Way, it is urgent to avoid pursuing sound and chasing form. Even if you realize the Way on hearing sound, or understand the mind on seeing form, this is still ordinary; you do not yet know how Zen learners ride on sound and enclose form, everywhere clear, every experience sublime.

But even so, tell me: Does sound come to the ear, or does the ear go to sound? Even if echoes and silence are both forgotten, when you reach this, how do you understand verbally? If you use your ears to listen, it will be hard to understand; only when you hear sound through your eyes will you be close.

WUMEN'S VERSE

Understand, and things are all one;

If you don't understand, there are myriad distinctions, a  
thousand differences.

When you don't understand, things are all one;

Understand, and there are myriad distinctions, a thousand  
differences.

ZEN MASTER GUSHAN'S VERSE

The formal vestment goes on at the sound of a bell;

The whole world cannot hide the appearance of a monk.

But if you see by way of form, or seek by way of sound,

The Buddha's successor, our teacher, was a fake.

*Translator's Comments*

This is the same Zen master Yunmen encountered in the fifteenth koan. He was especially noted for his skill in expressing many meanings simultaneously within apparently simple utterances.

It is recorded that Yunmen spoke the words of this koan on hearing the sound of the temple bell. "Putting on a formal vestment at the sound of a bell" symbolizes acknowledgment of purposeful order. In domestic terms, it is like tying your shoes and buttoning your shirt, cooking meals and washing the dishes, watering the plants and feeding the animals.

The point of this koan follows the preceding one. The "vastness" of the world to which Yunmen refers is the experience of nirvana in the essence of mind. From the point of view of absolute nirvana, all order is relative, so the mind should be open and fluid if one is to experience the fullest possible extent of that portion of infinity accessible to consciousness. The danger of misunderstanding or exaggerating this point of view, however, is to slip into habits of ignorance, heedlessness, and denial masquerading as realization of emptiness and transcendence. The point of this koan, therefore, is to examine the transcendence of transcendence, which means emergence from quiescent nirvana into perception of suchness as a cosmic web of events and processes.

Yunmen's question is not about one particular order, but any particular order and its relationship to the essence of order. It is a reminder to be mindful when reemerging from absorption in the ineffable absolute into the plane of order, to be sure one is not projecting subjective ideas based on old habits.

In the temptation to think of order exclusively as a specific order there is a typical Zen hook, designed to show whether a particular individual identifies the temporal form of a particular order with the eternal reality of order itself. In some sense everyone perceives some aspect of reality; illusion consists of imagining this limited perception to be the whole of reality; delusion consists of fabricated ideas and rationalizations filling the gaps between fragments of partial views of reality.

Wumen's prose comment is a study in balance: He tells the seeker not to be obsessed with formalities, and yet not to become disorderly or negligent. In the second paragraph, Wumen gives directions for

meditation to bring this Zen to life. "Does sound come to the ear, or does the ear go to sound?" In other words, are you "receiving" suchness as it is, or are you projecting what you expect? When "echoes and silence are both forgotten" is when you transcend the world and transcend transcendence; then you see the infinity of reality, not in fragments but as a whole, because you are seeing with your whole body and whole being.

Wumen's verse on this koan is unusually complicated. It is most easily understood when broken down line by line:

"Understand, and all things are one." Unity realized through understanding refers to a) direct perception and b) logical understanding of the interdependence of all things, which is the basis of order and causality.

"If you don't understand, there are myriad distinctions, a thousand differences." Diversity experienced through not understanding refers to a) blindness to unity of essence by fixation on external appearances, and b) preoccupation of attention with subjective discriminations.

"When you don't understand, things are all one." In a mundane sense, this refers to unity experienced through not understanding as reflecting everything in a fixed worldview. In a transcendental sense, it refers to unity experienced through not understanding as seeing the totality of things in holistic perception without subjective judgments.

"Understand, and there are myriad distinctions, a thousand differences." Diversity experienced through understanding refers to the capacity of objective analysis and discernment of practical differences.

A further refinement of the story in this koan underscores the message that stagnation is to be avoided in the ever-transcending path of Zen. In the most extensive book on Yunmen it is also recorded that the monks in Yunmen's audience did not say anything, so the master himself said, chiding them for their silence, "On a short stretch of riverbank there are a lot of clams." Observing that no one gave evidence of any vision beyond the conventional, Zen master Wu-an (pronounced Woo-ahn) said of this scene,

On a short stretch of riverbank, many are the clams:  
 Once the sun comes out, their mouths all open.  
 Although their ordinary guts are revealed,  
 When have falcons ever come pursuing the smell?

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The return of the Zen master to the ordinary world after transcendental experience of nirvana does not mean complacent acceptance of half-truths. The aftermath of awakening is awakeness: Those who have just awakened cannot assume that their sobriety is necessarily complete, and that they have become fully liberated from their former "dream" habits of thought.

Finally, the verse of Zen master Gushan summarizes the point, showing how the formal robe symbolizes the whole world of order, structure, and form, yet reminding everyone that the Buddha, the one who is Awake, is not identified with the clothing of form. Reproduction of form can only produce imitations of form, not the living source of all form in itself. Thus Gushan concludes by saying in effect that an imitation Buddha is by definition a "fake."



## THE NATIONAL TEACHER'S THREE CALLS

*The National Teacher called his assistant three times, and three times the assistant responded. The National Teacher said, "I had thought I was disappointing you. Actually it is you who are disappointing me."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

When the National Teacher called three times, his tongue fell to the ground; when the assistant answered three times, he spoke out luminously. The National Teacher, old of years and lonely at heart, held the ox's head to let it feed, but his assistant wouldn't take him up on it; fine food is not a suitable meal for the satiated.

Now tell me, where is the disappointment?

When a country is clean, talented people are valued. When a family is rich, the children are haughty.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

The iron stocks have no opening, yet he wants the man to put them on:

The burden extends to descendants, not to be lightly dismissed.

If you want to be able to uphold the school,

You must go on to climb a sword mountain in your bare feet.

### *Translator's Comments*

National Teacher was a title of honor given to teachers of the emperor. A number of distinguished Zen monks received this title, but the most famous National Teacher in classical Zen lore was the great Huizhong (pronounced Hway-joong), who lived in the eighth century.

The koan at hand is a very famous one. It centers around the no-

tion that the original mind and being-as-is are natural realities that cannot be taught or transmitted in the literal sense, but only realized by what is known as "teacherless knowledge," or direct firsthand experience of reality. Therefore this is also one of the koans that test realization of suchness, to see if it is superficial or deep, subjective or objective.

In the original story, the word for "disappoint" can be read to "let down" in the colloquial sense, or to betray, to turn against. There are many nuances in this koan.

According to one way of interpretation, the metaphorical "disappointment" or "betrayal" in this case is the suggestion implicit in the calling and answering that "there is something," which seemingly could compromise the transcendence and freedom of Zen. By calling attention to this, the teacher counsels people not to become so attached to the framework of study that they lose the real Zen content.

Another way of seeing the story is on the other side of the same coin: Zen masters have to teach their disciples not to chase their own imaginations; they have to teach them "nothing," as it were, so that they can unlearn the preconceived ideas that veil them from direct enlightenment. Therefore the master says ironically, "I thought I hadn't taught you anything; now I see you haven't learned anything."

Yet another way to view the story is to see that the teacher was testing the assistant, to see if he had any hidden doubts that would make him vulnerable to being "hooked." When the assistant simply acknowledged the event and remained where he was, he showed that he had attained fulfillment and was inwardly at peace. The teacher's final statement was then a recognition that the assistant had passed the test by foiling the trick.

In his prose commentary, Wumen gives a technical description of the points covered in the koan. He seems to chide the National Teacher, saying his "tongue fell to the ground," which means in Zen code, "Don't depend on anything, and don't take your ordinary perceptions for ultimate reality." Then Wumen praises the assistant, saying he "spoke out luminously," meaning that his "three responses" were complete affirmation of reality, be it ultimate, relative, or imagined.

Wumen goes on to make a gesture of ridicule toward the National Teacher's role again, portraying his calls as attempts to force-feed Zen

to his assistant, who is no longer in need. As usual, this is a symbolic representation of a general principle, which states that the teaching is set up according to the situation, in response to the needs of the seeker. When the ailment is cured, goes the Zen proverb, the medicine is taken away. Thus Wumen says, "Fine food is not a suitable meal for the satiated."

As he often does, Wumen concludes his prose comments with a challenge. "When a country is clean, talented people are valued" refers to the National Teacher calling his apprentice; "when a family is rich, the children are haughty" refers to the apprentice answering his teacher. Where is the disappointment?

By now it will be obvious that the meaning of the National Teacher is in the power of his words to engage the doubt of the reader. When you know where the disappointment is, there is no more disappointment.

The last lines of both Wumen's prose and verse commentaries also voice traditional warnings about complacency and aloofness masquerading as genuine transcendence, which is not compromised even by intimate involvement in works in the world. The conclusion of Wumen's verse places particular emphasis on realizing the infinity of suchness, and the consequent endlessness of practical adaptation to its flow. The great Yunmen said, "Where does the assistant disappoint the National Teacher? Even to pulverize one's bones and shatter one's body would not be enough to pay back his debt."

## THREE POUNDS

*A monk asked Master Dongshan, "What is Buddha?"  
Dongshan said, "Three pounds of burlap."*

WUMEN SAYS,

Dongshan had learned a bit of clam Zen: He reveals his guts the minute he opens his lips. But tell me, do you see Dongshan?

WUMEN'S VERSE

He thrusts out three pounds of burlap;  
The words are close, the intent even closer.  
Those who come talking of right and wrong  
Are therefore right and wrong people.

### *Translator's Comments*

Zen master Dongshan in this koan is the same one who attained enlightenment in the fifteenth koan, "Threescore Blows."

The present koan illustrates the kind of consciousness that Buddhists call the "great mirror knowledge," which is direct perception of being-as-is, reflection of suchness without subjective projections. Because it is impartial and objective, this kind of consciousness or "knowledge" is represented as being like a mirror. This mirrorlike awareness is one of four fundamental types of knowledge realized by Buddhas.

As usual, Wumen's comment seems to be a quip. He calls Dongshan's realization "clam Zen," in that you can see everything inside the minute he opens up, just as you can see inside a clam when it opens. This is a simple description of what the mirror knowledge is like: the whole panorama of immediate reality is reflected the instant the eye of this knowledge opens. Insofar as Wumen's remark does

contain a kind of irony, the point is that this knowledge is only one aspect of enlightenment.

Thus Wumen's question "Do you see Dongshan?" is two-pronged. In one sense, the question is whether or not we mistake an image in the mirror for the mirror itself. In another sense, the question is whether we take one aspect of enlightenment for the whole.

In his verse comment, Wumen says, "The words are close, the intent even closer." The direct experience of suchness is "closer" to reality than any description. "Those who come talking of right and wrong," Wumen goes on, referring to those whose attention is fixed on the image and do not see the mirror, "are therefore right and wrong people," because all they see when they do this are reflections of their own ideas.

There is a detailed description of typical subjective views of this koan by the great Zen master Yuanwu (pronounced Ywen-woo), who lived a hundred years before Wumen and included the same koan in his collection of classical lore, called *The Blue Cliff Record*:

Many people base their understanding on the words and say that Dongshan was in the storehouse at the time weighing out hem or burlap when the monk questioned him, and therefore he answered in this way. Some say that when Dongshan is asked about one thing he answers about another. Some say that since you are Buddha and yet you still go asking about Buddha, Dongshan answers this in a roundabout way. And there's yet another type of dead men who say that the three pounds of burlap is itself Buddha. These interpretations have nothing to do with it.

The most sophisticated comment on this popular koan comes from Zen master Tianbao (pronounced Tyen-bao), who cites a traditional teaching to "explain" in terms of three levels of reality: absolute reality, relative reality, and conceptually imagined reality. "To make rope of the hemp is still okay," the Zen master says, "but how can it be right to construe the rope as a snake?"

A classical Buddhist metaphor describes the relationship among these levels of reality by means of a story about a man who sees a piece of rope lying across his path at night. Unable to see clearly in the darkness, the man mistakes the rope for a snake and fears he may be bitten. Even though it is only a piece of rope, the man's distress is as real to him as the idea, or misperception, of the "snake."



Similarly, reality as conceptually imagined is like the "snake"—something is there, but not as we imagine. Relative reality is like the "rope"—when we stop clinging to our conceptual descriptions, we can see suchness unadorned. Ultimate reality is the fact that the rope is not only a snake, it is not even a "rope"—it is only a bundle of fibers.

The last distinction is very fine. The resolution into fiber represents the final analysis symbolically, not literally. Buddhist insight penetrates everything, so there is no element that is absolute. All descriptions of reality are only mental constructions, yet some descriptions are relatively truer than others. When it comes to ineffable absolute truth, even our perception of objective reality can never be total and complete.

So nothing can really be said to capture the experience of the ultimate truth in words, and the purity of this insight remains untouched in the mirror knowledge of Buddhas. Tianbao suggests that we return from the experience of absolute nirvana that opens up the mirror knowledge, and attend to the differentiated aspect of the suchness seen by this knowledge, this attention to differentiation is cultivated for the purpose of developing analytical and practical knowledge, two other basic aspects of enlightened knowledge.

In this work it is essential to distinguish between the relatively true and the relatively false. As the Zen proverb says, you cannot harvest beans by planting wheat. That is why it is "still okay" to "make rope of the hemp," because that is objectively true on the relative plane; but "how can it be right to construe the rope as a snake," which could only be true in subjective imagination?

Let me conclude with a brief statement and a challenge from Zen master Jinsue (pronounced Jin-soo), who slyly alludes to the nature and limitations of the mirrorlike awareness as experienced in isolation, without the other fundamental aspects of enlightened knowledge: "If you can understand here," he says, "it is easy to see Dongshan, but hard to see your own self." Then he asks us why: "Once you have seen Dongshan, why don't you see yourself?" How can the front of a mirror reflect the back of the mirror itself?

## THE NORMAL IS THE WAY

*Zhaozhou asked Nanquan, "What is the Way?"*

*Nanquan said, "The normal mind is the Way."*

*Zhaozhou asked, "Can it be approached deliberately?"*

*Nanquan said, "If you try to aim for it, you thereby turn away from it."*

*Zhaozhou said, "If one does not try, how can one know it is the Way?"*

*Nanquan said, "The Way is not in the province of knowledge, yet not in the province of unknowing. Knowledge is false consciousness, unknowing is indifference. If you really arrive at the inimitable Way, it is like space, empty and open; how can you insist on affirmation and denial?"*

*At these words, Zhaozhou was suddenly enlightened.*

### WUMEN SAYS,

Questioned by Zhaozhou, Nanquan simply crumbled and melted; he was unable to provide an explanation. As for Zhaozhou, even granting that he was enlightened, he still had to study for thirty years.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

In spring there are a hundred flowers, in autumn there is the moon;

In summer there are cool breezes, in winter there is snow.

If no idle matters hang on your mind,

Then it is a good season in the human world.

### ZEN MASTER JINGSHAN SAID,

The ancient spilled his guts all at once. The sky-scraping falcon should take advantage of the time; the tired fish resting in the shallows wastes the effort to stir up waves.

## ZEN MASTER FOJIAN'S VERSE

If you want to know the normal Way,  
 Trust nature spontaneously.  
 When you row a boat, you need to raise the oars;  
 When you ride a horse, you apply the crop.  
 If you get hungry, obtain some food;  
 And you should sleep when tired.  
 All is attained through conditions,  
 Yet what is attained is not a condition.

## ZEN MASTER GUSHAN'S VERSE

If you think the normal mind is the Way,  
 You produce more ramifications on top of ramifications.  
 If you have taken off the sweaty shirt sticking to your flesh,  
 Given a call you find eyebrows atop your eyes.

*Translator's Comments*

Nanquan and Zhaozhou have already been seen working together in the fourteenth koan, "Killing a Cat." The present koan is represented as the story of one of Zhaozhou's major awakenings, indicating its importance.

The essential point to remember in handling this koan is that the term "normal" here is a technical Zen usage. The early Japanese Zen master Dogen lamented the degeneration of Zen stemming from misunderstanding the expression "normal mind" or the saying "this mind is Buddha" to mean the ordinary mentality with its conditioned habits of thought. This is the crux of the issue in this koan, which should be examined very closely as a technical description of the normal mind as it is groomed and experienced in Zen.

Wumen's opening remark is also a technical description, which is as usual put in the form of a jibe for fools to fool with and thus demonstrate their own foolery, saving the teacher Wumen all that extra work. When he says that Nanquan couldn't provide an explanation, Wumen affirms that the experience of the normal mind, which is nothing but intimacy with being-as-is, cannot be described in words because of the limited nature of words themselves as compared with the infinity of suchness and the subtlety of the essence of mind itself.

Turning attention to Zhaozhou, Wumen remarks that he "still had to study for thirty more years" after this enlightenment. This a typically indirect way of saying that there is further development after awakening. Once you recover the unconditioned consciousness of the pristine normal mind, then you turn from spontaneous absorption in the unity of suchness to precise awareness of the differentiations within suchness, so that you may be "not blind to causality."

After realizing the timeless absolute, you return to the temporal world. To "study for thirty years" means that realization is not to be maintained at its simplest and crudest level, but should be developed to encompass all aspects of relative reality as well as absolute truth. As in the preceding koan, Wumen stressed the need for completely rounded and mature enlightenment that encompasses all aspects of enlightened knowledge.

So as usual, Wumen is not talking about Zhaozhou; this story is just a representation of an issue that concerns everyone by virtue of being conscious. The remarks of Zen master Jingshan affirm that the koan is about a very fundamental and pervasive realization, and charges those who are capable, the "falcons," with the inherent obligation to awaken this Buddha-nature.

At the same time, Jingshan reminds the intellectual faculty not to try to think its way to ineffable enlightenment. He says that ordinary thoughts and conceptions, "tired fish resting in the shallows," cannot come to grips with true reality, and only call useless attention to themselves, thus "wasting the effort to stir up waves."

The verse of Zen master Fojian (pronounced Fwaw-jyen) is also extremely enlightening in spite of its apparent simplicity. The critical points to watch are in the last two lines. "All is attained through conditions" means that even though Buddha-nature is by definition natural, it still needs to be cultivated, because consciousness can be conditioned. "Yet what is attained is not a condition" means that the essence of flexibility and openness of spontaneous awareness is not identified with anything it may perceive or any function it may potentiate. This is the pivotal point of freedom in Zen.

Finally, the verse of Zen master Gushan underscores the traditional warning not to mistake ordinary conceptual consciousness for the "normal mind" of Zen. Using classical metaphors, Gushan affirms that it is necessary to strip the mind of arbitrarily conditioned habits of thought ("take off the sweaty shirt sticking to your flesh")

in order to experience the suchness of being-as-is ("find eyebrows atop your eyes"). This is precisely what Wumen means when he concludes his verse comment with the lines, "If no idle matters hand on your mind, / then it is a good season in the human world"—only when you are not caught up in subjective imagination can you see suchness as it really is.



## PEOPLE OF GREAT POWER

Master Songyuan said, "Why is it that someone of great power cannot lift a foot?"

He also said, "Speaking out is not a matter of the tongue."

WUMEN SAYS,

Even if you get it right away, you should come to me and get a painful beating. Why? Listen!! If you want to discern real gold, see it in fire.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

Lifting a foot, one stamps over the ocean;  
Lowering the head, one looks down upon the heavens:  
The whole body has nowhere to stay;  
Please follow up with another line.

### ZEN MASTER XUTANG'S VERSE

Power cannot lift aloft, let me tell you,  
Why bother to whip a topflight horse?  
With one leap sail into the thirty-six open skies;  
When you arrive, your ordinary bones will turn immortal.

### *Translator's Comments*

Songyuan (pronounced Soong-ywen) was a thirteenth-century Zen master. Among his spiritual descendants was the distinguished Japanese pilgrim Dai-Ō, one of the founders of Zen in Japan.

The koan at hand refers to the experience of total absorption in the unity of being. Someone in this state "cannot lift a foot" because the "whole body" of this awareness fills the universe. Songyuan also says, "Speaking out is not a matter of the tongue," because this awareness

can only be expressed through the whole being and is therefore literally indescribable in the language of ordinary conceptions.

Wumen's prose comment may be even more cryptic than usual. When he says that you should get a "painful beating" even if you apprehend suchness at once, this "beating" symbolizes the impact of ongoing experience of the infinite path of being-as-is. Enlightenment is not just a momentary flash of insight into the essence of mind and the suchness of reality: After you wake up, then you have to face the day. This so-called painful beating is the process of "facing the day" after you have awakened.

Having said this, Wumen suddenly becomes crystal clear and almost completely explicit: Genuine realization of Buddha-nature, in which the unity of nirvana and samsara becomes an evident reality, is tested and refined in the "fire" of this "painful beating" that is nothing but "not being blind to causality."

In his verse, Wumen begins by describing the vastness of this consciousness of cosmic unity. Then he uses that to open up the way to see the boundlessness and infinity of the cosmos of reality. In the end all he can do is let us see for ourselves.

Finally, the verse of Zen Master Xutang (pronounced Shyw-tahng), who was the teacher of the Japanese Zen pilgrim Dai-Ō, affirms that this process of Zen realization is not a human invention but a natural law. Thus it occurs spontaneously when you follow its inherent pattern.

According to this natural law, which is also studied in Taoism, "power cannot lift aloft," in the sense that spiritual transformation cannot be forced, so "Why bother to whip a topflight horse?" The "topflight horse" is the Buddha-nature, the essence of mind itself, which is one of the same essence as enlightenment and thus can "with one leap sail into the thirty-six open skies," a Taoist term for the infinite vastness of awakened consciousness. He concludes that "When you arrive, your ordinary bones turn immortal." When you awaken, the world and everything in it will be found to have turned into suchness itself.

## YUNMEN'S TURD

*A monk asked Yunmen, "What is Buddha?"*

*Yunmen said, "A dry turd."*

WUMEN SAYS,

Of Yunmen it could be said that "when the house is poor, it's hard to get even a simple meal together; when things are busy, there's no time to write." There is a tendency to try to support schools with this dry turd; so you can see the state of affairs in Buddhism.

WUMEN'S VERSE

A flash of lightning.  
A flint struck spark;  
If you blink your eyes,  
You've already missed it.

ZEN MASTER LI-AN SAID,

A statement that startles the crowd is indeed a statement that startles the crowd; an extraordinary matter is undeniably an extraordinary matter. Great Master Yunmen could be said to have been strong and stern for a time. You should avoid biting in here.

### *Translator's Comments*

The figure of the great master Yunmen has already been seen in koans number fifteen and sixteen in this collection, "Threescore Blows" and "Putting on a Formal Vestment at the Sound of a Bell," both of which deal with the manifest world. The koan at hand also deals with the manifest world, and is of the same kind as number eighteen, "Three Pounds," which featured Yunmen's disciple Dongshan.

Wumen's prose commentary is typically artful. "When the house

is poor" means when you come to realize the poverty of thought and language in comparison to the richness of the direct experience of suchness. In metaphysical terms, "poverty" here symbolizes the transcendental nature of absolute reality as it is in itself.

In either sense Wumen can say of Yunmen that "it is hard to get even a simple meal together." Wumen seemingly chides Yunmen for his crude reply, but is actually affirming the impossibility of accurately depicting absolute reality in any relative terms.

Turning his attention to the other side of the coin, the infinity of the suchness of being-as-is, to which Yunmen summarily points with a "dry turd," Wumen makes the wry remark, "When things are busy, there's no time to write." Here, the expression "things are busy" refers to the infinity of suchness, which is endless in both complexity and extent. "There's no time to write" means that it is impossible to describe this infinity in words; so Yunmen simply notes something near at hand to represent what is everywhere.

One sense of Wumen's remarks is to reemphasize the point, made again and again in Zen comments on koans, that the use of a specific object is not meant literally. Wumen's verse comment stresses the immediacy of direct perception, faster even than thought.

The comment of Zen master Li-an (pronounced Lee-ahn) is extremely useful. He begins by explaining the use of the turd to shock people out of routine thinking. The "strength" and "sternness" of great master Yunmen that Li-an praises refer to the inadmissibility of any subjective ideas or judgments in regard to Yunmen's meaning. Zen master Li-an concludes his remarks by telling the reader to "avoid biting in" to this dry turd, meaning as usual that a superficial concern with the literal meaning of Yunmen's symbolic reply is a irrelevant distraction best avoided.

This sort of reminder still applies today. Most translators mistranslate this koan to start with, and then purport to explain the koan by superficial concern with the literal meaning of the mistranslation. This is not an ancient Zen toilet joke; even on the level of ordinary logic, its reference is elsewhere.

As far as the manifest content is concerned, Yunmen's reply alludes to a story in the Taoist classic *Chuang-tzu* involving a series of questions and answers regarding the whereabouts of the Tao, or natural law. The Taoist master acknowledges the omnipresence of the Tao, even in an object so lowly as a piece of dung.

Yunmen and some of his major disciples were known for their astounding ability to pull a line from the ocean of Chinese literature to reply to questions about Zen psychology. Although this technique requires use of the intellect, it is not and cannot be done solely by the intellect, which acts as an instrument and is not in itself the operator.

Yunmen's baffling skills in getting his mind to work on several levels of meaning with lightninglike speed reflect something of the liberation of complete Zen mastery. His sayings are often so cryptic on the surface that fakery is easy with an unsophisticated audience.

The best way to see through this is to understand all the levels at which Yunmen (or any other Zen master) simultaneously spoke. Then avoid people who are as incoherent below the surface as they are mysterious on the surface. Zen is not a game of riddles and quips, but there have always been people who make it out to be that way. "Yunmen's Turd" is a good testing koan, to see who can tell the difference between Buddhism and a pile of crap.



## KASHYAPA'S FLAGPOLE

*Ananda asked Kashyapa, "Aside from the golden-sleeved robe, what did the Buddha hand on to you?"*

*Kashyapa called, "Ananda!"*

*Ananda responded, "Yes!"*

*Kashyapa said, "Take down the flagpole in front of the gate."*

WUMEN SAYS,

If you can utter a pivotal saying here, you will personally see the congregation on Spiritual Mountain, still there intact. Otherwise, "An ancient Buddha focused on it from the start, yet still hasn't found the marvel yet."

### WUMEN'S VERSE

How was the point of the question as intimate as the point of the answer?

How many people have developed muscles in their eyes from this?

Elder brother calls, younger brother responds, bring out the family disgrace;

Not in the province of dark and light, this is a special springtime.

### *Translator's Comments*

Kashyapa has already been seen in the sixth case, "Buddha Picks Up a Flower." He was one of Gautama Buddha's main apprentices, and Zen Buddhists consider him the first master after Buddha in the transmission of Zen. According to the *Scripture of the Great Extinction*, one of the major texts of Buddhism, this Kashyapa was the only disciple not present at the death of Buddha. In esoteric tradition this

is interpreted to mean that he was truly independent and equal to the Buddha, though having realized the living truth that the Buddha realized.

According to Zen legend, Kashyapa was singled out as the Buddha's successor, represented by his inheritance of Buddha's golden-sleeved robe. When Ananda, another disciple, asked Kashyapa about the inner transmission symbolized by the outward succession, Kashyapa called him by name, using an outward representation to hint at an inner reality, the essence of the mind that asks and answers.

In ancient India, where this dialogue is supposed to have taken place, debates were signaled by hoisting a flag at the gate of the sanctuary. Having pointed to Ananda's own mind, Kashyapa tells him to take down the flagpole, signifying that there is no debate between them in the sense that the original Buddha-mind is equal in all people.

Wumen's prose comment follows up on this sense of the omnipresence of the Buddha-mind. Spiritual Mountain is a famous site of Buddha's teaching, already met with in the sixth koan. Naturally, it represents suchness, the context of enlightenment. Wumen says you will see the congregation still there when you understand this story, in the sense of realizing the inner essence of awakening that is one and the same in all times and places. If you don't understand, he says, then cast your eyes on infinity beyond all possible knowledge; this will "take your flagpole down."

Wumen's verse begins by using the icons of these two disciples of Buddha to contrast form (represented by Ananda) with essence (represented by Kashyapa). He then goes on to recommend the exercise of this discernment. Summing up the action, Wumen says, "Elder brother calls, younger brother responds." Ananda is considered the spiritual successor of Kashyapa; their interaction in this koan represents the activity of Zen teachership, which "brings out the family disgrace," a typically ironic way of speaking about enlightenment.

Enlightenment is called the family disgrace in two senses. One implication is that awakening is needed precisely because of degeneration in human consciousness, so recognition of the need for enlightenment can be called bringing out the disgrace of the family of humankind.

The other implication of enlightenment bringing out the family disgrace is that Zen masters traditionally do not claim enlighten-

ment. This attitude is not adopted out of professional humility, but because they actually do realize the infinity of reality.

Wumen concludes with a beautiful description of the experience and life of enlightenment, beyond the fluctuation of human thoughts of affirmation and denial.

Many comments of other Zen masters illustrate various aspects of this important koan. Zen master Fenyang, who was one of the pioneers of Zen koan training, said, ostensibly of Ananda, "How would he know if he didn't ask?" This means that even though Buddhature is the very essence of mind and therefore everpresent, nevertheless attention and effort is needed to bring it into consciousness.

Zen master Yunju used this koan to refer to two basic issues of Zen: "If you understand before the flagpole is taken down, you bury the ancient religion; if you understand after the flagpole is taken down, you let yourself down." This means that if you cling to outward forms as sacred in themselves, you obscure the eternal source of conscious being itself; but if you cling to annihilation of forms as truth, you deny your own life in the world.

Zen master Lingyuan remarked, "Everyone says that Kashyapa only knew how to dismantle, not how to reconstruct. What they do not realize is that he put a toxic drug in the milk that can kill people and can also enliven them, causing the twenty-eight Indian and six Chinese patriarchs of Zen to break their bones and split their skin, such that the blood drips on the road of Zen to this very day."

What this comment means to say is that the figure of Kashyapa in this koan is usually interpreted to stand for the heart of nirvana, referring specifically to his image of "taking down the flagpole." Lingyuan points out that this is a partial understanding, one that overlooks his call to Ananda, which was both a call to the essence of mind and a gesture of pointing to being-as-is.

This is the "toxic drug in the milk" that can both kill and enliven. It kills those who identify their own subjective minds with Buddhature, enlivens those who have attained nirvana and clarified their perceptions.

When Lingyuan says the Zen patriarchs "broke their bones and split their skin, such that the blood drips on the road of Zen to this very day," he means that they practiced the transcendence realized in nirvana as well as the compassion realized in being-as-is, devoting this completeness of spiritual development to the edification of others.

## NOT THINKING OF GOOD OR EVIL

*The Sixth Patriarch of Zen was pursued by Elder Ming all the way to a mountain ridge. When the Patriarch saw Ming coming, he cast the robe and bowl [of the patriarchate] onto a rock and said, "This robe symbolizes faith; could it be right to fight over it! You can take it away."*

*Ming tried to pick it up, but it was immovable as a mountain. Vacillating, in fear, Ming said, "I have come for the Teaching, not the robe. Please instruct me."*

*The Patriarch said, "Not thinking good, not thinking evil, right at this moment, what is your original face?"*

*Ming immediately attained great enlightenment. His whole body ran with sweat. In tears, he bowed and asked, "Is there any meaning beyond the esoteric intent of the esoteric words you have just spoken?"*

*The Patriarch said, "What I have just told you is not esoteric. If you turn your attention around to your own state, the secret is after all in you."*

*Ming said, "Though I went along with the assembly at Huangmei, in reality I had not seen into my own state. Now that you have pointed out a way of entry, I am like a person who drinks water and knows for himself whether it is warm or cool. Now you are my teacher."*

*The Patriarch said, "If you are thus, then you and I alike are students of the Fifth Patriarch. Keep it well on your own."*

WUMEN SAYS,

Of the Sixth Patriarch it could be said, "The matter comes from a busy house." He was so kind that it was as if he had peeled a fresh lychee, removed the seed, and put it in your mouth, so all you have to do is swallow.

## WUMEN'S VERSE

It cannot be depicted, cannot be drawn;  
 It cannot be praised enough, stop trying to sense it.  
 The original face has nowhere to hide—  
 When the world disintegrates, this does not decay.

## ZEN MASTER FENYANG'S VERSE

Few people believe in the Buddha in their own mind;  
 Unwilling to take responsibility for it, they suffer a lot of  
 cramps.  
 Arbitrary ideas, greed and anger, the wrappings of afflictions,  
 All are conditioned on attachment to the cave of ignorance.

*Translator's Comments*

The Sixth Patriarch of Zen was the last in a line of early masters who established Zen in China. The figure of the Sixth Patriarch is one of the most important icons in Zen lore, representing the universality of Zen.

Before his enlightenment, the Sixth Patriarch had been an illiterate woodcutter from a frontier area. As a young man, he was suddenly awakened to the truth of Zen one day when he happened to hear a line of a Buddhist scripture being recited in the streets of the marketplace where he sold his wood.

After this experience, the young woodcutter went to see the Buddhist master of the age, who at the time (in the seventh century) was the Fifth Patriarch of Zen.

The new illuminate found the Fifth Patriarch at a place called Huangmei (pronounced Hwong-may), near the ancient heartlands of Chinese culture, surrounded by seven hundred of the most educated and intelligent clerics of the day.

The young woodcutter from the boondocks could not read classical Chinese or speak a cultivated dialect, but the Fifth Patriarch recognized the light of enlightenment in his simple genuineness. The story of the first encounter between these two is traditionally used as a symbol of the principle that the Buddha-nature in the essence of mind transcends all ethnic and cultural difference, being inherently univer-



sal to humankind and not acquired by specialized history or conditioning.

Fearing the jealousy of the monks surrounding him, the Fifth Patriarch sent the enlightened young woodcutter to work in the mill of the training center. Since there were as many as seven hundred students at the monastery of Huangmei, there were also a large number of workers who were not clerics, but helped with the upkeep of the grounds and infrastructure of the Buddhist community. This pious tradition began in India and has continued in all countries where Buddhism has had public institutions. It was among these workers that the fledgling Sixth Patriarch was first hidden from the jealousy of the learned clerics, who naturally represent intellectual snobbery in the symbolic historiography of Zen.

Not long after that, the Fifth Patriarch retired. Everyone wanted to know who the sixth patriarch was going to be. He told them it was that illiterate woodcutter from the frontier who had been working in the mill for the last few months. When they went to look for him, the enraged clerics and scholars found that he had disappeared.

In the story underlying the koan at hand, Elder Ming was the leader of a group of those who pursued the new Sixth Patriarch in high dudgeon. History says that Elder Ming had actually been a military commander before retiring into Buddhist orders; thus he is a perfect icon for this role in this koan, which is to represent aggression as an outgrowth of arrogance and presumption.

When Ming caught up with him, the Sixth Patriarch willingly handed over the robe of the patriarchate, popularly believed to be the same robe that Buddha handed to Kashyapa. The symbolic meaning of this act is that what is essential is the heart of the teaching, not its outer dressing. If the formalities of Buddhism has become objects of ambition and contention, the Sixth Patriarch was certainly willing to give them up in order to preserve the living heart; more than willing, he was obliged.

As it turned out, Ming could not even lift the robe. The living meaning of Buddhism cannot be understood on demand, or by insisting on picking it up by preconceived ideas. Even the formalities of Buddhist practices cannot be wielded with genuine effect by those who are really just ambitious self-seekers underneath it all.

Suddenly Ming had a change of heart. He realized that what he really needed was truth, not the mere name or claim of truth. This

is also a representation of the universality of Buddha-nature in all conscious beings. Even an egotistic, compulsive, and tyrannical mentality has an opportunity to change its orientation and act through original Buddha-nature rather than through the personality of conditioned mental habits.

Then the Sixth Patriarch taught Ming an exercise in Zen introspection: "Not thinking good, not thinking evil, right at this very moment, what is your original face?" In Zen, introspection does not mean looking into your inward thoughts and feelings; it means looking into the source and essence of consciousness. "Thinking good and evil" means continuously thinking about one thing or another, and then reacting to your own thoughts emotionally and intellectually, learning to represent artificial conceptions and opinions to yourself as objective truths. In order to introspect in the Zen sense, this process of "thinking good and evil," and its preoccupation with mental contents, are suspended for the sake of clarity of vision into the impersonal essence of mind underlying all consciousness.

In *Wumen's* prose comment, he praises the Sixth Patriarch for presenting such a simple method of realization. Just as *Wumen* often makes a hidden point underlying a surface of apparent criticism or sarcasm, here he also issues a traditional warning under the surface of what looks like praise. As *Wumen* hints from the start, the method set forth here by the Sixth Patriarch is just an expedient, designed to cut directly through the tangle of confused thinking; one should not let its simplicity mislead one into a halfhearted or simplistic approach to the exercise.

The verse of Zen master Fenyang, who, it will be remembered, was one of the founders of Zen koan study, also emphasizes the purely practical aspect of the method taught by the Sixth Patriarch. When he says, "Few people believe in the Buddha in their own mind," he is not referring to religious faith as ordinarily conceived, but to the pragmatic fact that the experience of Buddha-nature is not an idea or a thought, and is therefore unfamiliar to the ordinary thinking mind.

"Unwilling to take responsibility for it," Fenyang goes on, referring to inability to avail ourselves of the Buddha-nature within because of compulsive habits of thought that obscure it, "they suffer a lot of cramps." People who are alienated from Buddha-nature and therefore restricted by their preconditioned mentalities and habits of thought can not experience the freedom of Buddhahood.

Finally, Fenyang gives the traditional diagnosis of this problem, which also indicates what the patient should avoid during the course of treatment: "Arbitrary ideas, greed and anger, the wrappings of afflictions." This is a more elaborate way of describing what the Sixth Patriarch called "thinking good and thinking evil," which can be transcended for the very fact that it is not ultimate objective reality itself, but "conditioned on attachment to the cave of ignorance." To see the "original face" of the essential mind we need to stop thinking about our own imaginings, and find "the secret in ourselves."

## DETACHMENT FROM WORDS

*Master Fengxue was asked by a monk, "‘Speech and silence involve alienation and vagueness’—how does one get through without transgression?"*

*Fengxue said, "I always remember South of the Lake in spring-time, the hundred flowers fragrant where the partridges call."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

Fengxue's mind is like lightning; finding a road, he immediately goes on it. Nevertheless, he did not entirely cut off the tongue of the ancient quoted. If you can see intimately here, you will have your own way of expression.

But try to make a statement apart from absorption in words.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

He doesn't reveal a stylish phrase;  
It's already imparted before speaking.  
If you step forward chattering,  
I know you are really at a loss.

### ZEN MASTER ZHONGFENG SAID,

This monk's question was like a flood reaching the sky, engulfing everything in its waves. Fengxue could certainly go into water without drowning, but how could he do anything about being completely immersed?

### ZEN MASTER DAHUI'S VERSE

Suddenly going out the gate, first he sees the road;  
As soon as he sets down his foot, he climbs into a boat.  
The secret of spiritual immortals is truly worth preserving—

Even parent-child intimacy does not make transmission possible.

#### ZEN MASTER FOJIAN'S VERSE

In the shadows of the colored clods, a spiritual immortal appears;

In his hand he holds a fan of scarlet gauze, screening his face.

It is urgently necessary to set your eyes on the immortal;

Don't gaze at the fan in the immortal's hand.

#### *Translator's Comments*

Zen master Fengxue (pronounced Fung-shweh) lived in the tenth century. An exceptionally brilliant master, Fengxue was one of the very last teachers of the original Linji school of Zen in his time. It was only through the work of his spiritual descendants that the ego-shattering impact of Linji Zen was preserved and transmitted to future generations. It was also through the combination of spirituality and intelligence in Fengxue and his school that Linji Zen was able to absorb the methods of other Zen schools and use them effectively even after the disappearance of the parent traditions.

The question in the koan at hand makes a reference to a pre-Zen Chinese Buddhist classic, probably the first native Chinese Buddhist work all about absolute reality as it is in itself. This was highly admired by Zen Buddhists. As someone noted for unusual development of both intelligence and insight, Fengxue is well suited to be the master icon in this story, to answer a subtle question about the ultimate truth.

The issue in the koan at hand is this: "Speech," which also means ratiocinative thinking, involves alienation from inconceivable ultimate truth, while "silence," which also means unthinking, involves vagueness about what may or may not be implied or discerned. The question is how to relate to reality without falling into either extreme. The essential point is to transcend habitual thinking without compromising precise awareness.

Here, Zen master Fengxue responds with a little bit of scenery, which as often seen in Zen lore symbolizes the direct experience of being-as-is or suchness. In its infinity, suchness is beyond speech and



thought; yet the experience of suchness cannot be a dead silence, because it contains everything.

At first, Wumen's prose comment looks like praise of Fengxue. As usual, it is really a technical description of the action, in this case direct perception of suchness. Then Wumen seems to qualify this praise, saying, "Nevertheless, he did not entirely cut off the tongue of the ancient quoted," meaning that it is still important, for practical purposes, to contemplate the original question. Only by your own experience, in Wumen's words "seeing intimately," can you "have your own way of expression." As usual, Wumen concludes by urging the reader to proceed from intellectual understanding ("absorption in words") to actual application.

Wumen's verse comment underscores the point that the real answer is in the direct experience of reality, not in clever talk. "It's already imparted before speaking" because reality is already there. So "if you step forward chattering," just paying attention to words and images, "I know you are really at a loss."

The comments of the other Zen masters cited also emphasize the practical aspect of dealing with this koan. Zhongfeng affirms that the seeker's question, which really represents concentration technique, applies to the total field of awareness and experience, and thus should be practiced in the context of all activities.

Then he goes on to describe Fengxue's answer, which really represents the effect of the technique, absorption in suchness, and concludes with a warning to avoid being so captivated by the forms and colors of suchness that the heart of nirvana is lost.

The verse of Zen master Dahui begins with a description of the immediacy of suchness, and ends with a reminder that this can only be understood in its real sense at first hand. Thus he says, "Even parent-child intimacy does not make transmission possible," meaning that reality directly experienced is your own realization and cannot be obtained from another or communicated to another as it is in itself.

Finally, the verse of Zen master Fojian presents a colorful description of the koan, not as a display of literary skill to match the sophistication of this story, but as a warning to avoid being diverted by the verbal expression, or even by the sensual experience: In order to see the point of the Zen master's indirect answer, he says, "Set your eyes

on the immortal; / Don't gaze at the fan in the immortal's hand." The aim is the "immortal," the essence of mind that is able to contact reality without alienation or vagueness, not "the fan in the immortal's hand," the scene conjured up to announce the immortal's presence.

## SERMON FROM THE THIRD SEAT

*Master Yangshan dreamed that he went to where the future Buddha Maitreya was, and was assigned to the third seat.*

*Then one of the saints there struck a gavel and said, "Today it is the turn of the one in the third seat to preach."*

*So Yangshan got up, struck the gavel, and said, "The teaching of the universal vehicle is beyond all propositions and denials. Listen clearly!"*

### WUMEN SAYS,

Tell me, was this preaching or not? Open your mouth and you miss; but keep your mouth closed and you lose. If you neither open or shut it—108,000.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

In the bright sunlight on a clear day  
He speaks of a dream in a dream.  
Making up wonders,  
He fools the whole crowd.

### ZEN MASTER BENJIAO'S VERSE

Talking about emptiness in a dream is very unusual;  
How is it possible to get beyond all propositions and denials?  
At that time, if he could have upheld the Buddha's direction,  
What need would there have been to strike the gavel in the hall?

### *Translator's Comments*

Yangshan (pronounced Yahng-shahn) was one of the greatest of the classical Zen teachers. He lived in the ninth century and studied with several of the ancient masters. Renowned for both spiritual and intel-

lectual brilliance, Yangshan had many distinguished disciples and was said to have attracted seekers from as far away as India and Central Asia. He and his teacher Guishan (pronounced Gway-shahn), who appears in a later koan, were among the very first Zen masters to construct koans deliberately, long before koans became a routine part of Zen training.

In the koan at hand, Yangshan relates a dream in which he went to the heaven where the future Buddha lives. In traditional Buddhist lore, the future Buddha who is to succeed Gautama Buddha and usher in a new era is called Maitreya, whose name means "The Loving One" or "The Kindly One." The abode of future Buddhas, furthermore, is a heavenly state called Tushita (pronounced Too-shee-tuh), which means "Satisfied" and "Happy."

Asked to give a lecture on the occasion of his dream visit to this heaven, Yangshan got up, called everyone to attention, and stated the timeless liberative teaching of Buddhism that universal absolute truth is beyond all categories of human thought. Then he closed by once again calling forth presence of mind.

Wumen poses the question, was this preaching or not? Before we can answer, he warns us that neither speech nor silence can express it. The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna (pronounced Naa-gaar-joo-nah), who was also a Zen patriarch, wrote about this pivotal issue in these terms: "Without relying on conventional usage, absolute truth cannot be expressed; without going to ultimate truth, nirvana cannot be attained."

Thus it is necessary to make use of structure, including language, in order to formulate ways of approaching ultimate truth, but it is essential to avoid being mesmerized thereby into taking those structures themselves for ultimate truth. The traditional mental posture of universalistic Buddhist practice is therefore described as "neither grasping nor rejecting." Nirvana is realized by "not grasping," suchness is experienced by "not rejecting."

Wumen concludes his prose comment, which is simply a mirror of the exercise Yangshan presented to the denizens of the state of contentment, with another warning about suchness, reminding us not to understand it vaguely and subconsciously identify it with subjective ideas: "If you neither open nor shut" your mouth, he says, meaning that if you do not have an articulate awareness and yet are not unconscious, "108,000."

"One hundred and eight thousand" what? If you go for the "what?" you will surely find at least that many possibilities. "108,000" is a symbolic number representing all the feelings, thoughts, and ideas that can come between you and objective reality.

On the brighter side, of course, Wumen's comment can also be read to mean that if you avoid the extremes of attachment and rejection, there are an infinite number of possibilities of perception, experience, appreciation, and understanding available to the liberated mind.

Wumen's verse begins by affirming Yangshan's message that ultimate reality is omnipresent, like the sunlight on a clear day. This is contrasted to the "dream in a dream," which is the conceptualized version of reality constructed by the thought habits of the subjective mind, or what Yangshan referred to as "all propositions and denials."

In the third line of Wumen's verse, "making up wonders" may be used to expose the objective unreality of subjective ideas; and it may be used to express wonder at what Buddhist scripture calls the "magic of knowledge." The magic of knowledge is the capacity of the mind to apprehend a total field of experience as one unified reality, and also to handle order, structure, and logic with full awareness of the "magical" nature of mental construction.

When Wumen says in the end that Yangshan's scenario "fools the whole crowd," he again warns us not to be captivated by the outward appearance of this exercise when focusing on the mental posture of balance that it is designed to foster.

As usual, at the same time and in the same words Wumen indirectly makes a metaphysical statement about the nature of "knowledge." Being in the conventional sense a matter of consensus by definition, in comparison to absolute truth it is as subjective as a dream.

This statement and this realization have an unsuspected depth of intricacy, and no one should expect to understand them at one reading or at first thought. While you try to understand the structure of this meditation, cut through any confusing thoughts that arise by asking yourself, "Who dreams the dreamer of the dream?"

The verse of Zen master Benjiao (pronounced Bun-jiao) tells us that when we practice and realize this teaching of Buddha, there is no need for any special mention of it, because our direct experience of everything is a reminder of its truth and living reality. Thus it is best



to practice and realize it in the midst of everything, without telling yourself you are doing so at all.

But if you get to feeling self-satisfied along the way, you can find out if you are still awake by observing your reaction to the crack of the Zen gavel.

## TWO MONKS ROLL UP A SCREEN

*Master Fayan came up for consultation before the communal meal. He pointed to a bamboo screen, and two monks then both went to roll it up. Fayan said, "One gain, one loss."*

WUMEN SAYS,

Tell me, whose gain is it, whose loss? If you can focus a single eye here, you will know where the master failed. Even so, it is of utmost importance to avoid discussing this in terms of gain and loss.

WUMEN'S VERSE

Rolling up, there's utter clarity, penetrating space;  
But even space does not accord with our source.  
Better to let go of everything, from space on,  
For such subtle secrecy that nothing can get in.

### *Translator's Comments*

Fayan (pronounced Fah-yen) was one of the great classical masters. He was born in the late ninth century and lived well into the tenth century. Among his numerous enlightened disciples were four National Teachers of Chinese and Korean kingdoms. As a figure in Zen iconography, Fayan is noted for subtle dialectic.

The koan at hand is a story of a test, much like koan number eleven, "Testing Hermits." Later the story of the test came to be employed as a test itself, by virtue of its capacity for producing doubt in the mind. Many people imagine that the Zen master was saying one monk was right and one was wrong, then puzzle over the apparent conundrum of which was which: *This* is "one loss." Some people see the Zen master's test: *This* is "one gain."

Also, when anything is taken up, something else is left aside: This

too is "one gain, one loss." The point of the Zen exercise using this perspective is not to seek gain and avoid loss *per se*, but to note the working of "one gain, one loss" in what you do and what goes on around you. This is a way to enlarge your perspective on events and make the most of the power of choice.

In Wumen's prose comment, he immediately indicates that the function of this koan is testing and doubt-producing. When you see the whole perspective, he continues, you will know "where the master failed," in the sense that you will see the ambiguity that looks like partiality or arbitrary discrimination. Finally Wumen reveals the secret of this koan, saying "it is of utmost importance to avoid discussing this in terms of gain and loss."

In his verse comment, Wumen speaks of the absolute: "Rolling up" seems to refer to the rolling up of the blind, but it actually stands for putting away all conjecture and speculation. This produces a state of "utter clarity, penetrating space," which might be called viewing true suchness with the eye of nirvana.

Typically, Wumen goes on to discuss the limitation of this exercise when pursued alone to the exclusion of knowledge of differentiation, cautioning the buoyant practitioner of spacelike consciousness that "even space does not accord with our source." This has two meanings. One is that the heart of nirvana does not mean being "spaced out," or empty-headed. The second is that nirvana alone is not the source of reality, it is the way to the source. The first level of warning is for errant practitioners; the second is for genuine practitioners.

In the third line Wumen describes what Buddhists called the "emptiness of emptiness," which you realize when you "let go of everything *from space on*." This means that you begin by the exercise of a mind like space, containing the whole universe yet in essence not fixed or obstructed anywhere, then progress from this level of detachment to a more advanced level that includes detachment from detachment itself. This is the state when samsara and nirvana are united so perfectly that the distinction between them is a matter of "such subtle secrecy that nothing can get in."

The comments of other Zen masters also reinforce the sense of this koan as a testing instrument, and also tell how to look at the story.

Zen master Huanglong (pronounced Hwong-loong) said, "Fayan had a sharp sword in his hand, killing and giving life according to the

time. Both monks went at the same time to roll up the screen: Tell me, which one gained and which one lost? Do you understand? For mundane affairs, just use impartiality to decide them; the human mind can hardly be made equal to the disk of the moon."

Huanglong's final remark means that vision of absolute reality is not obtained through human discrimination.

Zen master Nanjian (pronounced Nahn-jyen) remarked, "Fayan was probing, the two monks were chasing a clod. Even if the wrap-up was quick, there was still no avoiding biting the dust on level ground."

The expression "chasing a clod" likens delusion to a dog that is hit with a clod of earth thrown by a man, then angrily chases the clod instead of the man. The image is of the human mind becoming captivated, deceived, and even tormented by its own thoughts and constructions, never turning attention to the ultimate source of thought itself. The final remark that there is no avoiding "biting the dust on level ground" refers to the human proneness to automatic thinking that this koan exposes.

Zen master Caoqi (pronounced Tsao-chee) reinforced these observations when he said, "Old Fayan sure had a magic spearhead on the tip of his finger! The two monks didn't manage to dodge it, and couldn't avoid losing their lives. If they had been of the right stuff, they'd have flipped over his chair the minute he pointed at the screen." The magic spearhead is the testing function of his action. The "two monks" who didn't manage to dodge it are those who think in terms of either/or, gain and loss. Those with the "right stuff" of genuine insight and complete perspective, in contrast, see that what looks like a question is in fact an answer, thus turning the test into a lesson, and thereby "flipping over" the pivotal basis of understanding.

One of the greatest tests in Zen koan study is the fact that so much Zen literature contains coherent but superficial meanings as well as coherent and profound meanings. By understanding people's understanding, it is thereby possible to discern whether they are shallow in their perceptions or whether they see below the surface. Yet an observer may also understand understanding either superficially or deeply. That is why remembering the principle of "one gain, one loss" helps us wake up completely.

## IT IS NOT MIND OR BUDDHA

*A monk asked Master Nanquan, "Is there a truth not spoken to people?"*

*Nanquan said, "There is."*

*The monk asked, "What is the truth not spoken to people?"*

*Nanquan said, "It is not mind, it is not Buddha, it is not a thing."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

Confronted with this question, Nanquan could only put forth all he had; he was quite a dotard.

#### WUMEN'S VERSE

Meticulous instruction diminishes your virtue;  
The unspoken truly has effect.  
Even if the ocean transmute,  
It's never conveyed to you.

### *Translator's Comments*

Nanquan was the great early classical master met with in koan number fourteen, "Killing a Cat," and koan number nineteen, "The Normal Is the Way." It may be useful to recall here that Nanquan's main function as an icon in Zen lore is to remind seekers that absolute reality in itself transcends any conception we may form of it.

The present koan is also of this nature. According to Zen Buddhist understanding, there is no way to actually describe the direct experience of reality as such; you can only realize it for yourself. This is metaphorically described as a "taboo name," the ultimate reality that can only be witnessed and cannot be spoken.

In practical terms, Nanquan's answer describes a three-part exercise in detachment. It should be remembered, of course, that in Bud-



dhism the practice and experience of detachment do not mean rejection or destruction of that from which one detaches. With that understood, the process Nanquan depicts is clear. "It is not mind" refers to the stage of detachment from thoughts, "it is not Buddha" refers to the stage of detachment from clear consciousness; "it is not a thing" refers to the stage of detachment from immediate perception.

What lies beyond this procedure is the experience that cannot be spoken. In both his prose and verse comments, Wumen's extreme reserve further underscores the point that this process is something one works through, not something that yields meaning to theoretical discussion.

In his prose remark Wumen says Nanquan "put forth all he had," indicating that this roundabout reference to the "unspoken truth" encompasses the full range of initiatory practice.

In his verse Wumen deliberately stresses the idea that the unspoken and unexpressed in Nanquan's answer cannot be filled in by words. This is the usual invitation to see for ourselves.

## LONG HAVE I HEARD

*Once Deshan questioned Master Longtan until late at night. Longtan said, "It is late; why don't you retire?"*

*So Deshan said good-bye and raised the screen to go. Seeing that it was pitch dark outside, he turned around and said, "It's dark outside."*

*So Longtan lit a paper torch and handed it to Deshan. As Deshan reached out to take the lamp, Longtan blew it out.*

*At this Deshan suddenly had an insight. He bowed to Longtan, who asked him, "What principle have you seen?"*

*Deshan said, "From now on I won't doubt the utterances of the Zen masters."*

*The next day Longtan went up in the hall and said, "There is someone here whose fangs are like sword trees, whose mouth is like a bowl of blood. Even if you hit him with a stick he won't turn his head. Some day he will establish our Way on the summit of a solitary peak."*

*Deshan subsequently placed his commentaries in front of the teaching hall, took up a torch, and said, "Even to investigate all the mystic discernments is like a hair tossed into space; even to exhaust the pivotal workings of the world is like a drop thrown into a gigantic canyon." Then he burned his commentaries, bowed, and left.*

## WUMEN SAYS,

Before he left northern China, Deshan was in a state of high dudgeon; he made his way South, determined to destroy the teaching of a special transmission outside of doctrine.

On the road, Deshan asked a woman if he could buy some refreshments from her. She said, "What writings are you carrying in your knapsack, O Worthy?"

Deshan replied that they were commentaries on the *Diamond Cutter Scripture*.

The woman said, "How about where it says in that scripture, 'Past mind cannot be grasped, present mind cannot be grasped, future mind cannot be grasped'—which mind do you want to refresh, O Worthy?"

Faced with this question, Deshan could only frown. But even so, he did not die at the woman's words; he asked her if there were any Zen teachers around. The woman said there was a master Longtan a couple of miles away.

When he got to Longtan, Deshan experienced complete defeat. It could be said that his earlier words did not match his later talk.

As for Longtan, he very much seems to have been unconscious of being unseemly, because of his compassion for a child. Seeing the other had some live embers in him, Longtan hurriedly took some foul water and doused him, putting the fire out. When you look, it's a laughable scene.

#### WUMEN'S VERSE

Hearing the name is not like seeing the face,  
 Seeing the face is not like hearing the name.  
 Even though he managed to save his nostrils,  
 Nonetheless he blinded his eyes.

#### ZEN MASTER BAIYUN'S VERSE

When light and dark overcome each other, that is not worth  
 talking about;  
 As long as there is any interpretation, this is not yet intimacy.  
 When the paper torch went out, the eyes emerged,  
 Breaking through the empire of China, finding no one at all.

#### ZEN MASTER BAONING'S VERSE

All at once a cascade comes down before the cliff,  
 In the middle of the night, the sun is bright in the palm of his  
 hand.  
 Opening wide his mouth, he expresses the energy of spirit;  
 With whom will he travel freely throughout the world?

#### ZEN MASTER DAHONG'S VERSE

When light and dark form each other, things are vague and  
 remote;

Who would have known the back of his head would gush with  
 spiritual light?  
 All in all he drew the line, cutting off the path of a thousand  
 distinctions;  
 South, North, East, West, he arrives at his native village.

### *Translator's Comments*

Deshan has already been seen in koan number thirteen, "Deshan Carrying His Bowl." Longtan (pronounced Loong-tahn) was his Zen teacher, otherwise little known. Like Nanquan, Deshan's iconographical function in Zen lore is mostly quite specialized.

The koan at hand, which purports to represent Deshan's Zen awakening, is a good example of the symbolism of the figure of Deshan in Zen koan literature. Overall, the story illustrates a sudden shift from ratiocinative conceptual consciousness to immediate all-at-once cosmic consciousness.

In the main recital, the "darkness outside" represents unknown dimensions of reality beyond the confines of ordinary perception and thought. The Zen teacher hands the hesitant seeker a paper torch, which represents the ordinary exercise of the intellect, thus demonstrating the incommensurability of the tiny light of the torch with the immense vastness of the dark. This simple action further shows how the impression of illumination given off by the torch depends on keeping the eyes trained on the immediate vicinity of the torch itself, just as reason only works within its own self-circumscribed parameters.

Having absorbed the seeker in this overwhelming realization, the teacher suddenly extinguishes the little "light" of conceptual thought, all at once letting the rest of Deshan's mind sense the immense "dark" of the unknown infinite. To borrow some of the images of Zen master Baiyun (pronounced Bye-ywun) and Zen master Dahong (pronounced Dah-hoong), this symbolizes the experience of nirvana and the awakening of "spiritual light," a level of consciousness that is more fundamental and more subtle than the contrasting "light" and "dark" of formal knowledge and ignorance.

At the end of the main recital, the newly awakened Deshan burns his books, which were in fact books about books about some of the ways to getting to reality. This means that he no longer used them

for the purposes of academic discussion or philosophical speculation, but digested them in the fire of direct experience. Deshan's own words on the occasion are often quoted in later Zen lore to describe the contrast between the experiences of ordinary thinking and academic intellectual exercise on the one hand and the experience of direct perception of reality on the other. Notice that all the verses of the Zen masters also talk about this.

Longtan himself, the ancient master of the koan, also eulogizes Deshan in terms suggestive of nirvana, with images of fangs, a bowl of blood, indifference, and solitariness, all of which evoke the image of esoteric death. Zen Taoists refer to this as death of the human mentality in order that the immortal spirit may live.

Wumen's prose comment gives some background to this koan, which should as usual be understood in a pragmatic sense rather than a literary or folkloric sense.

Northern China was the ancient seat of Chinese civilization, and represents conformity and rigidity. The South, in contrast, means the process and destination of Buddhism, which is liberation. Deshan himself was a Buddhist scholar who was very much attached to formal learning, and very much attached to the feeling of being one of those who enjoyed this dignity.

Buddhist scholars have often had a problem with Zen masters, because the scholars specialized in formal exegesis of particular texts and doctrines, while the Zen masters were not attached to any school of dogma. This is why the scholar Deshan was in "high dudgeon" and desirous of destroying the Zen teaching of a "special transmission outside of doctrine" through direct experience. This schism was something like the Churchmen versus the Gnostics in terms of Christian history.

Deshan the scholar was stopped in his tracks by a woman selling tea and cakes by the roadside. As it happens, this was an enlightened individual, many of whom were known to set up roadside stalls such as this in order to support themselves and also to contact the people, both Zen seekers and ordinary folk, who passed by that way. Naturally, many such people lived in the areas of China where numerous genuine Zen masters were active.

The woman in this story could see Deshan's condition, so she set a trap for him, using the very book that he studied, a popular text known as the *Diamond Cutter Scripture*, which is in one sense all



about nonattachment to form. As a matter of fact, the Sixth Patriarch of Zen, who was seen in koan number twenty-three, "Not Thinking of Good or Evil," first awakened on hearing a single line from this scripture: "You should enliven the mind without dwelling on anything."

By the way, notice that while the text Deshan studied was well known, the woman did not necessarily know what it was when she started to set her trap. There were actually many possibilities, including some very arcane and difficult treatises studied by many scholarly clerics. But leaving aside chance and prescience, we can also say she wasn't being either foolhardy or bold: One of the marks of genuine Zen adepts is that they can actually interpret any authentic Buddhist system coherently, even if they have never studied it formally.

There have been several masters in history especially noted for their remarkable talents in this area, but the ability is very widespread in records of real Zen Buddhists of the past. Of course, many Zen masters cultivated this ability through firsthand study of Buddhist doctrines and schools, either deliberately or as a matter of course. In ancient China, however, laywomen were not usually supposed or allowed to obtain as much formal education as men, so for the purposes of symbolic iconography the woman in this story represents essential understanding as contrasted to acquired knowledge.

As for the portion of scripture cited by the woman, see how the question she tags on has the same function as so many of Women's comments, to signal to the reader that this is an exercise. The point is not to understand conceptually how or why past, present, and future mind cannot be grasped: The message is to use this line of scripture as a lens to focus attention in a novel way, in an attempt to reflect the ineffable in the mirror of consciousness.

One mistake intellectuals commonly make is not really trying to focus the mind in this way because they already know it is theoretically impossible to grasp the essence of mind anyway. The secret here is that the "cannot be grasped" refers to method, in the sense that it means not grasping thoughts as they come and go, and it also refers to state of awareness, in the sense that it means direct consciousness of the ethereal nature of awareness itself underlying all mental events.

In Zen lore, Zen adepts, especially concealed ones, commonly chide scholars and priests for not practicing what they study and

preach. This is a classic example. Wumen says, "Faced with this question, Deshan could only frown." The conventional mind cannot even perceive, let alone handle, the vastness beyond its preconceived boundaries. "But even so," Wumen goes on, "he did not die at the woman's words," in the dual sense that he did not use this impasse to transcend his circle of assumptions and doubts all at once, nor did he let it destroy his last chance by allowing it to inflame his egotistic wrath. What he did do was continue his search for a Zen master, only now not to contend but to learn.

Deshan's "complete defeat," in Wumen's classical terms, was the final submission to his limited intellect to the realization that infinity is not an idea but an experience. "His earlier words did not match his later talk" in the sense that the idea and the experience are not the same thing; as Wumen says in his verse, "Hearing the name is not like seeing the face, / Seeing the face is not like hearing the name."

Wumen concludes his prose comment with one of his usual warnings to get the essential point in the effect of the action, while avoiding entanglement in the superficial appearance of the story. When a Zen master is said to be "unconscious of being unseemly because of compassion for a child," it means that the method or technique of teaching employed is not a personal predilection but a temporary expedient devised for the needs of a particular individual or type of seeker.

To say that the Zen master is "unconscious of being unseemly" has several levels of meaning. In one sense, it means that imitations of his act ("unseemliness") are not part of his intention. In another sense it means that Zen masters are willing, when necessary, to employ means of teaching that cannot be understood in conventional terms (and are therefore "unseemly"). And it also means that the sayings and actions of Zen masters have covert ("unconscious") meanings that are often not at all what the sayings and actions seem to mean (so the surface event is "unseemly" in comparison to the inner intent).

At the conclusion of his verse comment, Wumen turns to an even higher level of integration of insight. Here he points out that the cosmic consciousness is still only part of complete Zen enlightenment, and thus stories like this should not be taken to represent the whole issue: "Even though he managed to save his nostrils, / Nonetheless he blinded his eyes." As another Zen proverb says, "The heart of nir-

vana is relatively easy to attain; knowledge of differentiation is hard to clarify." The last lines of the verses of Zen master Baoning and Zen master Dahong also conclude with a reminder to the seeker to "see both sides" and fully integrate the heart of nirvana with objective knowledge of the world.

## NOT THE WIND, NOT THE BANNER

*Once when the wind was whipping the banner of a temple, the Sixth Patriarch of Zen witnessed two monks debating about it. One said the banner was moving, one said the wind was moving.*

*They argued back and forth without attaining the principle, so the Patriarch said, "This is not the movement of the wind, nor the movement of the banner; it is the movement of your minds."*

*The two monks were both awestruck.*

### WUMEN SAYS,

It is not the wind moving, not the banner moving, not the mind moving: Where do you see the Zen patriarch? If you can see intimately here, then you will realize that the monks were buying iron but got gold, while the Zen patriarch, unable to conceal his enlightenment, divulged it on this occasion.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

Wind, banner, minds moving—

Their crimes are listed on one indictment.

If you only know how to open your mouth,

You won't realize when you're trapped in words.

### ZEN MASTER BALING SAID,

The Zen master said it is not the wind moving, and not the banner moving. If it is not the wind or the banner, where is it evident?

If there is anyone who can play the host for the Zen master, come forth and meet with me.

*Translator's Comments*

The great Sixth Patriarch of Zen has already been seen in koan number twenty-three, "Not Thinking of Good or Evil." According to Zen lore, after he disappeared from sight to avoid the wrath of jealous clerics, the Sixth Patriarch lived among mountain hunters for fifteen years. The present koan is the traditional story of the occasion of his emerging from concealment.

The essential point of the story is to illustrate how we think about our thoughts and imagine we have thereby explained things. Judging by our conceptual constructions rather than by direct perceptions, we wind up entrapped in our own points of view. We may think we are talking about realities when all we are doing is talking about what we think. As the koan says, this can be a shocking realization.

In his prose comment, Wumen adds that it is not the mind moving either. Here he is not contradicting the Zen patriarch; he is making a pragmatic distinction between the essence of mind (which does not fluctuate) and the functions of mind (which do fluctuate). When Wumen asks, "Where do you see the Zen patriarch?" he refers to the essence of mind as it is in itself, not as it is refracted in fragmentary mental functions. This is what Zen master Baling means by calling for "anyone who can play the host for the Zen master," referring to the universal mind that is at the very root of all consciousness.

Wumen goes on to say that if you realize this universal mind, you see how the monks were buying iron but got gold: First, they were haggling over mental constructions but instead received witness of mind itself; and second, they were expecting to find an answer in the form of a metaphysical principle, but instead got their reply in the form of a direct insight.

Wumen's verse begins by describing the relativity of the perceived world and the perceiving mind. It ends by reminding us that if we only use our conceptualizing minds we will only get theoretical answers; if we want actual experience of understanding, we need understanding through actual experience. Zen master Baling's verse echoes the call to that in us which understands through direct experience. It is through inwardly asking ourselves the question he poses that the living meaning of Zen becomes the normal condition of consciousness.



## THE VERY MIND ITSELF IS BUDDHA

*Damei asked Mazu, "What is Buddha?"*

*Mazu said, "The very mind itself is Buddha."*

WUMEN SAYS,

If you can get the point directly, you wear Buddha's clothing, eat Buddha's food, speak Buddha's language, do what the Buddha does; that is, you are Buddha.

But even so, how many people has Damei drawn into mistakenly approving the zero point of the scale! How could they know to wash their mouths out for three days when they say the word "Buddha"? Had he been enlightened, he would have covered his ears and run away on being told that mind itself is Buddha.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

On a clear day, in the bright sunlight,

Don't go searching around;

To go on asking "what"

Is to protest your innocence while holding the loot.

### *Translator's Comments*

Damei (pronounced Dah-may) and Mazu (pronounced Mah-dzoo) lived in the eighth century. Mazu was one of the greatest Zen masters of all time. He is said to have guided as many as one hundred and thirty-nine disciples to enlightenment.

There is little to be said about this koan. Wumen beings his prose comment as usual with a technical description of the experience of the koan. The apparently paradoxical statements in the second part of his comment warn against a typical misunderstanding, which is

to construe "the very mind itself" to refer to the ordinary subjective mentality with its conditioned thought habits.

This traditional warning is issued with supreme clarity by the great Japanese Zen master Dogen in his commentary on this koan: "When they hear tell of 'mind itself,' what the ignorant suppose it means is that ordinary people's thinking awareness without awakened aspiration for enlightenment is itself Buddha. This is a consequence of never having met an enlightened teacher."

Thus the practice and understanding of Zen makes a distinction between the false mind and the true mind; this is utterly critical for Zen realization. The main difficulty in Zen, from this point of view, is to give up seeking for a theoretically imagined enlightenment in order to experience the mind in its natural purity by direct intuitive insight and spontaneous understanding.

## ZHAOZHOU CHECKS A WOMAN

*A monk asked a woman, "Which way is the road to the sacred mountain Taishan?"*

*The woman said, "Go right straight ahead."*

*When the monk had gone a few steps, the woman said, "A fine monk—and so he goes!"*

*Later a monk told Zhaozhou about this. Zhaozhou said, "Wait till I check out this woman for you."*

*The next day Zhaozhou went and asked her the same question; and the woman also answered in the same way. Zhaozhou returned and said to his group, "I have checked out the woman of Taishan for you."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

The woman only knew how to sit there and scheme in her tent, unaware when she ran into a rebel. As for old Zhaozhou, he skillfully used the device of sneaking into the camp and removing the barricades; but he had none of the marks of great people. When you bring them up for examination, both of them had faults.

But tell me, at what point did Zhaozhou check out the woman?

### WUMEN'S VERSE

Since the question was the same,  
The reply was also similar.  
There is sand in the rice,  
Thorns in the mud.

### ZEN MASTER FENYANG'S VERSE

Old Lady Zen on the road to the holy Mount Tai—  
South, North, East, West—myriad myriad thousand.

Zhaozhou's checking people is hard to understand—  
Coming and going, his straw sandals were worn clear through.

#### ZEN MASTER HUANGLONG NAN'S VERSE

Outstanding from the community is Zhaozhou;  
The woman's test was out of the blue.  
Now the four seas are clear as mirrors;  
Let travelers not make enemies of the road.

#### ZEN MASTER YUNXI'S VERSE

On the road to Taishan, a white-headed woman;  
Endless travelers have passed by, how many times!  
Of the hidden gate to the direct way, people are not aware;  
So Zhaozhou made a special trip to cut off the confusion.

#### ZEN MASTER TUSHUAI'S VERSE

Go right straight ahead, go right straight ahead,  
Not following the pointing finger itself, not going the same old  
    way:  
People who are robust and hardy  
Walk alone in the universe.

### *Translator's Comments*

Taishan is Mount Wutai, the northern of the Five Holy Mountains of China. It was believed to be an abode of the great Buddhist saint Manjushri (pronounced Mon-joo-shree), who is the supernal personification of wisdom in Buddhist iconography. At the time of this story, Taishan drew countless pilgrims, even from as far away as India.

This koan is about "testing" and "checking," like the early one about the same master Zhaozhou testing two hermits; so it can really fool you if you do not have independent vision.

This koan is also about the integration of practice and realization, so it can show whether you are in the habit of forcing conclusions where there are only processes.

In very simple terms, a central issue revolves around the way one interprets "right straight ahead"—literally or figuratively. The Zen

master Zhaozhou certainly demonstrates a straightforward approach to the question raised.

Wumen begins his prose comment in one of his usual ways, with a crack that looks like criticism but basically describes an essential point or state of the koan in a functional or technical manner. What he means is that the type of device the woman used can only expose those who respond to it, and does not necessarily reveal anything about those who do not.

Wumen goes on to treat the Zen master in the same way, acknowledging his mastery of probing technique, especially noting Zhaozhou's unobtrusive subtlety ("he had none of the marks of great people"), which could be extremely effective under the right circumstances, but could also go completely unnoticed and therefore be in that sense useless for study.

Wumen concludes this portion of his prose comment with the remark that there exist incompleteness and ambiguity in both the method of the woman and the method of Zhaozhou, for the reasons just described. Of course, that very realization is itself incomplete and ambiguous, which is why it puts us to the test. Thus Wumen goes ahead and asks the reader, "At what point did Zhaozhou check out the woman?"

Wumen's verse comment begins with a lulling truism, mirroring the apparent everyday ordinariness of the action in the koan. Then he suddenly states the shocking reality that it is not as simple as it seems, that there are unexpected complications in the Zen master's test.

Although it is traditionally considered very difficult, there is something about this koan that is obvious for those who have already seen koan number eleven about testing hermits. But there is also an extra subtlety in this koan, although it is one that is also obvious when you see it. It is better for the reader to see this independently, but I have quoted verses of four Zen masters to help.

For the purposes of illustration, I combine the final lines of these four verses into a single poem, to show something about the living meaning of this koan:

Zhaozhou made a special trip to cut off the confusion;  
 Coming and going, his sandals were worn clear through.  
 Let travelers not make enemies of the road;  
 Walk alone in the universe.



## AN OUTSIDER QUESTIONS BUDDHA

*An outsider questioned Buddha in these terms: "I do not ask about the spoken, I do not ask about the unspoken."*

*The Buddha just sat there.*

*The outsider said in praise, "World Honored One, you are very kind, very compassionate; opening up the clouds of my confusion, you have enabled me to attain penetration." Then he paid respects and left.*

*Ananda subsequently asked Buddha, "What did the outsider realize, that he uttered this praise and left?"*

*Buddha said, "Like a good horse, he goes as soon as he sees the mere shadow of the whip."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

Ananda was a disciple of Buddha, but even so he did not match the outsider's insight.

Now tell me, how far apart are an outsider and a disciple of Buddha?

#### WUMEN'S VERSE

Walking on a sword blade,  
Running on an ice edge,  
Without going through any steps  
He lets go over a cliff.

#### ZEN MASTER BAIYUN'S VERSE

Ten thousand fathoms deep, the cold pool is clear to the very  
bottom;  
A brocade carp in the still of the night travels toward the light.  
With a tug of the pole, it comes up, following the hook;

On the surface of the water, indistinct, the light of the moon is scattered.

#### ZEN MASTER BAONING'S VERSE

Night fell on him passing by, so he lodged in the wild weeds;  
When he managed to open his eyes, the sky was completely light.

With an empty heart and bare feet, he goes back home singing;  
On the road the travelers already are not few.

#### ZEN MASTER GUMU'S VERSE

Snow covering a deciduous forest, all is one color;  
Clear light above and below engulfs the sky.  
A wood gatherer stands at the ford, cold;  
For whom is the distant full moon white?

### *Translator's Comments*

In Buddhist literature, an "outsider" overtly refers to a non-Buddhist, especially a non-Buddhist philosopher or religious mendicant. In Zen symbolic language, "outsiders" are those who are unaware of the Buddha-nature within their essential minds and therefore cling to something "outside." In this case, everything is "outside," even abstract ideas about the nature of ultimate truth.

The question posed by the outsider in this koan refers to what Buddhists call emptiness, a reference to ultimate truth. The great illuminate Nagarjuna defined emptiness as "departure from all views." The outsider's indirect reference to the "spoken" and the "unspoken" is a traditional way of referring to the totality of all possible notions about reality, all that can be conceived as well as all that is beyond conception. In simpler terms, the outsider asks the Buddha if there is any realization that transcends understanding of the relative world and the absolute truth.

The classical Buddhist definition of emptiness as "departure from all views" means, for one thing, that fixed ideas and opinions crowd consciousness and blind the clarity of direct insight. Buddhism often illustrates the limitations of all categories of thought, in order to shift attention to a more direct yet more comprehensive mode of aware-

ness. This is what the "outsider" was getting at: how to make the leap from the boundaries of conceptual consciousness into the infinity of enlightened knowledge.

In reply, "The Buddha just sat there." A number of koans are built on this very same model; and the traditional warning of the masters is this: "Don't go to the silence to understand." In the great Nagarjuna's classical statement just cited, after defining "emptiness" as "departure from all views," he immediately adds, "but those who hold to the view of emptiness cannot be saved." This is an incalculably important point, as the rest of the koan demonstrates.

The outsider in the story obviously did not take Buddha's silence as silence (for that would have been about the spoken or unspoken); as Buddha himself said, "He goes as soon as he sees the mere shadow of the whip." Buddha's silence, in other words, is an indirect teaching, a "shadow of the whip," not negation or assent, but a "penetration" of all subjective ideas of any kind. Look *through* the window, not *at* it.

As Wumen notes in his prose comment, Ananda was a disciple of Buddha. In history, Ananda was Buddha's secretary and memorized many of Buddha's discourses; so in Zen iconography, Ananda represents formal learning. The point of Wumen's comparison between Ananda and the outsider is that formal learning does not in itself realize the same effect as direct insight.

Summing up as usual with a question to bring the koan alive, Wumen asks how far apart an outsider and a disciple of Buddha are. On the other hand, he asks us to see how a "disciple of Buddha" can be an outsider by attachment to dogmatic understanding. On the other hand, he asks us to see how an "outsider" can become a disciple of Buddha by direct awakening to the naturally real.

Wumen's verse comment is exceptionally sharp, illustrating the keen focus of the exercise represented by the outsider's question, and the swift response of the effect represented by the outsider's reaction to Buddha's reply.

As for the beautiful verse comments of other Zen masters on this prototypical koan, in spite of their colorful surface content, they can be understood quite readily as structural analyses of the koan.

The first two lines of Zen master Baiyun's verse describe the state of the outsider as he came to Buddha. The third line refers to the Buddha simultaneously testing and teaching the outsider. The last

line acknowledges the awakening of the outsider, but makes careful note of the fact that no "content" of the awakening is specifically expressed, and warns the reader not to project any subjective ideas on the outsider's insight.

The first line of Zen master Baoning's verse symbolizes the technical definition of an "outsider" as someone in the "night" ("dark") of ignorance, lost in the "wild weeds" of arbitrary thoughts and subjective ideas. The second line describes his awakening as the realization that ultimate reality is of itself clear ("the sky was completely light"), having been obscured only by our subjective imaginings. The third line depicts the outsider after his awakening, now liberated from the burden of subjective views. The last line affirms that this potential is in everyone, and also leaves a typically subtle reminder to avoid thinking of the Buddha's reply and the outsider's realization as a state of empty nothingness.

Zen master Gumu's verse begins with symbolic reference to vision of total unity of being (line one) and insight into absolute emptiness (line two). Then he goes on to describe the outsider having left aside all of his intellectual holdings (line three), and concludes with an invitation to the reader to look into the root of the matter, the essence of mind.

## NOT MIND, NOT BUDDHA

*A monk asked Mazu, "What is Buddha?"  
Mazu said, "Not mind, not Buddha."*

WUMEN SAYS,

If you can see this, you are a graduate of Zen.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

When you meet a swordsman on the road, draw;  
If you do not meet a poet, don't recite.  
When you meet people, tell thirty percent;  
Don't give away the whole thing.

### ZEN MASTER DAHUI'S VERSE

"Mind itself is Buddha"—don't seek arbitrarily.  
"Not mind, not Buddha"—stop searching elsewhere.  
Snowflakes fly over the flames of a glowing furnace:  
A dot of coolness removes the torment of the heat.

### *Translator's Comments*

The great master Mazu was met in koan number thirty, "The Very Mind Itself Is Buddha."

In the simplest possible terms, "Not mind, not Buddha" means Buddhahood is not the temporally conditioned mentality with its compulsive habits of thought, and is not any idea or image of "Buddha" that this mentality can conceive.

In an even deeper pragmatic sense, "not mind" refers to detachment from thoughts, "not Buddha" refers to detachment from undifferentiated clarity as a mental state or object in itself.

The next step cannot be communicated directly from one person



to another, because it is the individual's firsthand experience of real suchness.

In another koan connected with this famous line of teaching, Mazu explains how teaching that "mind is Buddha" represents an expedient technique to stop confused imagination and wishful thinking about Buddhahood: A seeker asked Mazu, "Why do you say mind is Buddha?"

Mazu said, "To get children to stop crying."

The seeker asked, "After the crying stops, then what?"

Mazu said, "Not mind, not Buddha."

Wumen's one-line prose comment seems completely straightforward, but like most such Zen sayings it contains a concealed "hook." According to many Zen classics, at every stage of the Way some people come to feel that what they have experienced is all there is. Does a graduate of Zen still have anything to learn?

Wumen's verse comment describes the advanced study of the infinite knowledge of differentiation in suchness. This includes the science of objective communication, which requires a Zen master to discern the level of an individual's understanding in order to establish meaningful interaction leading to a meeting of minds.

This comment also hints that we should avoid trying to apply koans like this out of order, which is exactly what happens when sayings like "mind is Buddha" turn into dogma and cliché.

Wumen concludes with another multiple *entendre* alluding to the endless infinity of reality, the impossibility of capturing everything in words, and the need for people to experience direct perception of reality themselves in order to attain full understanding of what little can be hinted about it.

The verse of Zen master Dahui summarizes these points. In the first line he says that "Mind itself is Buddha" was a teaching designed to still the restless mind seeking an imagined reality. But there were yet those who went on to try to understand this Buddha-mind by thinking about it with their own thoughts, so "Not mind, not Buddha" was then presented to halt even abstract seeking.

Dahui's verse ends with a description of the feeling and effect engendered in consciousness when deliberately focusing attention on this koan to alert the mind: "Snowflakes" (random thoughts) may "fly," but if they fly over the "flames of a glowing furnace" (absorption in focus on "not mind, not Buddha"), then the flying "snowflake"

thoughts spontaneously vaporize in the "flames of concentration." Reversing the image but producing the same meaning (a Zen device to prevent drowsiness), Dahui describes this koan meditation as like a "dot of coolness" that "removes the torment of the heat" of confused thoughts.

## KNOWLEDGE IS NOT THE WAY

*Nanquan said, "Mind is not Buddha, knowledge is not the Way."*

WUMEN SAYS,

It might be said of Nanquan that he was so old he had no shame; the minute he opened his foul mouth he advertised the family disgrace. Even so, few are those who know enough to be grateful.

WUMEN'S VERSE

When the sky clears, the sun emerges;  
When it rains, the ground gets wet.  
He wholeheartedly told it all,  
Only fearing incomplete faith.

### *Translator's Comments*

Nanquan has already been met, in koan fourteen, "Killing a Cat," and koan nineteen, "The Normal Is the Way." Appropriately, Nanquan was a disciple of Mazu, and this koan follows up on the point of the preceding one.

As he so often does, Wumen starts out with a deliberately misleading tone of sarcasm. What he is really saying underneath is that all reference to the absolute is by nature relative. Zen teaching masters can only hint at reality and demonstrate means of perceiving it, but the actual experience of insight is up to the individual.

Wumen again concludes with a challenge, declaring that few people realize that Nanquan's statement of the limitations of human understanding is actually intended to clear the way for insight into a much more subtle experience of reality. Wumen's verse invites us into the experience left unspoken by the ancient master, and reiterates his concern that we take it up for ourselves.

For this koan we are blessed with the rare fortune of having the explanation of Zen master Nanquan himself, which I translate directly from the ancient record of his teaching:

The Way is the Great Way without obstacles; subtle action free from passion is inherently complete. Only thus do you attain freedom in all domains of activity. Therefore we speak of acting without attachment to objects in all domains of activity, and we also refer to absorption in unlimited action, manifesting physical forms everywhere.

Just because it is unknown to others, this function has no tracks and does not belong to the realms of perception or cognition. Truth is realized spontaneously, subtle functions are fulfilled spontaneously. The Great Way is formless, truth is beyond comparison. Therefore they do not belong to perception or cognition.

## A WOMAN'S SPLIT SOUL

*Wuzu asked a monk, "A woman split her soul; which was the real one?"*

### WUMEN SAYS,

If you can understand the real one here, you will know that leaving a shell and entering a shell is like lodging at an inn.

If not, it is essential that you do not run off at random. When the material body disintegrates all at once, you will be like a lobster in hot water, frantically thrashing about. At that time, don't say I didn't tell you.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

The clouds and moon are the same,  
The valleys and mountains are individually different.  
Myriad blessings, myriad blessings—  
Are they one or two?

### ZEN MASTER PURONG'S VERSE

The dual woman combines the roles of daughter and wife:  
When the wheel of potential is cut off, interchange is  
impossible.  
All along the comings and goings have no tracks;  
Travelers are not to be asked the road by which they came.

### ZEN MASTER CISHOU'S VERSE

It is just the usual carryings-on;  
Casually brought up, it becomes confusing.  
Last night a wild wind arose,  
Blowing down who knows how many peach blossoms.



## ZEN MASTER HUO-AN'S VERSE

Whatever is done is not forgotten  
 Even in thousands of years:  
 When causes and conditions combine,  
 Results and consequences are naturally experienced.

*Translator's Comments*

Zen master Wuzu died in 1104. He came to Zen practice when he was already a middle-aged man, and his general iconographical significance in Zen lore is seen in his robust earthiness and practicality, transformed into spiritual tools through Zen enlightenment. Noted for his inimitable style, Wuzu used all sorts of interesting and arresting devices to teach people. He is, for this reason, one of those Zen masters whose teachings are considered paragons of misdirection and inscrutability, traditional arts of warfare and political strategy which are transmuted by Zen spiritual "alchemy" into tactics of Zen teaching, whose object is to communicate the ineffable.

In the koan at hand, the "woman who split her soul" is the heroine of a folk story well known to the Chinese people of Wuzu's time. The underlying point of the tale is that human beings play different roles in life, and relate differently to different people and different situations through these different roles. Wuzu's question is this: "Who and what is the real self underlying and undertaking these roles?"

The Zen point is that these roles are not the real self, but are more properly like guests or servants of the real self. Confusion and loss of freedom arise from a fundamental misapprehension: Identifying with a role, people can forget and lose the rest of their potential; shifting from role to role unconscious of the central "pivot" of the essential self, people can experience stultifying conflicts among their commitments to different roles.

Zen teaches a personality-transcending experiential standpoint from which it is possible to attain independent insight and restore elements of personality to their proper function as servants rather than masters of mind. Wumen's prose comment deals with realizing the essential nature of mind; his verse comment places this in the context of life in the world, while maintaining the critical discernment of the distinction between the essential and circumstantial.

The first two of the other Zen comments begin from the perspective of the relative, the stream of events and nexus of conditions that gives the appearance of so many faces of existence. Then they turn to the absolute to realize freedom of spirit untrammelled by changes in temporal states of being.

Zen master Purong (pronounced Poo-zroong) uses the image of the two roles in the story, which naturally are two universal roles in spite of the fact that they are actualized in many different ways. He goes on to warn us not to lose touch with the source, lest we lose communion and harmony among the different selves we act out. In the third line, Purong turns to the experience of the essence of mind, in which the "comings and goings" of fluctuations in emotions and thoughts "have no tracks" and do not leave a binding influence. The final line is a beautiful expression of the transcendence of essential mind, the eternal Buddha-nature, over all the temporal roles that humans can play out.

The verse of Zen master Cishou (pronounced Tsih-sho) affirms that ordinary social life normally involves the performance of different roles, putting on and taking off different masks. When we do not understand the real nature of what we are doing, he continues, we become confused by our own act. In the third line Cishou presents a colorful description of Wuzu's questioning the ultimate reality of social roles, acting like a "wild wind" that "blows down" the "peach blossoms" of conceited fancies about these roles.

The last verse, by Zen master Huo-an shows how "personalities," including all facets of life, evolve through action. This has a dual meaning, in reference to bondage and to liberation. On the one hand, it means that whatever you do there is no escaping the consequences of that action, because it affects the development of *all* of your personalities in some way, and also affects other people. On the other hand, it means that when you attain the transcendental viewpoint of Zen, you do not efface everything and abandon the world; liberation means that you can now act independently and constructively, uninhibited by identification with a fixed set of feelings and thoughts.

This is what Mahayana Buddhism calls the creation of "mentally produced bodies," the development of expanded and diversified personalities and capabilities for the purpose of carrying out beneficial and enlightening tasks in the world.

## MEETING ADEPTS ON THE ROAD

*Wuzu said, "On the road, when you encounter people who have attained the Way, you do not face them with speech or silence. So tell me, how do you face them?"*

### WUMEN SAYS,

If you can answer intimately here, there will no doubt be a joy and a pleasure; but if not, you should keep an eye out everywhere.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

On the road, meeting people who've attained the Way,  
You do not face them with speech or silence:  
Punch them right in the jaw;  
If they understand directly, then they understand.

### ZEN MASTER YUELIN'S VERSE

Those who come talking about right and wrong  
Are themselves right and wrong people:  
How true are these words!  
Sport with things unconcerned with their names.

### *Translator's Comments*

This is the same master Wuzu as in the preceding koan, again presenting a problem to force the mind into a higher level of psychological integration than is possible to self-limiting discriminatory "either/or" thinking. In the preceding koan, the master asked us to see a level of mind deeper than "either/or" choices. In this koan he asks us to see the ineffable beyond "neither/nor."

The easiest way to see this koan is to use Wumen's admonition to "keep an eye out everywhere." Try to notice everything all around

you as a total field of awareness for a period of ten days or so; then you may well see for yourself why what you experience cannot be expressed in words, yet cannot be relegated to silence.

Wumen's "punch in the jaw" is not intended literally. It is an expression of the dynamic experience of direct encounter with the real. When he says, "If they understand directly, then they understand," Wumen reaffirms the technical caveat that this experience is only realized by direct insight, not conceptual thinking.

The verse of Zen master Yuelin declares the apparent conundrum to be itself a construction of the subjective mind, a reflection of the human mentality rather than a property of objective reality. He concludes with a very practical and down-to-earth method of integrating realization of absolute and relative truths in the living reality of everyday life: "Sport with things unconcerned with their names."

## THE CYPRESS TREE IN THE YARD

*A monk asked Zhaozhou, "What is the living meaning of Zen?"  
Zhaozhou said, "The cypress tree in the yard."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

If you can see the point of Zhaozhou's answer intimately, there is no past Buddha before and no future Buddha after.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

Words do not set forth facts,  
Speech does not accord with situations;  
Those who take up words perish,  
Those who linger over sayings get lost.

### ZEN MASTER HUANGLONG NAN'S VERSE

All trees wither and die in time,  
But the cypress in Zhaozhou's yard flourishes forever.  
Not only does it defy the frost, keeping its integrity;  
It virtually sings with a clear voice to the light of the moon.

### ZEN MASTER FOGUO BAI'S VERSE

Only when really unusual do you recognize the unusual;  
It is the eye of spirits that recognizes spirits.  
People today don't know the living meaning of Zen;  
They only see the green green cypress in the yard.

### ZEN MASTER FOJIAN'S VERSE

When the rain clears in the vast and endless sky,  
The bright moon shines with a clear radiance.



Floating clouds cover up a thousand people's eyes;  
 Those who see the face on the moon are few and far between.

### *Translator's Comments*

Zen master Zhaozhou is already a familiar figure. His saying in this koan is a reflection of the suchness of being-as-is. In his prose comment, Wumen says that if you see the point intimately, there is no past Buddha before and no future Buddha after: In other words, the immediate moment of awareness of suchness is the Buddha of all time.

In his verse comment, Wumen warns us not to mistake ordinary conditioned perceptions for true suchness itself. Undoubtedly the plainness and rigor of Wumen's statement here is adopted in view of the deceptively simple face of the koan, often noted by Zen commentators.

In contrast, the verse of Zen master Huanglong Nan is a beautiful eulogy of the eternal reality of suchness and its accessibility to clear awareness.

The verse of Zen master Foguo Bai (pronounced Faw-gwaw Bye) emphasizes the practical need for clarifying awareness, so that it is possible to actually see suchness as is. He says that most people who hear of the identity of samsara and nirvana mistake their ordinary experience for true suchness, and thus wind up every bit as attached to objects as any ordinary person.

Finally, the verse of Fojian begins with another description of the preliminary need for mental clarification before objective insight is possible. Then he turns to depict the condition of the ordinary human mentality as being clouded with subjective views and opinions, thus rarely seeing truth as it is.

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THE OX PASSING THROUGH THE  
WINDOW SCREEN

!!?  
... Wuzu said, "It is as if an ox had passed through a window screen:  
Its head, horns, and four hooves have all passed through; why can't  
the tail pass through?"

WUMEN SAYS,

If here you can shift into reverse, set a single eye, and speak a pivotal word, you will be able to requite the favors you receive and help all beings. Otherwise, you have to pay further attention to the tail before you get it.

WUMEN'S VERSE

If it goes on past, if falls into a pit;  
If it comes back, then it is spoiled.  
This little tail  
Is very strange indeed.

*Translator's Comments*

Here is another one of Wuzu's devilish schemes. Japanese Zen masters consider this koan one of the most difficult to penetrate, so they usually take it up in a comparatively advanced stage of study. One reason for this is that the question involves examination of very subtle barriers to enlightenment. In advanced Zen, special attention is focused on the problem of mental obstruction by the feeling of knowing, or being conscious of consciousness.

In my opinion, perhaps the best illustration of this sense of the koan may be made by parallel. As it happens, there is an excellent parallel in the story of Wuzu's own completion of the awakening process.

Wuzu had already studied with ten Zen masters before he came to Master Baiyun, and he was under the impression that he had understood and realized Zen. His object in continuing Zen studies was to test himself and also to test the masters.

One day Baiyun told him that several Zen practitioners had just arrived, adding that all of them had experienced Zen awakening, could explain it, could understand Zen stories, and could comment on them. Pausing a while, Master Baiyun finally said, "But they're still inadequate. You tell me why."

Many readers will by now recognize the working of the Zen "hook" to bring hidden doubts and confusion to the surface. This is not an arbitrary challenge, however, since the experiences and capacities Baiyun describes are really not the totality of Buddhist enlightenment. What he wanted for Wuzu to question this, in principle and in himself.

As it turned out, Wuzu was in fact deeply disturbed by the statement of Zen master Baiyun. Unable to fathom this mystery, he wondered about constantly for seven days. Finally one night he understood, the story goes, and all at once "let go of what he had been treasuring," forgetting his subjective feeling of completeness and realizing the true infinity of enlightenment.

This is what is called "the wind of unburdening" in Zen language. It is what you turn to when you realize why "the tail hasn't passed through."

For the beginner, there is an easier way to approach this koan. Something of the point can be seen by the following procedure:

1. Forget thoughts, even as they occur.
2. Use the leeway thus created to let the mind merge with space as a total field of awareness.
3. View the totality itself as the "tail" that has "not yet passed through."
4. Observe the consciousness of awareness itself as the "tail that has not yet passed through."

In Wumen's comments, which are appropriately abstruse for this koan, to "shift into reverse" means to detach from absorption in nirvana, "set a single eye" to see the transcendental peace of nirvana right in the midst of samsara, and be able to express this transformation of ordinary experience into enlightened awareness. If you cannot

do this, he concludes, you should turn your attention back to the "tail," which here means your own mind.

In his verse comment, *Wumen* expresses a dual meaning. One meaning is in reference to nirvana, the other in reference to suchness. Referring to nirvana, he says that if we go too far, if we understand transcendence as complete separation, then we "fall into a pit." But if we come back from transcendent experience only to resume former habits of thought, then the value of nirvana is "spoiled."

Referring to suchness, *Wumen* says that if we go too far, if we identify ordinary perceptions with suchness, then we fall into a pit of ordinary biases and attachments. But if we resort to permanent nirvana as quiescence, the living potential of freedom is spoiled.

From either point of view, "This little tail / Is very strange indeed"! In one sense, "strange" means wonderful; with our minds we can become enlightened, or we can become deluded. In another sense, "strange" means unlike anything else; the essence of mind in itself is not identical, and not even like in kind, to any thing that may be imagined. It is essential to be aware of this kind of "strangeness" in Zen work.

## TRAPPED IN WORDS

*A monk asked Yunmen about the line, "Radiant light silently illumines the universe."*

*Before the monk had even finished, Yunmen abruptly said, "Aren't those the words of the scholar Zhang Zhuo?"*

*The monk replied, "Yes."*

*Yunmen said, "You're trapped in words."*

*Later, Zen master Sixin brought this up and said, "Now tell me, where did the monk get trapped in words?"*

### WUMEN SAYS,

If you can see the radical strictness of Yunmen's action, and why the monk got bogged down in words, then you can be a teacher of humans and celestial spirits. But if you still do not understand, you cannot even save yourself.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

He casts his hook in the swift current;  
One greedy for the bait bites.  
As soon as the seam of his mouth opens,  
He's lost his natural life.

### ZEN MASTER SUSHAN'S VERSE

Questioning, answering, free from partiality:  
How can an iron wall or silver mountain be penetrated?  
Conceding and denying depend on the time; he says "You're  
trapped in words,"  
Eventually causing a thousand ages to stir the wind of lament.



## ZEN MASTER SONGYUAN'S VERSE

Clearly he depicts it for you to see:  
 The meaning is on the hook, not in the pan.  
 Even if a stone man can open his mouth,  
 He still doesn't realize he's been fooled by his tongue.

*Translator's Comments*

Zen master Yunmen has already been seen in several koans. Zhang Zhou (pronounced Jong-jwaw) was a noted poet who was also interested in Zen. Sixin (pronounced Sih-shin) was a distinguished master of the Linji school of Zen who lived about a century before Wumen.

To understand Yunmen's testing device, it is crucial to note the question posed by Sixin. If you can see the answer to this question, at what point the monk got trapped in words, you can learn to use words without getting trapped.

In order to see the answer to this question, particularly Songyuan's comment, "The meaning is on the hook, not in the pan." Was the monk already trapped in words, only to be exposed by the master? Or was the monk trapped in words by the master's question? Either way, he found out how easily it can happen, "causing a thousand ages to stir the wind of lament."

Wumen's comments describe the comprehensive perspective of Yunmen and the nature of his action as a test. The verse of Zen master Sushan depicts the surface impenetrability of the simple factuality of the initial exchange between Yunmen and the monk. Because similar appearances may disguise different realities, it takes the device of a Zen master to see if a questioner is true or false.

The verse of Zen master Songyuan is unusually explicit, miming the deceptive simplicity of the koan. He lauds the clarity with which Yunmen's device exposes the monk. Songyuan also reveals the secret of Zen testing methods, which is based on the nature of the relationship between subject and object.

Songyuan's final lines represent the monk's getting caught without even realizing it. This is a typical warning to the reader to pay special attention to see just where the trap is. Where is it now?

## KICKING OVER A WATER PITCHER

*Master Guishan started out in the community of Master Baizhang serving as the chief cook. Baizhang was going to appoint him to be the master of Great Gui Mountain, and so requested him and the leader of the assembly to utter a saying to the community, in order that the most extraordinary individual could be the one to go.*

*Baizhang picked up a water pitcher, set it on a rock, and posed this question: "If you cannot call it a water pitcher, what do you call it?"*

*The leader of the assembly said, "It cannot be called a wooden upright bolt."*

*Baizhang then asked Guishan. Guishan immediately kicked over the pitcher and left.*

*Baizhang smiled and said, "The leader of the assembly has lost the mountain." And so he had Guishan start Zen teaching on that mountain.*

## WUMEN SAYS,

Guishan was courageous, but he could not leap clear of Baizhang's snare. When you bring the matter up for examination, he finds convenience in the heavy, not in the light. How so? Look! He removed his bandanna and took up iron fetters.

## WUMEN'S VERSE

Tossing aside his basket and ladle,  
He gives a direct thrust, no beating around the bush.  
Baizhang's double barrier cannot stop him;  
The point of his foot kicks out Buddhas without number.

## ZEN MASTER SHAOZHAO'S VERSE

What determines the hero is the water jug;  
At the point of minutest distinction, there are no more  
emotions.

Great peace is originally for the general to bring about,  
But the general is not allowed to see great peace.

ZEN MASTER TONGZHAO'S VERSE

The great function needs an expert to know;  
On the spot, one kick put an end to doubt.  
What a pity those who do not succeed in Zen  
Do nothing but judge right and wrong at the jug.

*Translator's Comments*

Zen master Baizhang was met with in the second koan on "not being blind to cause and effect." Guishan was among the very greatest of Baizhang's many Zen successors. He was the author of one of the earliest written works on Zen, in which he teaches both sudden and gradual methods of enlightenment. Many koans about Guishan are found in classical collections.

The koan at hand is represented as the story of Guishan's final "graduation" from Baizhang's school. Ancient Chinese Zen schools did not cling to particular places, but spread all over the land, appearing when circumstances were appropriate and disappearing when their work was over.

The essential point of the koan as it is presented here is quite clear: In the life of Zen enlightenment, pragmatic measures prevail over theoretical disquisitions. Because this emphasis may mislead the superficial into fixation on dramatic acts, however, Wumen makes a joke of the koan's conclusion. In a humorous twist, he points out that Guishan was assigned a much more difficult and demanding responsibility because he got caught showing his enlightenment.

The verse of Zen master Shaozhao (pronounced Shao-djao) begins by saying that the "water jug" stands for objective reality, indirectly affirming that Baizhang's decision to appoint Guishan as the new teacher was not based on subjective feelings or opinions. Shaozhao then cites the proverb, "Great peace is originally for the general to bring about, but the general is not allowed to see great peace." This means that Zen enlightenment is attained through one's own efforts, but not for the sake of individual ease. According to the universal vow of Buddhism, the enlightened do not spend the rest of their lives enjoying their own liberty, but dedicate it to the enlightenment of others.

The first line of the verse of Zen master Tongzhao (pronounced Toong-djao) refers to Guishan, and also to Baizhang. The "great function" means the activation of ordinarily unused potential in order to accomplish extraordinary acts of exertion and perception. In reference to Guishan, it means that one needs this great function as a prerequisite for taking up the responsibility of Zen teacherhood, which is to liberate minds from binding limitations ingrained by routine conventions of thought. In reference to Baizhang, it means that genuine direct perception is required in order to see whether someone else is acting on genuine direct perception.

The second line of the verse refers to Guishan's straightforward action that "put an end to doubt" by settling the ambiguities suggested in the first line.

The third line turns to the trap concealed in the action, which is then defined in the last line. The sense of these two lines is that those who are diverted or deceived by superficial appearances do not get the enlightenment of Zen from their interpretations of events. This distinguishes Zen from competitive educational systems that use promotion as an inducement to conformity.

Baizhang wanted a Zen center that pulsed from its own enlightened heart, not a mere clone or branch of his own school. This is why he did not appoint the senior disciple, but devised a special way of bringing out a truly exceptional successor.

## PACIFYING THE MIND

*As the founder of Zen faced a wall, his future successor stood in the snow, cut off his arm, and said, "My mind is not yet at peace. Please pacify my mind."*

*The founder said, "Bring me your mind, and I will pacify it for you."*

*The successor said, "I have looked for my mind, and cannot find it."*

*The founder said, "I have pacified your mind for you."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

The founder of Zen sailed thousands of miles over the ocean, coming to China by stages; this might be called "raising waves without wind." In the end he got a student, but he turned out to be handicapped. Too bad! "The imbecile doesn't even know the motto on a penny."

#### WUMEN'S VERSE

Coming from the West, directly pointing,  
The matter arose from entrusting a charge.  
Stirring up the Zen communities,  
After all it's you.

#### ZEN MASTER FENYANG'S VERSE

Nine years the founder faced a wall, awaiting the proper  
potential;  
Standing in snow up to his waist, the successor never relaxed  
his brow;  
Respectfully he asked for a method to pacify the mind:  
Searching for the mind and not finding it, for the first time in  
his life he was free from doubt.



## ZEN MASTER FOGUO BAI'S VERSE

Thinking, why seek to pacify mind?  
 Seeking out peace of mind causes pain to the body.  
 Three feet deep the snow where he once stood:  
 Who knows who it is in the snow?

*Translator's Comments*

The "founder of Zen" in this story was an Indian master named Bodhidharma, whose name means "The Way of Enlightenment" and is emblematic of the essential point of the founding of Zen as well as symbolic of the Zen mind itself.

At the time that the Zen founder was in China, which was between the late fifth century and the early sixth century, intellectual Buddhist studies were flourishing, but the Zen way of direct intuition was virtually unknown.

The story at hand, which is a popular elementary koan, symbolizes one of the basic exercises of Zen meditation, commonly called "turning the light around and looking backward." This is done by turning attention "backward" to the source consciousness, rather than reaching "forward" to grasp at contents of consciousness.

In the koan, the successor awakens after realizing why he cannot find his mind. The pragmatic significance of this point is crucial, because only after having made this inward search for the source of consciousness is it possible to attain peace of mind by experiential realization of the ungraspability of the mind. The end result of this exercise involves an experience of transformation from a sense of opacity and limitation to a sense of light and openness, with fresh awareness and understanding.

Wumen's prose comment conceals a technical analysis within a seemingly superficial critique. The expression "raising waves with wind," made in reference to the founding of Zen in China by a missionary from India, means that talk about "Zen" gives the impression that there is something special or exotic, something "extra" not shared by everyone, but in reality it deals with truths that are fundamental and apply in some basic sense to everyone everywhere regardless of culture or personality.

Wumen's remarks about the successor also seem to be derogatory

quips, while concealing an essential provision about the exercise represented in this koan. The successor is called "handicapped" not because of the loss of his arm, but because this exercise deals exclusively with formless awareness, which is only one aspect of complete Zen enlightenment. It does not deal with knowledge of differentiation or understanding of objective causality, so the successor who symbolizes the exercise is called an "imbecile" who does not even know the simplest conventional facts.

Then again, the fact that the successor is called an imbecile unaware of conventional reality is also a signal that the exercise of looking into the mind is not a kind of self-analysis of the personality, but a direct activation of a deeper level of awareness.

The verse of Zen master Fenyang alludes to the story that the Zen founder sat silently facing a wall for nine years awaiting someone capable of understanding his teaching. When the successor finally came to him, the founder sat silently until the seeker had stood there through a snowstorm and cut off his arm. This symbolizes the learning of Zen in the process of going through the hardships of life in the world and cutting off illusions about the self in order to seek objective reality. The final line is a description of the method and realization of "turning the light around" and seeing the original mind.

The verse of Zen master Foguo Bai is extremely clever in conveying the orientation of the mind in the meditation represented by this concentration. In this sense "causing pain to the body" does not refer to the successor's austerities: It means directing the front-edge attention away from the material world.

"Three feet deep the snow where he once stood" means that the material world does not disappear after liberation; it is just that there are no more fixations on objects in the mind.

The final question employs the usual tactic of turning the work over to the reader, to see by direct perception: to see who it is in the snow, and also to see who knows who it is in the snow.

This last line is particularly clever in starting the reader off on the exercise in one of its most accessible forms, which is something like an endless circular series of "Who?"s, ultimately leading to what seems to be like a kind of infinite regression back into the boundless source of consciousness itself.

## A WOMAN COMES OUT OF ABSORPTION

*In ancient times, Manjushri went to an assembly of Buddhas. When the other Buddhas returned to their respective domains, a woman remained, sitting near Gautama Buddha, in a state of absorption.*

*Manjushri said to Buddha, "Why can a woman sit near Buddha, when I cannot?"*

*Buddha said to Manjushri, "All you have to do is wake the woman up, get her out of absorption, and ask her yourself."*

*Manjushri circled the woman three times and snapped his fingers. Then he lifted her up to pure heaven, using all of his spiritual powers, but was not able to get her out of absorption.*

*Buddha said, "Even a hundred thousand Manjushris could not get this woman out of absorption. Below here, past as many worlds as grains of sand in twelve trillion Ganges Rivers, there is a bodhisattva named Ensnared Light who can get this woman out of absorption."*

*In a moment, the great being Ensnared Light sprang up from the earth and bowed to Buddha. Buddha instructed Ensnared Light to go up to the woman and snap his fingers once. When he did so, the woman emerged from absorption.*

### WUMEN SAYS,

Buddha acted out a complex play, having nothing in common with minor trivia.

Now tell me: Manjushri was the teacher of seven Buddhas; why couldn't he get the woman out of absorption? Ensnared Light was a bodhisattva of the first stage; why was he able to get her out?

If you can see intimately here, you will attain the great dragonic absorption even in the flurry of active consciousness.

## WUMEN'S VERSE

Whether or not they can get her out,  
 She has attained freedom.  
 With a spirit head and a ghost face,  
 Defeat amounts to elegance.

## ZEN MASTER ZHENJING'S VERSE

Buddha-nature is a natural reality;  
 Who says there is any other teacher?  
 Where Ensnared Light snapped his fingers,  
 When the woman came out of meditation,  
 Not the slightest effort was expended—  
 When were thoughts ever stirred?  
 Living beings are all equal;  
 They produce many doubts and obstacles by themselves,  
 in the course of their daily activities.

## ZEN MASTER LANGYA'S VERSE

The woman, Manjushri, and Ensnared Light:  
 Ultimately how do Zen followers understand?  
 Only if you harmonize subtly, beyond convention,  
 Will you believe the waves are basically water.

*Translator's Comments*

Manjushri, a transhistorical bodhisattva, or enlightening being, is a central figure in Buddhist iconography and a sort of patron saint of Zen. Portrayed as an eternal youth, Manjushri represents formless knowledge of absolute truth.

The woman in the story represents total absorption in absolute truth and immersion in the quiescence of nirvana. Manjushri is unable to get her *out* of that state because it is none other than his own domain (ineffable knowledge of the absolute) in which she is absorbed. Indeed, as Buddha says in the story, "even a hundred thousand Manjushris could not get this woman out of absorption," because the absolute is the "zero point" of Zen, and a thousand times zero equals zero.

What the individual in this state needs is complementary experience and knowledge. The complement to nirvanic absorption in absolute truth is discerning knowledge of relative truth, represented in this koan by the bodhisattva Ensnared Light. The name Ensnared Light symbolizes consciousness and knowledge of the apparent world, or mind absorbed in matter.

These two kinds of knowledge, formless insight into absolute truth and discerning cognition of relative truth, are the basis for the two essential aspects of Buddhism, known as wisdom and compassion. The Way of Buddhahood is lived through the harmonious combination of these two fundamental qualities.

Wumen's prose comment begins by affirming the message of the koan that enlightenment is not just nirvana per se; that is why he says that Buddha "acted out" a "complex play." The point of the word "act" is that enlightenment is not just transcendental knowledge (represented by Manjushri), but also practical knowledge (represented by Ensnared Light). The "complexity" of the play refers to knowledge of differentiations; it is called a "play" because it is carried on in the domain of relative truth.

Wumen also remarks that this "complex play" has nothing in common with "minor trivia." In the technical language of Zen, this means that the reality of this koan is not a ritual performance, not a mythological recital, and not an indication of literal belief in supernatural powers or supernal beings.

Wumen continues his prose comment with the usual distillation of a pivotal question, which he poses to the reader to bring the koan alive. In this case, the reason for the answer is obvious; the issue is in the actual application. Wumen says that if we can see "intimately," that is, in firsthand experience, we will attain "the great dragonic absorption" even in the "flurry of active consciousness."

"The great dragonic absorption" is a Buddhist technical term for a state of mind undisturbed in the midst of the mundane world. This is called "dragonic" because in Buddhist iconography a dragon is considered to be in a very lofty state of trance in spite of being in the body of an animal, which is regarded as a comparatively low estate in the evolutionary scale. In saying that this is attained even in the midst of the flurry of ordinary activities of consciousness, Wumen simply makes this aspect of the definition of this state of mind explicit to the reader.



Wumen's verse comment is very clever, turning things around to call attention to two of the profoundest and most subtle points of attention in Buddhist meditation. The first point is the inclusion of relative reality within absolute reality; whatever relative reality may be, or however it may be described, it is enveloped and pervaded by absolute reality. The second point is the essence of the absoluteness of absolute reality; although the absolute pervades everything relative, nothing relative is itself absolute.

The first two lines of the verse characterize the experience of emptiness as pivotal. This means that one who has this perspective is not bound to any point of view, be it that of nirvana or that of samsara, that of absolute truth or that of relative truth. True adepts cannot experience nirvana and samsara simultaneously, yet demonstrate or emphasize one or the other expediently for the sake of edifying others.

In the last two lines Wumen also rescues literal-minded readers from the temptation to believe that the woman in this koan is an object of censure or ridicule. Her "spirit head" was her profound experience of nirvana; her "ghost face" was her immediate response to samsara. Her "defeat" refers on one level to absorption in nirvana, which was perfect in its profundity, as symbolized by the fact that Manjushri could not move her. Her "defeat" on another level refers to her awakening by Ensnared Light, which was perfect in its sensitivity, as symbolized by her instantaneous response. In both senses, "defeat amounts to elegance."

The lengthy verse comment of Zen master Zhenjing (pronounced Jun-jing) is most extraordinary clear. It seems to me that any comment on it would spoil its unusual spiritual beauty; I can only suggest that readers look at it very closely and completely.

The verse of Zen master Langya is simple but contains one or two special expressions. He explicitly states that the point of the koan is to harmonize nirvana and samsara, or consciousness of absolute truth and consciousness of relative truth. To do so "subtly" means to be able to integrate these two levels of awareness simultaneously, rather than merely go through an intermittent alternation of disparate states.

This harmonization is "beyond convention" in that the conceptual boundaries between samsara and nirvana dissolve. Only then, Langya concludes, will one realize that the "waves" of relative reality are in essence not separate from the "water" of absolute reality. In other terms, the "waves" of knowledge of differentiation are not separated from the "water" of the oceanic consciousness of unity.

## THE BAMBOO STICK

*Master Shoushan held up a bamboo stick before a group and said, "If you call it a bamboo stick, you are clinging. If you do not call it a bamboo stick, you are ignoring. So tell me, what do you call it?"*

WUMEN SAYS,

Call it a bamboo stick, and you're clinging. Don't call it a bamboo stick, and you're ignoring. You cannot say anything, yet you cannot say nothing. Speak quickly! Speak quickly!

WUMEN'S VERSE

Picking up a bamboo stick,  
He enforces a life and death order:  
With clinging and ignoring neck and neck,  
Buddhas and Zen masters beg for their lives.

ZEN MASTER MINGZHAO PU SAID,

Had I been there at the time, when he said, "What do you call it?" I would have simply whistled a couple of times and watched old Shoushan crumble and melt.

ZEN MASTER SI-AN'S VERSE

Not clinging, yet not ignoring,  
It is useless to bother initiating deliberation;  
If you open your mouth and go on discussing further,  
White clouds cover thousands of miles.

ZEN MASTER WAN-AN'S VERSE

Reviling in others is reviling yourself;  
Anger at others is anger at yourself.

Be wary of this, be careful;  
 What comes from you returns to you.

### *Translator's Comments*

Zen master Shoushan (pronounced Sho-shahn) lived in the tenth century. He was the successor to Fengxue, who was met with in koan number twenty-four, "Detachment from Words." In his time, Fengxue was the last living master of the Linji lineage of Zen; his successor Shoushan began a dramatic revival of the Zen school upheld by his lineage. This koan of Shoushan's was a favorite device of the later Linji master Dahui, a spiritual descendant of Shoushan who was also a major figure in yet another revitalization of Zen teaching.

The question of how to avoid both clinging and ignoring is equivalent to the pragmatic issue of combining consciousness of absolute truth with consciousness of relative truth, or how to combine wisdom and compassion. As mentioned before, the Indian Zen ancestor Nagarjuna wrote about absolute "emptiness" in a famous collection of verses on the Middle Way of balance and harmony: "Emptiness wrongly viewed destroys the feeble-minded, like a mishandled serpent or misapplied spell." He also wrote, "It has been said by the Victorious that emptiness is departure from all views; but those who keep the view of emptiness are called incurable."

Therefore when someone clings to a habitual compulsion to label and define everything in conventionally fixed terms ("call it a stick"), this is called attachment to views. By this expression Zen Buddhists do not just mean intellectual or emotional attachments to certain ways of looking at things, they also mean the whole complex of behavioral syndromes that accompany such attachments, such as materialism, aggression, and conceit.

Those who practice Zen learn to stop compulsively trying to label and define everything in fixed terms, detaching from conceptually construed truths in order to see into ineffable absolute truth. As for the Zen master's saying that you are ignoring if you do not call it a bamboo stick, this contains two meanings. In one sense, insight into ultimate reality is called ignorance of superficial appearances; in another sense, denial of any reality is called ignorance of actual fact. Thus in his prose comment *Wumen* says "You cannot say anything,

yet you cannot say nothing." It is necessary to be the host of both emptiness and existence.

Wumen's verse comment describes the pivotal question in this koan as a "life and death order," which is meant both literally and symbolically. Do not cling to superficialities, and the habit of clinging to superficialities dies out. When the habit of clinging to superficialities dies out, the capacity for deep insight comes to life. Don't ignore the objective reality of suchness, and the habit of heedlessness dies out. When the habit of heedlessness dies out, the capacity for discerning awareness comes to life.

The final lines of Wumen's verse symbolize the complete integration of the relative ("clinging") and the absolute ("ignoring"), and indicate that this is an essential realization for all enlightened people.

Turning to the comments and verses of other Zen masters, the "whistle" of Mingzhao Pu (pronounced Ming-djow Poo) symbolizes the integration of absolute and conventional truths in a concrete act, insofar as it is articulated (thereby representing conventional truth), yet in a sense not articulate (thereby representing absolute truth.)

The verse of Zen master Si-an (pronounced Sih-ahn) reminds the reader that this koan is not an intellectual conundrum to be solved by an exercise of linear thought.

The verse of Zen master Wan-an looks like a moralistic truism, and works well enough on that level. Its technical meaning is whatever thoughts and ideas you project on suchness are in actual fact the limitations you yourself impose on your own mind. This is the self-inhibiting mechanism underlying vicious circles and deadening habits of thought and behavior. The essential purpose of Zen is to free the mind from these unnecessary limitations, to restore the pristine innocence and autonomy of the enlightened nature in everyone.

## THE STAFF

*Master Baqiao said to a group, "If you have a staff, I will give you a staff; if you have no staff, I will take your staff away."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

It helps you across a river where the bridges are out, and gets you back to the village when there is no moon. If you call it a staff, you go to hell fast as an arrow.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

The depths and shallows everywhere  
Are all within his grip:  
Holding up the sky and bracing the earth,  
Wherever he is he makes Zen flourish.

### ZEN MASTER DAHUI'S VERSE

At the crossroads  
he does business with what's at hand;  
But if you want to haggle,  
you stumble by in ignorance.

### ZEN MASTER WUZHUO'S VERSE

Baqiao raised his staff,  
Startling all creation:  
Shrimp may fly past the heavens,  
But eyebrows are still above eyes.

### ZEN MASTER KENTANG'S VERSE

In a village where the wells are poisoned  
The water should not even be tasted;



Even with a single drop of it  
The whole family dies.

### *Translator's Comments*

Baqiao (pronounced Bah-chyow) was one of the last Zen masters of the subtle and lofty-minded school known as the Gui-Yang house because of its spiritual descent from the great masters Guishang (who appeared in koan forty) and Yangshan (who appeared in koan twenty-five).

This koan has many levels of meaning. One level of interpretation represents different aspects of the total Zen teaching. Part of the teaching deals with cause and effect relationships in the relative world. This is represented by the statement, "If you have a staff, I will give you a staff." Another part of the teaching deals with the vanity of conceptions about absolute reality in itself. This aspect of teaching is ordinarily phrased in a negative way, precisely because no concept of the absolute truth is objectively accurate. People are prone to misconstrue this apparent negativity and exaggerate it into nothingness, so the teacher abolishes the notion of nothingness in emptiness. This is represented by the statement, "If you have no staff, I will take your staff away." As the great Buddhist master Nagarjuna wrote, "Without relying on common usage, ultimate truth cannot be expressed; without going to ultimate truth, nirvana cannot be attained."

On another level, this koan refers to authentic understanding. Those who have some authentic understanding receive more from the source of all understanding; while those who have no authentic understanding are ultimately unable to hold on to their subjective conceptions.

A third level is seen by putting yourself in the place of the Zen master, who symbolizes individual autonomy. In whatever situation you may find yourself, whether to concede or deny, whether to be active or passive, whether to get involved or abstain, is entirely up to you.

In a deeper reflection of this same sense, the Zen master stands for consciousness itself. Since the experienced world is a relationship between the perceiver and the perceived, for each individual subject the issue of what "is" or "isn't" depends on that individual's consciousness and perception.

In Wumen's comments, the "staff" is mind. The verses of the other Zen masters illustrate how to use this story to stay in centered balance and how to clear the mind of bias and partiality. This is especially clear in the last verse by Kentang (pronounced Kun-tahng), who warns us not to kill our living awareness of the vast panorama of being-as-is by imbibing false ideas and partial judgments.

## WHO IS THAT?

*Wuzu said, "The past and future Buddhas are servants of another. Tell me, who is that?"*

### WUMEN SAYS,

If you can see that one clearly, it will be like bumping into your own father at a crossroads; you don't have to ask anyone else whether or not that's the one.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

Don't draw another's bow,  
Don't ride another's horse,  
Don't discuss others' errors,  
Don't mind others' business.

### ZEN MASTER YE-NIU SAID,

The past and future Buddhas are servants of another; do Zen followers past and present know, or not? Where the wine is fine, you don't need to hang up a sign; where the vinegar's sharp, why put up a gourd?

### ZEN MASTER NANTANG'S VERSE

Old in years, the season late,  
Pleasurable things far away,  
It's not like childhood days  
When you didn't know how to be sad.

### *Translator's Comments*

Here is Zen master Wuzu again with his pesky questions. The "past and future Buddhas" represent the means by which people attain en-

lightenment and the means by which people transmit enlightenment. The "Buddha of the Past" stands for the teachings that lead the individual to personal liberation from past limitations, and thus to awakening of preexisting potential. The "Buddha of the Future" stands for teachings formulated in the aftermath of enlightenment for the purpose of communicating with others in new situations yet to come in the future.

Zen master Wuzu asks us to look into the root of the whole matter: Who is the master of the past and future Buddhas? There is no practical use in giving the obvious answer, that it is the universal Buddha-nature or Buddha-mind. The question of the koan is precisely the fundamental question of Zen that everyone who seeks enlightenment has to ask inwardly.

Wumen cannot stress this enough in his prose and verse comments, where he reminds us over and over again that the essential study of Buddhism is the study of the essence of mind, carried out by internal investigation of one's own experience of consciousness, and not by concern with irrelevant externals.

The comments of Zen masters Ye-niu (pronounced Yeh-nyu) and Nantang take interesting turns in order to make sure the reader does not mistake a shallow understanding for a deep realization.

Ye-niu speaks of the liberated essence of mind, which is also called the host, or the master. When this essence is fully liberated ("fine wine"), there is no need to cling to the letter of expedient doctrine ("hang up a sign"). When the essence is fully awakened ("sharp vinegar"), there is no need to advertise ("put up a gourd"). This artful Zen statement also cautions seekers not to mistake intellectual or emotional self-consciousness ("sign," "gourd") for authentic perception of the essence of mind ("wine," "vinegar").

As for Nantang's doleful verse, the least of its lessons is that we shouldn't let melancholy stop us from learning. What we learn at such times may be precisely that which will teach us to be a master of emotions rather than be mastered by emotions.

In its strict technical sense, in contrast, this verse is extraordinarily artful and indirect, both reinforcing the first meaning and adding further dimension. In these four brief lines, Nantang basically says that true wakefulness of the liberated essential mind is nothing like ideas and sentiments of the ego, which is conditioned from child-

hood onward and therefore naively assumed to be real or true. In practical terms, this means that we need to see beyond, or beneath, the various artificial selves we have acquired and developed through the formation of psychological habits, in order to arrive at the underlying self of selves.



## STEPPING FORWARD ATOP A POLE

*Master Shishuang said, "Atop a hundred-foot pole, how do you step forward?"*

*Another ancient worthy said, "One who sits atop a hundred-foot pole may have gained initiation, but this is not yet reality. Atop a hundred-foot pole, one should step forward to manifest the whole body throughout the universe."*

WUMEN SAYS,

If you can step forward and flip around, what more aversion is there to any place as unworthy of honor?

Now tell me, at the top of a hundred-foot pole, *how* do you step forward? Whoops!

### WUMEN'S VERSE

If you blind the eye on top,  
Mistakenly sticking to the zero point of the scale,  
Giving up your body, you can abandon your life,  
But you'll be one blind leading many blind.

### *Translator's Comments*

Zen master Shishuang (pronounced Shir-shwong) was one of the great masters of the classical era, known for his establishment of a "dead tree hall" where Zen seekers plunged into nirvana. He is therefore a perfect icon for this koan, which has to do with gaining a higher balance after the experience of nirvana, here symbolized by the top of a pole.

One of the most important scriptures of Buddhist psychology and meditation is called *The Discourse on Unlocking the Mysteries*. This highly developed and unusually subtle and detailed text explains the

relationships among absolute, relative, and imagined reality. One of its most important revelations is the technical description of "tranquil nirvana" as "the highest expedient." In other words, nirvana is the highest expedient for seeing through the deceptions of imagined truth to the realities of objective truth.

The *Lotus Scripture*, another important Buddhist text already mentioned, describes tranquil nirvana as an "illusory citadel," which is expediently represented as ultimate relief in order to soothe the fears of those who face the endless infinity of the path of real being-as-is.

The present koan and Wumen's comments drive home the point that nirvana is not in itself the goal of Zen Buddhism, but a temporary resting place on an endless pathway of complete realization. Wumen's prose comment first describes the shift in attention from the peace of nirvana to the infinity of suchness, then observes the essential equality of all phenomena when they are seen as just "such."

Then, lest the reader remain complacently or indiscriminately in mirrorlike awareness as though it were the sum of Zen, or fall into the notion that the totality of real suchness is an undifferentiated unity, Wumen concludes with a typical Zen question to engage the required attention: *How* do you step forward? It is no coincidence that one of the most popular Zen proverbs for this situation can be read to say, "Watch your step!" or "See right where you are!" This is being "not blind to causality."

One of the main problems with jumping to conclusions about Zen is represented by the distinction made here by Wumen. It is not just "that" you emerge from nirvana to higher integration; it is also "how" you do it. Sometimes people who emerge from nirvana precipitately, without considering this "how," become mentally unstable or even deranged. This is one source of the eccentricity known in technical literature as "crazy Zen."

Wumen's verse comment summarizes the danger of overestimating the experience of quiescent nirvana and mistaking a means for the end. Slightly more concealed is the parallel message that there are no counterfeit and genuine versions of nirvana. It is not only the counterfeit nirvana (quietism or nihilism) that "blinds" the unwary seeker, but even the real nirvana also blinds people when it is taken out of context as an expedient method and turned into an object of devotion as if it were an ultimate goal.

## THREE BARRIERS

*Master Tushuai Yue set up three barriers to question students:*

- 1. Brushing aside confusion to search out the hidden is only for the purpose of seeing essence. Right now where is your essence?*
- 2. Only when you know your own essence can you be freed from birth and death. When you are dying, how will you be free?*
- 3. When you are freed from birth and death, then you will know where you are going. When the elements disintegrate, where do you go?*

WUMEN SAYS,

If you can utter three pivotal sayings here, you can be the master wherever you are; whatever circumstances you encounter are themselves the source.

Otherwise, it is easy to fill up on coarse food, hard to starve if you chew thoroughly.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

In an instant of thought, survey measureless eons;  
The affairs of measureless eons are the very present.  
Right now see through this instant of thought,  
And you see through the person now seeing.

### *Translator's Comments*

Tushuai Yue (pronounced Too-shwai Yweh) was one of the later masters of the Linji school of Zen. This school generally showed a proclivity for systematic koan construction such as demonstrated here.

The exercise presented here may be summarized as follows:

1. Stand aside from the rustle of thoughts to try to see into the essential mind.
2. Maintain independent awareness of the essential mind when thoughts die out. Note that there is a tendency for part of the mind to start up in fear when reaching the brink of nirvana. The habit-ridden psyche then pours forth images, ideas, and thoughts, thus distracting attention from the absolute and thereby retreating from the overwhelming power of nirvanic experience, which is so threatening to the limited ego.

This last-minute psychic flurry is a common theme in Buddhist iconography and mythology, because it actually does happen to almost everyone. Many people in deep meditation do become agitated or frightened at the eleventh hour, on the verge of the "Great Death" of the false self, thus spoiling the result. Tushuai zeros in on this critical point in the transformation of consciousness, asking, "When you are 'dying,' how will you be free?"

3. Once you get through confusion and distraction to attain the nirvanic calm of the original mind and are freed from bondage to coming and going thoughts and feelings (samsara, or "birth and death"), then you will know real suchness. When the "elements" of mentally constructed versions of reality "disintegrate" (as a result of the foregoing process of Zen concentration), your future lies in your own relationship with the reality of suchness as it is.

Wumen's prose comment begins by affirming that when you succeed in this exercise, you can remain in contact with your basic mind, regardless of what may go through your head or what may take place around you. If you have not yet understood, he gives another description.

"It is easy to fill up on coarse food" symbolizes plunging into nirvana, or resorting to the mirrorlike awareness of everything at once. As a matter of fact, each of these (nirvana and mirrorlike awareness), when properly carried out as an exercise, leads to knowledge of the other one as an experience.

"It is hard to starve if you chew thoroughly" symbolizes complete integration of two aspects of Zen: 1) insight into the basis of consciousness; and 2) everyday management of the actions and products

of consciousness. The expression "chew thoroughly" also represents thorough knowledge of the differentiations in suchness. In this case also, each meaning of the line represents an exercise that completes the experience of the other.

Wumen's verse summarizes a way of practicing the koan:

1. Observe the constant essence of mind underlying its fluctuating functions.
2. Use the insight thus fostered to unify formerly fragmentary perception of being-as-is.
3. Use this extradimensional perspective to see through subjectivity in perception.
4. By seeing through subjectivity, realize the objective nature of the self.



## ONE ROAD

*A monk asked Master Qianfeng, "The Blessed Ones of the ten directions have one road of nirvana. Where is the road?"*

*Qianfeng raised his staff, drew a line, and said, "Here."*

*Subsequently the monk asked Master Yunmen for further instruction. Yunmen held up a fan and said, "This fan leaps up to the thirty-third heaven and bumps into the nose of the chief of the celestial rulers; the carp of the eastern sea are given a blow, and it rains buckets."*

### WUMEN SAYS,

One sifts dirt and raises dust on the bottom of the deepest sea; one rouses waves and floods the sky at the top of the highest mountain. Holding still, letting go, each puts forth a single hand to help set up a way to the source. It was very much like two racers bumping into each other. In all the world there could be no one who matches up, but from the point of view of the absolute eye, even those two great elders did not know the road at all.

### WUMEN'S VERSE

You've already arrived before you take a step:  
It's already explained before a word is said.  
Even if you keep on top of the situation with every move,  
Still you should know there's an opening higher beyond.

### ZEN MASTER HUANGLONG NAN SAID,

Qianfeng temporarily pointed out a road, bending over backward for a beginner. Yunmen communicated the evolution, to get later people not to weary.

## ZEN MASTER FOJIAN'S VERSE

One man rides a boat across dry land,  
 One man rides a horse on a needle point:  
 They arrive at the Capital at the same time, same day,  
 But one of them was most sharply focused.

*Translator's Comments*

Qianfeng (pronounced Chyen-fung) was a distinguished master of the same school as Caoshan, who appears in koan number ten, "Alone and Poor." Yunmen, who was already been seen in several koans, spent time studying the subtleties of Zen with both elder masters Caoshan and Qianfeng after his own enlightenment.

The koan at hand illustrates what Indian Buddhists called the Ekayana (pronounced Eh-kuh-yaa-nuh), which means One Vehicle. This term refers to the total scope of the essence and function of Buddhism as a science of human liberation. Technically speaking, the One Vehicle may be viewed from two perspectives, one that is perceptible to all people and therefore is called "common," and another that is perceptible only to people at a certain stage of awareness and therefore is called "special."

Simple as this principle of classification seems, some of the most sophisticated problems of Buddhist psychology and philosophy revolve around it. My purpose in mentioning the two visions of One Vehicle here is not to introduce a learned discourse on this subject, but to alert readers to a "barb" in the unconscious temptation to suppose that the two cannot be at once different and equal, that one must be better than the other.

In terms of Buddhist systems, this koan and the riddle of the two "One Vehicles" can be illustrated in terms of Flower Ornament Buddhism, which is based on the Buddhist text known as the *Flower Ornament Scripture*; and in terms of Lotus Buddhism, which is based on the Buddhist text known as the *Lotus Scripture*.

In terms of Flower Ornament Buddhism, one Zen master illustrates the perspective of "all in one," seeing everything at once as one integral whole; the other Zen master illustrates the perspective of "one in all," seeing the unity of everything in the whole of its plurality. If these seem to be exactly the same to you, or if they seem completely different, now you know the reason for this koan. Both of

these facets of total perception are necessary for complete mentation; yet because they are interdependent, neither of them is an absolute basis. This is why Wumen delivers the Zen coup de grace at the close of his prose and verse comments, turning the attention to the ineffable source of the one and the all.

In the terms of the *Lotus Scripture*, one Zen master points to the ineffable transcendence of quiescent nirvana, another hints at the infinite livingness of suchness. There is suchness in Qianfeng's quiescent nirvana, which he indicates is anywhere and therefore everywhere; and there is quiescent nirvana in Yunmen's suchness, as he demonstrates how even the most unexpected and extravagant happenings cannot disturb the unity of his vision and the equanimity of his observation.

Wumen's prose comment begins with an excellent description of these multiple *entendres*, using traditional Zen symbolism. Then he turns our attention to ourselves, to see if we are only partially awake, "leaning to one side." Wumen wants us to open our "absolute eye," which can see the One Road in both its totality and its particulars, without either mode of awareness domineering over the other, and without their interplay obstructing the more fundamental or essential consciousness of the basic mind.

Wumen begins his verse comment by depicting the omnipresence of the ineffable absolute. He goes on to say that if you use subtle awareness of this omnipresent absolute in order to clear your mind of superficial thoughts, that will allow you to attain intimacy with suchness. The final line contains multiple warnings, which may be summarized as follows:

1. Don't let absorption in the silence of nirvana cause you to forget the essence of mind.
2. Don't let fascination with the infinity of suchness cause you to forget the essence of mind.
3. Don't let the ongoing task of coordinating the heart of nirvana and the knowledge of differentiation cause you to forget the essence of mind.

Here again Wumen skillfully evokes Yunmen's style of Zen expression, renowned for its subtlety and ability to contain three statements within every remark. One of the criteria I use to evaluate Zen masters after the classical era is their ability to express this sort of versatility and depth without simply imitating others. This would

express the freedom of the Zen mind more than literary poetic sentiment, or the routine habit of turning everything into cliché

The remark of Huanglong on this koan presents an exact description of the main outline of Lotus Buddhism. The first line stresses the point that quiescent nirvana is a temporary expedient; the second line hints at the infinite endlessness of suchness.

In schools of Chinese Buddhism inheriting the Lotus tradition, quiescent nirvana is called the magical castle, the illusory citadel, the temporary abode, with all these terms referring to its expedient nature. The endless experience of working consciously with suchness, in contrast, is called the continent of jewels, the knowledge of all knowledge, and the vision and cognition of Buddhahood.

Finally, the verse of master Fojian symbolically describes the integration of the heart of nirvana with objective knowledge of the world, indicating the different approaches of the two masters as well as the different ways in which each master's approach can be viewed. Lest we be confused by difference in approach and imagine this means difference in destination, Fojian says they "arrive in the Capital at the same time, same day."

Still fearing vagueness in understanding, Fojian cautions us that there is orderly procedure involved in the work of integrating different modes of consciousness. It is not an arbitrarily forced mixture based on the subconscious notion that we can gain access to the actual experience of integrated awareness simply by having the idea that it can be done.

In plain terms, there have always been people, especially intellectuals, who demand more enlightenment than they can actually perceive, let alone sustain, because they are overly impressed by the theoretical knowledge they have of its existence. People like this often have to unlearn a lot before they can find out what is real.

It may appear here that Fojian is saying one or the other of the Zen masters was "most sharply focused." It may also seem that he is saying one way of interpreting each Zen master's pointer is "most sharply focused." It may also be evident that the sharpest focus is on the specific needs and capacities of the individual at a given stage on the Way. The One Road of Nirvana is anywhere and everywhere, but your journey begins from right where you are.

Now where are *you*? To focus this question "most sharply," place before yourself the questions it contains. Where is *who*? Which *who* or *you* is there? *Who* says *where* or *there*?

THE ORIGINAL FACE

*An Anthology of Rinzai Zen*





## INTRODUCTION

A fundamental experience and comprehension which the enlightened Zen masters have urged us to realize is known as the original face. A famous Zen patriarch asked, "Before your father and mother were born, what was your original face?" If we understand "father and mother" in a traditional symbolic way to refer to ignorance and craving, this question directs us to realize our original nature as it was before a lifetime of habitual illusions based on ignorance and greed.

Here, in this original face, there is no station or grade, no prejudice, no philosophy or religion; all beings are the family, all worlds are the household. Only on the basis of the most fundamental realization, only with an open mind and heart, can the affairs of the family and household have a sound foundation for accomplishment.

This volume, titled *The Original Face* to evoke this persistent theme, draws on the sayings and writings of Zen masters who gave up their personal selves to find the truth and have been pointing at this original face for Zen and is the source of present day Rinzai Zen in Japan.

Jakushitsu (1290-1367) was the last noted Japanese Zen master to go to China. Exceptionally intelligent, he became ordained at the age of fifteen and before long came to the National Teacher Butto, a Zen master in Kamakura. Butto said that the night before Jakushitsu's arrival he dreamed the saints appeared, their lights brightly illumining mountains and rivers; seeing Jakushitsu, Butto named him Genko, Original Light. Once when Butto was ill, Jakushitsu, who took care of his medicine, asked him what is the last word; Butto slapped him, whereupon Jakushitsu attained enlightenment. He was then eighteen years old.

Later Jakushitsu went to Yuan China and met Mingben, the foremost Linji Chan master of the time there. Subsequently he met numerous Chan masters and was praised and encouraged by them all.

After he returned to Japan, he left a rich record of verbal and written teaching. He was especially noted for his eloquence.

By the closing decades of the fourteenth century, with the ending of the era of pilgrims and patriarchs in Japan, Zen was losing its freshness—indeed, it had already been in decline and become outwardly highly formalized in China by the time it took root in Japan. Social and politicoeconomic conditions were not very peaceful in either China or Japan, and much of the real Zen practice and teaching was carried on in places other than the large urban public monasteries. *Koan* study and practice seems to have become highly formalized, producing a great deal of Zen culture—literature, art, ritual—as an accumulating by-product. Then Zen monks preserved formal knowledge, including worldly knowledge, while generations of warlords fought throughout the country. In the meantime, a few great masters furthered contacts with the populace, more and more writing in the vernacular.

Bassui (1326–1387) studied for a long time and experienced transformations of his state dozens of times before his great enlightenment. Later he furthered his investigation with the leading Soto Zen master of the day and did not assume the role of a teacher until his latter years. A volume of sermons and letters of advice to both homeless and lay students, written in easily understood, ordinary language, have been useful to many generations of meditators. Bassui favored an intense introspective method, continually transcending conscious ideas of understanding or realization, describing a method for gaining access to enlightenment and deepening one's practice to thoroughly awaken the original mind in all activities.

Ikkyu (1384–1481) is perhaps the best known and beloved of all Zen monks in Japan. He is the Nasrudin of Japan, and indeed some of the same tales and jokes are told of the humorous Sufi and the wild high priest of Zen. The bastard son of an emperor, Ikkyu was ordained at the age of six and realized enlightenment only after many hardships and difficulties. While the hundred years' war raged around the ancient capital of Kyoto, Zen was in decline and the monasteries corrupt; Ikkyu burned the testimonial of enlightenment he received as the sole successor of his teacher and suggested that he was the only true heir of Rinzai in sight at the time.

Ikkyu is famous for enjoying women and wine, especially in his latter years, flouting the pretexts of immoral abbots of his time. Car-

rying a wooden sword in public, he declared that the teachers of the time did not even have the sword to kill (egoism) much less the sword to give life (to enlightenment). For the last ten years of his life he was abbot of a major Zen monastery in Kyoto, but he never recognized any successors.

Ikkyu was a poet, calligrapher, and artist. His *Skeletons*, in prose and poetry, is a simple yet profound and utterly moving work.

Bunan (1603-1676) studied for thirty-odd years with the guidance of the famed National Teacher Gudo, considered the true lamp of the generation spanning war and peace. Bunan was a layman until his forties, working as a gatekeeper; there he used to talk to Gudo, who stopped there on his travels between east and west Japan, answering the request to teach. Later Bunan left home and became a monk and an abbot of a small hermitage, historically the foremost of Gudo's twenty-four successors.

Bunan had a few close disciples and a wide range of disciples and acquaintances; he left a great deal of inspiration and guidance in Japanese poetry and booklets in prose and verse. He was naturally austere, led his group with a few simple rules; it is said that he couldn't even read the difficult Chinese classic texts. His greatest disciple was Dokyo Etan, later known as Shoju Rojin, or Old Man of Correct Perception, who was Hakuin's root teacher. Shoju Rojin seems to have been modest and austere like his teacher, whom he met when he was nineteen, three years after his first enlightenment, and went into seclusion in the Japanese Alps rather than accept abbacy in a monastery. He was evidently very learned and delved profoundly into the ancient teachings in his meditations; his disciple Hakuin shared this trait along with the everyday conversational manner of Bunan.

Bankei (1622-1693) wandered for years, sat for years, and visited teachers all over Japan before becoming suddenly enlightened at the age of twenty-six. He had been induced out of a hut in which he had been shut for two years, near death from consumption, and suddenly awakened while washing his face. Later he studied with a Chinese Chan teacher in Nagasaki, and at thirty years of age experienced great enlightenment there; of all the students there, he alone received the recognition of the Chinese master, and like others in similar situations, took his teacher's advice to slip away in the night. After this, Bankei remained in concealment for many years, after finding, as had

Shakyamuni, that no one could understand his freshly inspired proclamations of what he had realized.

Later Bankei became an immensely popular teacher, the most famous of the time, said to have had over ten thousand disciples from all walks of life and all religions. Many established teachers of Zen, Vinaya, Shingon, Tendai, and Pure Land schools came to see and study under Bankei, who did not use ancient texts, but based his teaching on the fundamental unborn enlightened mind inherent in everyone, the aware radiance that is the source of both delusion and enlightenment. Sometimes called a popularizer because of his extensive teaching in the provinces and contact with all sorts of people, Bankei approved of very few successors. He said that there were enlightened peasants surpassing the teachers in the monasteries. Bankei's visible succession waned and died out in time, but his broad appeal, impeccable dignity, and fresh approach cut through much doctrinal and stylistic formality inherited from medieval Zen establishments, thus clearing the way for the monumental work of Hakuin and his successors.

Hakuin (1686-1769), called the greatest saint to appear in the last five hundred years in Japan, was the father of modern Rinzai Zen. Like Bankei, Hakuin and his enlightened apprentice and successor Torei (1721-1792) both went through exhausting years of effort; Hakuin's first awakening took place when he was twenty-four, his great awakening at twenty-seven, and his final realization at forty-three. Torei, like Ananda of old, was first awakened as he began to lie down, exhausted and driven to distraction by his intense efforts in sitting meditation; later he met Hakuin, but became desperately ill and had to be healed before continuing his work with Hakuin.

Hakuin, Torei, and other associates and successors revitalized the use of *koan* in Zen practice, making use of their extensive knowledge of the ancient teachings and experience in methods used all over Japan. Torei also wrote a detailed history of Zen and a study of the five houses of classical Zen in China, while Hakuin's works like the one presented here lucidly and powerfully show the reality of the teachings. Both Torei's and Hakuin's treatises are organized on the patterns of ancient teaching devices; they deal with fundamental and essential ideas, experiences, and scope of the Mahayana, or great vehicle teaching of enlightenment.

There is a great deal of anecdotal lore, written and orally transmit-



ted, surrounding the hosts of Zen eminent which has been, is, and will be told in various books and circles. For the moment of this glimpse of the Original Face we emphasize not personalities or situations, but the timeless teaching. When the timeless teaching becomes familiar, it contains the personalities and situations in prototype, in the intimate or differentiating teachings of Zen after enlightenment.

This book contains materials suitable for deepening the study of such Zen classics as the *Blue Cliff Record*, Mumonkan, and the letters of Tai Hui, translated in *Swampland Flowers*\* and they, in turn, hark back to this book. It is safe to say that all the Zen masters represented in *The Original Face* were familiar with these books; Hakuin and Torei made famous commentaries on the *Blue Cliff Record*, sometimes called the foremost classic of Zen, and were certainly inspired in their practice and teaching by the stories and methods told in the Mumonkan (Gateless Gate or Barrier of the Gate of Nothingness) and the letters of Ta Hui, one of the great disciples of Yuanwu (author of the *Blue Cliff Record*), known as the second coming of Linji (Rinzai). All of these, therefore, are recommended to the reader.

\* *Swampland Flowers: The Letters and Lectures of Zen Master Ta Hui*, translated by Christopher Cleary, published by Grove Press.



*The Original Face*



## ZEN MASTER DAIKAKU'S TREATISE ON SITTING MEDITATION

Sitting meditation is the method of great liberation; all the teachings flow forth from this, myriad practices are mastered this way. Supernormal powers, knowledge, wisdom and virtue all arise from here, the path of life of humans and gods opens herein; all the buddhas have entered and left by this door, bodhisattvas practicing it have entered this door, disciples and self-enlightened ones are still only halfway there, while outsiders, though they practice, do not enter the right path. Whatever esoteric or exoteric schools do not practice this do not have anyone who realizes the way of buddhahood.

"What does it mean that sitting meditation is the root source of all teachings?"

Meditation is the inner mind of the enlightened ones, discipline is their outer character, doctrine is their speech, Buddha remembrance is the invocation of Buddha's name—all come from the enlightened mind of the buddhas; therefore it is considered fundamental.

"The method of meditation is formless and thoughtless; spiritual qualities are not obvious, and there is no proof of seeing reality—so how can we believe in this?"

Your own mind and the enlightened mind are one—is that not spiritual quality? If you don't know your own mind, on whom can you call for witness and proof? Other than the identity of mind and Buddha, what proof do you seek?

"How can the ability to cultivate the teaching of one mind compare to myriad practices cultivating myriad virtues?"

When you suddenly awaken to the pure clear meditation of those who realize thusness, the six transcendences and myriad practices are complete within your body; thus the one practice of meditation includes all practices. Haven't you heard it said that the three realms are only one mind, that outside of mind there is nothing else? Even if



you do cultivate myriad practices, if you don't know the mind you cannot realize enlightenment; and how can there be any way to fulfill the way of the Buddha if you don't realize enlightenment?

"How should we practice this method? Even if we practice we are not sure of attaining enlightenment and fulfilling buddhahood; and if it is uncertain, even if we do practice, what is the benefit?"

This school is an exceedingly deep and subtle teaching; once you have heard it, it becomes an excellent cause for enlightenment for all time. An ancient said, "Those who hear this, even if they don't believe, have blessings greater than humans or gods; those who study even without attainment eventually reach buddhahood." This teaching is the school of the enlightened mind; the enlightened mind itself basically has no delusion or enlightenment. This is actually the subtle art of those who realize thusness; even if you don't become enlightened, when you sit once in meditation you are a buddha for that sitting; when you sit for a day in meditation you are a buddha for a day; when you sit in meditation all your life, you are a buddha all your life. The same is true of the future; one who can have faith in this is someone with great potential.

"If so, I can practice, too; how should I rest my mind, how should I use my mind?"

The enlightened mind has no attachment to appearances; detachment from appearances is the character of reality. Among the four modes of conduct—walking, standing, sitting, and lying—sitting is considered to be stable and tranquil. This means sitting straight and contemplating the characteristics of reality.

"Please explain in detail the meaning of sitting straight and contemplating reality."

Sitting straight means sitting cross-legged as the Buddhas do; contemplating reality means sitting meditation—forming the symbol of absorption in the cosmos,\* body and mind unmoving, eyes half-open, watching over the tip of the nose, you should see all compounded things as like dreams, illusions, bubbles, shadows; don't get hung up in thought about them.

"Crossing the legs and making the symbol with the hands is the

\*Left palm up, left hand on right palm, thumbtips joined to form a circle, symbol of the body of reality with no lack or excess, beginningless and endless, perfect and complete as a sphere.

comportment of the realized ones, but why keep the eyes half-open, watching over the tip of the nose?"

When the eyes are open and you can see for a distance, your mind can be distracted by the profusion of objects; yet if you close your eyes, you fall into a state of darkness and oblivion, and your mind is not clear. When your eyes are half-open, your thoughts don't race; mind and body are one thusness. When you examine clearly, the afflictions of birth and death cannot be approached—this is called fulfilling buddhahood right where you are, the meaning of great capacity and great function.

"Though I hear what you say, it's still hard to really believe. Only by accumulating the virtues of reading and reciting scriptures and spells, fasting, discipline, and recitation of Buddha names, can we have something to rely on; how can there be anything special about peaceful meditation without doing anything?"

Such doubt is called activity causing birth and death; such doubt is called affliction. Practicing everything without any sense of attainment is called the exceedingly profound transcendent wisdom; this wisdom can cut off the source of birth and death, like a sharp sword. To practice virtue in hopes of reward is the illusion of ordinary folk; bodhisattvas do not seek for the resulting rewards as they cultivate roots of virtue, because they cultivate goodness for the sake of impartial love and compassion, and thus it becomes sustenance for enlightenment. As for those who seek rewards as they cultivate virtue and attain the lesser reward of humanity or godhood, this is surely the work of birth and death.

"Without accumulating virtue and good qualities, how can one become a Buddha, in whom myriad virtues are complete?"

It takes three incalculable eons to attain buddhahood by accumulating virtue and good qualities, but if you practice the way of unity of cause and effect, you realize buddhahood in one lifetime. Someone who illumines his own mind and awakens to his real nature sees that he himself is originally Buddha, not now attaining buddhahood for the first time.

"Do those who realize buddhahood by seeing reality not depend on cause and effect? Should they not cultivate virtue?"

Although those who realize buddhahood by seeing their true nature may cultivate virtue, they do it for others' benefit, not for rewards. Because they teach and transform sentient beings, they teach

cause and effect; because they know they have no personal gain, they do not depend on merit—they have no mind at all.

“What is no mind? If there is no mind at all, who sees reality, who awakens to the way? And who can expound the way to teach?”

No mind means there is no deluded, foolish mind; it does not mean there is no mind to discern false from true. If one doesn't think of sentient beings, doesn't long for Buddhas either, doesn't think of illusion or seek enlightenment, doesn't go along with the honor of others, does not hope for fame, profit, support or reputation, does not shrink from attacks from those who are resentful or hostile, and does not add any discriminating thoughts about any good or evil, one is called a mindless wayfarer. Thus it is said, “The path is mindless of union with man, a mindless man unites with the way.”

“Are there differences of more or less merit in fasting, observing the precepts, reading and reciting scriptures and spells, and chanting Buddha names?”

Eating once a day removes greed for food and results in great blessings and virtue in the coming life. Morality and discipline is also to stop bad states of mind and produce a good mental state; those with good minds live in human and heavenly realms, in the highest estates. Since those who read the scriptures and spells protect and maintain the teachings of the enlightened ones, these people will have great knowledge and wisdom in the coming life. Extolling their names is taking refuge in the Buddhas, so in the coming life one will surely be born in a Buddha land. No mind is the Buddha mind; the qualities of this enlightened mind cannot be reached by words or thought—it is truly inconceivable.

“Such roots of goodness as these each have their merit, undoubtedly, but what is the virtue of mindlessness?”

Learning the standards of conduct of the Buddha, transmitting the sayings of the Buddha, and extolling the names of the Buddha have merit, so mindless wayfarers must also have merit; if you say no mind has no merit, then other practices cannot have any merit either. All roots of virtue and good qualities are conditional, whether they be heavenly or humanly mundane; no mind is immediate witness of the path of enlightenment, so its merit cannot be adequately expressed in words—really it is the condition of the one great matter; the afflictions of birth and death die away of themselves, mind and body are one thusness—this is what it is. How can there be any doubt

about the immediate mind realizing buddhahood? That is why someone in ancient times said, "To make offerings to the Buddhas of the three times cannot compare to making offerings to one mindless wayfarer." Actually this is the sphere which only an enlightened one can communicate to an enlightened one; ordinary people, disciples, and self-enlightened ones cannot fathom it.

"The scriptures do not speak of no mind, nor do they praise it; by what school of teaching do you esteem this?"

Various scriptures have not failed to speak of it; some say "the path of words ends," some say "it cannot be explained," or "ultimate emptiness," or "the condition of the one great matter." And also they say that all things are quiescent and dead—Shakymuni shut his room, Vimalakirti closed his mouth. Does this not point to no mind? Because the phantomlike bodhisattvas already have experiential knowledge of this, the Buddha does not preach it to them, and he does not teach it to seekers of sainthood and self-enlightenment because they could hardly attain it. That is why it says in the Lotus of Reality scripture, "Do not expound this scripture in the presence of ignorant people." That's what this means. Although there are eighty-four thousand entrances to the truth in the teachings, they do not go beyond matter and emptiness. Everything that has form and characteristics is matter, body; that which does not show any form is all empty. Because the body has form, it is called material; and because the mind is formless, it is called empty. All the scriptures do not go beyond these two things: matter and emptiness. They cannot explain the sphere of no mind, so they don't extol this matter. Because words cannot reach it, it is called the special transmission outside of doctrine.

"Is this body then to be considered illusion? Can it be considered enlightenment? And what is the mind? The basis of illusion and enlightenment, it should be known. And is the mind inside the body or outside the body? Where does it come from?"

The body of four gross elements (fire, water, earth, air) and five clusters (matter, sensation, perception, coordination, consciousness) fills the universe; all sentient beings are the foundation. Causes and conditions interact to form physical bodies—this is called birth. When the results of the causes and conditions change and die out, then the four elements disperse—this is called death. In form and characteristics there are ordinary people and saints; in the essence of



mind there is no delusion or enlightenment. Even so, we professionally define the deluded as sentient beings and the enlightened as the buddhas. Delusion and enlightenment just depend on the deceiving mind—in the real mind there is no illusion or enlightenment. Sentient beings and buddhas are basically deluded or enlightened on the basis of one mind; when you comprehend its true nature, then ultimately there is no distinction between ordinary man and saint. Therefore the Surangama scripture says, “The perfect illumination of inconceivable reality is beyond names and symbols; there is no original world or sentient beings.”

“If there is fundamentally no illusion in the nature of mind, where do illusions come from?”

When false thoughts arise, illusion comes along, and because of illusion, afflictions are born. When errant thoughts cease, then illusion goes; and when illusion goes away, afflictions also die out. Afflictions are things of life, seeds of birth and death. Enlightenment is the way to extinction. If you take peace and quiet to be bliss, all things are afflictions; but when you are enlightened, all things are enlightenment. People of the world do not understand this basis of delusion and enlightenment; they suppress thoughts of birth and death and think that this is the nonbirth of a single thought, and also consider this mindlessness—but these are still thoughts of birth and death, not mindlessness, not quiescence. When you try to stop thought by thought, birth and death continue.

“Those of the lesser vehicle fall into the principle of emptiness and so don’t know mindlessness; can bodhisattvas of the great vehicle attain this no mind?”

Through the (highest) tenth stage, bodhisattvas still have two kinds of obstruction—confusion and knowledge; therefore they do not realize no mind. The obstruction of confusion means that bodhisattvas up to the seventh stage still have conscious seeking for truth, and that becomes a barrier. Up to the tenth stage, they have conscious shining awareness, which thus becomes a barrier. When they reach the stage of complete enlightenment, they merge with this no mind.

“Since even bodhisattvas through the tenth stage do not know this, how can beginning students merge with no mind?”

The great vehicle is inconceivable, directly cutting off the root source of a thought; there are those who awaken to it immediately. In the doctrinal schools they set up three stages of sagehood and ten



stages of sainthood for those of dull faculties and potential; there are people of sharp faculties who immediately become truly awake when they are first inspired and directly attain buddhahood. Merging with no mind when reaching the tenth stage of bodhisattvahood and true enlightenment is no different in principle from the no mind we speak of now in seeing the true nature and realizing buddhahood.

"In seeing real nature and realizing buddhahood, what is the way, what is real nature, and how does the seer see? Can it be known by knowledge? Can it be seen by the eye?"

Knowledge attained by studying scriptures and treatises is discriminating knowledge from seeing, hearing, discerning, knowing; this practice does not need such knowledge. Turning the light around to shine back, knowing and seeing fundamentally inherent nature, is called the eye of wisdom; after seeing nature, seeing, hearing, discernment and knowledge may then be put to use.

"In knowing and seeing one's own fundamental inherent nature, the knowing and seeing can be known, but what about inherent nature itself?"

Because all sentient beings have a fundamental nature, it supports their own bodies; this real nature has never been born, never dies, has no form or shape, is permanent and unchanging—this is called fundamental inherent nature. Since this inherent nature is the same as that of all buddhas, it is called Buddha nature. The three treasures (buddhas, their teachings, their communities) and six kinds of sentient beings (humans, gods, ghosts, animals, titans, hell beings) all have this nature as their basis, whence come to be myriad things.

"What is turning the light around to shine back?"

Illumining outward things, one's own light is turned back to shine on the inner self. The mind is bright as the light of sun and moon, immeasurable and boundless, shining on all inner and outer lands; where the light does not reach is dark—this is called the ghost den on the black mountain, the abode of all ghosts, which can hurt people. The mind phenomenon is also like this; the light of knowledge of the mind essence is infinite and boundless and illumines all things; where the light does not reach is called the shadow world of ignorance, the clusters and elements, the abode of all afflictions, which can harm people. The knowing mind is the light, errant thoughts are shadows; the light illumining things is called shining, and when the mind and thoughts do not range over things but are turned toward

the original nature, this is called "turning the light around to shine back." It is also called "panoramic illumination"; illumining the whole of the immediate substance, it is where neither delusion nor enlightenment have ever appeared. Nowadays people think of basic mind by means of errant thoughts and consider afflictions enjoyable—when will they every escape birth and death?

"The essence of sitting meditation is the nonproduction of a single thought; trying to stop thought by thought is like washing blood with blood—what should we do?"

The nonproduction of a single thought is what is known as the original essence of mind. It is not stopping thought, yet it is also not not stopping thought; it is just the nonproduction of a single thought. If you merge with this original essence, this is called the realization of thusness of the reality of things. Thus, even sitting meditation is no use here—there is no illusion, no enlightenment, so how could there be thoughts? If you do not know this original essence, you cannot help but produce thoughts; even if you suppress them so they don't arise, this is all still ignorance. It is like a rock lying on the grass; before long the grass will grow again. You should work on meditation most meticulously and carefully; don't take it easy.

"Some say we should turn to the point where not a single thought is born; what about this?"

The nonproduction of a single thought is an expression referring to complete absence of any signs of birth, extinction, going, or coming. Birth and death come from the mind; if you don't know where thoughts come from, you cannot know the root of birth and death. Sentient beings are constantly afflicted by lustful, angry, foolish thoughts which compel them, making them turn away from their inherent nature. If the clouds of delusive thought clear, the moon of the nature of mind appears; the thoughts you hated before them becomes knowledge and wisdom, and you can use these thoughts to talk about reality and teach sentient beings. An ancient said, "You people are used by the twenty-four hours; I make use of the twenty-four hours."

"You say that when sitting in meditation, it is wrong when thoughts arise, yet wrong to stop them—so then what?"

Before you have seen reality, creating and stopping thoughts are both wrong; when it says in the Buddhist scriptures sometimes not to create false ideas, and sometimes it says not to cease and pass

away, these are words to let us know of the fundamental reality. If you know fundamental reality, then cultivation of practice is not necessary; when the disease of illusion and delusion is removed, then there is no more use for cures. Even so, when the diseases of delusive feelings arise, then you need the cure of cultivation of practice. Thoughts arising is the disease; not continuing is the medicine.

"Even if thoughts arise, they have no reality of their own; what is wrong?"

Even though they have no reality of their own, as soon as they arise you go wrong; it's like things in a dream—when you awaken you realize they were unreal; were you not mistaken? That which makes mistakes and produces dreams is sentient beings' false views; one day if they hear the teaching of enlightenment and are inspired with faith, this is much better. Even so, those who do not have a really genuine aspiration for enlightenment do not realize the errors of their minds because their application of effort is not careful; even though from time to time they suppress small thoughts, they are not aware of the big thoughts. If you do not cut off the root source, even if you have some affinity with the way, it will be impossible to escape birth and death.

"The sixth patriarch said, 'Do not think any good or bad at all.' To have no thoughts about good or bad surely is the essential point of sitting meditation; what are little thoughts and big thoughts?"

"Do not think any good or bad at all" are words that cut directly; not only in sitting meditation are they to be applied. If you reach this state, walking, standing, sitting, and lying down are all meditation; no need to cling to the form of sitting. A patriarch said, "Walking is also meditation; sitting is also meditation; speaking, silent, active or still, the body is peaceful." One of the Buddha's discourses say we are always in it, walking around, sitting, and lying down. Little thoughts are thoughts that suddenly arise about what is before you. Big thoughts are thoughts of things like greed, hatred, folly, false views, conceit, jealousy, name and fame, profit, and support. When sitting in meditation, those whose wills are weak may keep back little thoughts, but such evil thoughts as these [big ones] will remain unawares in their minds. These are called big thoughts. Giving up these big bad thoughts is called directly cutting off the root source; when you cut off the root source, afflictions become enlightenment, folly becomes wisdom, the three poisons become the three bodies of pure

discipline, ignorance becomes the objective reality of great knowledge—need we speak of little thoughts? Buddha said, “If you can transform things, then they are the same as those who realize thusness.” That’s what this means. If you can transform things, don’t be transformed by things.

“ ‘If you can transform things, you are the same as those who realize thusness’—what are things, what is transformation?”

Things are everything; transformation is complete liberation. Transforming things means that your mind is immutable in the midst of all things, turning back to fundamental nature, objects do not hinder the mind, heavenly demons, ghosts and spirits, afflictions, birth and death cannot overcome you. This is called transforming things. The essential point to watch is not to shift your mind onto things. Even views of Buddha and Dharma should be cut off, to say nothing of false thoughts; although the cutting mind seems like the thinking mind, this is right thought, and right thought is called wise thought. This is the knowledge and wisdom which enters into right seeing.

“It is clear that afflictions and enlightenment come from the mind, but just where do they begin?”

Seeing forms, hearing sounds, smelling odors, tasting flavors, sensing feelings, cognizing phenomena, are the functions of the powers of the six faculties; among these sense fields, that which distinguishes good and bad, discriminates false and true, is wisdom. Herein to set up others and self, producing love and hate, all are wrong views; development of attachment to forms based on these wrong views is called delusion, and from this delusion arise matter, sensation, perception, coordination, and consciousness—the five clusters—this is called affliction. Because sentient beings’ physical bodies are built of afflictions, they indulge in murder, theft, adultery, falsehood, and other evil actions, and eventually degenerate into the three evil ways [hell fiends, hungry ghosts, animals]. All this comes from wrong thoughts; as soon as these wrong thoughts arise, if you can turn them right around toward fundamental reality, then you can attain mindlessness. Once you rest in no mind, then the five clusters become the five-element body of reality of those who come to realize thusness. This is called “abiding nowhere, yet activating the mind.” Using your mind in this way is the great function of cultivation of practice.

“Someone who has long developed accomplishment at sitting meditation and whose work is pure and mature should not have any



afflictions or delusion in his mind; how can those who are just beginning to cultivate practice put an end to afflictions?"

Don't despise afflictions, just purify your mind. An ancient said, "To study the way you must be made of iron; lay hold of the mind and it's settled. Directly approaching unexcelled enlightenment, don't worry about any right or wrong." Laying hold of the mind means judging if the mind is in a proper state or not; those who know their minds' errors are wise ones, and those with wisdom should not be deluded. It is like taking a lamp into a dark cave where sunlight or moonlight has never come in; the old darkness doesn't go outside, but suddenly it becomes light inside. With the light of wisdom, the darkness of ignorance and affliction don't have to go away to be gone. At night the sky is dark, but when the sunlight comes out, the sky becomes daylight. The mind is also like this; illusion is darkness, enlightenment is light—when the light of wisdom shines, the darkness of afflictions suddenly turns light. Enlightenment is not something separate.

"Illuminating the darkness of afflictions depends on the light of wisdom; without wisdom there can be no enlightenment, so how can we attain this wisdom?"

Your own light of wisdom is clear and bright of itself, but when obscured by false ideas you lose this, and therefore create illusions. It is like when someone dreams; whatever it is seems to appear real, but after awakening there is not a single thing. Dreamlike illusions are seen to be originally nonexistent once you have awakened. Because sentient beings are deluded, they take the false for the true.

"If enlightenment means suddenly realizing something you didn't know before, then can one know things of the past and future?"

When false views are all ended and the great dream suddenly wakes and you know the enlightened nature by seeing it, this is called great enlightenment, great penetration; such as this cannot be fathomed by discriminating thought. Knowing past and future events is a power of superknowledge and depends on effective power from cultivation and practice; it cannot be called great enlightenment. Heavenly devils, ghosts and spirits, outsiders and sorcerers all have supernatural powers, which are attributes attained by past practice of hardships and austerity. But although they have such attributes, they don't give up their false ideas and don't enter the way of the enlightened ones.



"If those who awaken to the way and realize the truth do not have supernormal powers, what useful qualities do they have?"

Because this mind is made of past follies and delusions, even in people who see reality and realize buddhahood, superpowers are not manifest. Even so, when enlightened, you transcend the fields of senses, cut off birth and death; so you naturally have superpowers and their inconceivable use, but these are not the powers of heavenly demons and outsiders, which have attachments. One who is vastly and greatly enlightened immediately realizes the way of the enlightened ones without passing through three immeasurable aeons; why specially talk about supernormal powers besides this?

"Is there any difference between 'seeing reality and realizing buddhahood' and 'this very mind is Buddha'?"

'This very mind is Buddha' indicates that there is no Buddha outside of mind; one who can realize the meaning of this directly is sharp. This is also pointed out by the saying "not mind, not Buddha." Those who see reality and realize buddhahood know their own nature by direct seeing and cut off the root of life of sentience, clearly realize the perfect illumination of inconceivable real nature, so there is no birth and death, no afflictions—this is provisionally termed realizing buddhahood. Buddhahood is enlightenment, realizing you have never been deluded. Although there is no difference, it seems that there are differences among entry ways; that is why there are two expressions.

"If real nature is permanent and unchanging, the same in sentient beings as in buddhas, doesn't the fact that deluded sentient beings have the pains of birth and death mean that you can't say they are equal to buddhas?"

Equality is illumined by knowledge and wisdom, not seen by ignorant folly. The words and expressions of the ancestral teachers are tiles to knock on the door; when you have not yet entered this door, then the saying "seeing reality, fulfill buddhahood" is the ultimate. Once you have entered this door, you detach from all characteristics; so realizing buddhahood, too, involves no attainment.

"The exoteric and esoteric Buddhist schools all have guidelines; teaching, principle, knowledge, detachment, practice station, cause, effect; disciples of the two vehicles cultivate the four stages of meditation and eight absorptions, are free from calamities caused by fire, water, and wind, empty matter, sensation, perception, coordination, and consciousness, and enter extinction without remainder. Bodhi-

sattvas maintain three bodies of pure precepts, cultivate myriad practices out of great love and compassion, pass through the three stages of sagehood and ten ranks of holiness, cut off inner and outer afflictions. If where there are no afflictions is the sphere of buddhahood, why have the buddhas of the three times left the real world of true thusness and come to the realm of desire where there is birth and death?"

The buddhas and bodhisattvas make it their task to help sentient beings; if they do not help sentient beings, they are not buddhas or bodhisattvas—as long as those of the three vehicles do not help sentient beings, in the great vehicle this is called entering the deep pit of liberation. Bodhisattvas, in the three stages of sagehood and ten ranks of holy ones, cultivate practice and advance further into the multiplying hidden gates; in order to save sentient beings, they leave the blissful land of silent light and come to the miserable world of five corruptions to make trees of enlightenment. High meadows on dry ground do not produce lotuses; it is the mud of the low swamps that gives birth to lotus blossoms. A farmer who sows and reaps cannot plant crops on clear dry ground—putting dirty manure into wet mud, he plants rice seeds there, and with the proper basis and conditions, when the time comes and the sun's energy quickens them, sweet rain wets them, sprouts grow, roots and stems, branches and leaves flourish in profusion and grain ripens; when the farmer's work is done, he sings songs of peace and tranquility. The appearance of the buddhas in the world is also like this; in the clear blue vastness of the sky, you cannot construct a teaching of enlightenment, so they put on dirty old ragged clothes in this defiled evil world of five corruptions to invite and guide sentient beings afflicted with evil doings by explaining the truth to them in accordance with their state and potential to understand, planting seeds of the true basis; when the time for the casual connections comes, the sun of wisdom shines, the breeze of compassion fans, the rain of truth refreshes, ambrosia descends, the sprouts of the way appear, the branches, leaves, roots, and stems flourish and grow, producing trees of enlightenment, causing flowers of perfect enlightenment to bloom and producing the fruit of inconceivable enlightenment, transforming and guiding, to perfect fulfillment, extolling the inconceivable state of eternal bliss of nirvana.

People of the way are like a tree blood body; putting the manure of the six sense fields on the ground, planting the seeds of living aware-

ness, replanting the sprouts of physical bodies, sending forth shoots of inherent knowledge, producing the roots of mind and thoughts, growing the stems of conception and imagination, bringing forth branches of conscious spirit, sprouting leaves of emotions and desires, producing roots and trunk of pleasure, opening flowers of knowledge and vision, producing the fruit enlightenment. When the work of the way is done, they sing the song of mindlessness.

Ordinary people are also like trees; on the thin soil of folly and delusion putting the manure of greed and lust, planting seeds of ignorance, transplanting shoots of the five clusters, producing buds of actual habitual consciousness, growing roots of attachment and stems of the sense of others and self, bringing forth branches of flattery and deceit, sprouting leaves of jealousy and envy, creating trees of affliction, causing flowers of infatuation to bloom, forming fruits of the three poisons. When the tasks of fame and profit are done, they sing the songs of desires.

Now tell me: are these three kinds of trees any better or worse than each other? If there is anyone who can pull them out by the roots with a single hand and plant them on the ground where there is no light or shade and make a shadowless tree, he must be someone of great power, who has the same root as heaven and earth, the same body as myriad things. But tell me: who is this, what is he? If you say he is a Buddha, heaven and earth are far apart.

## SAYINGS OF NATIONAL TEACHER SHOITSU WHILE DWELLING AT TOFUKU ZEN TEMPLE

### ADDRESSING THE COMMUNITY ON THE NEW YEAR

Zen is not conception or perception; if you establish an idea, you turn away from the source. The way is beyond cultivated effects; if you set up accomplishment, you lose the essence. The news of the new year does not stir a bit of dust—harvesting blessings according to the season, no celebration inappropriate. If you assess it in terms of Buddhism, you are calling a bell a pitcher; if you call it mundane reality and its ordinary conventions, you fall on your face on level ground. Do you all understand? Early spring is still cold; return to the hall and have tea.

### OFFERING INCENSE IN MEMORY OF WUJUN

In the old days when I was traveling, I sailed across seas and climbed mountains, dragging mud and dripping water, traveling all over the south. Then on Five Topknots Peak I bumped unawares into this old teacher [Wujun] and encountered his poison hand—there was no way for me to escape. Setting my eyebrows above my eyes, I cleared away my life and even up till now have nothing to explain, no principle to expound; now in the presence of the assembly I will raise the depths and turn them over—[raising the incense]

The rock of ages will someday wear away, but when will this sorrow end?

## ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF A BUDDHA- IMAGE-WASHING CEREMONY ON BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

Prince Siddhartha, manifestation of the body of reality, today was born; in the palace of the King of Pure Food, nine dragons spit water to bathe the golden body, and golden lotuses sprouted from the ground to bear his feet. He boasted throughout heaven and earth, pointlessly opening his mouth and saying he alone was to be honored. He had all the adorning marks of a great man, and performed subtle and marvelous great Buddhist services. But what are great Buddhist services? [a silence] Getting down from the seat, asking the pillar and the lamp to enter the ocean of fragrant water of those who realize thusness, and help this old fellow turn the great wheel of the true teaching.

## INFORMAL TALK AT THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER RETREAT

In the secret transmission on the Spiritual Mountain, the pure tradition of Shaolin, actions accord, words complement each other, great perfect awareness is one's own sanctuary. Body and mind dwelling at peace, with knowledge of equality of the real nature of all things, not going anywhere for ninety days, protecting creatures for three months, keeping pure as ice and snow. Summon forth great energy in your efforts, great courage and determination; wielding the sword of wisdom, go directly ahead, killing all, whether in the stage of learning or beyond learning, and after having killed all you see that mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers, the whole body comes thus, the whole body goes thus—there are no complications around at all. At this time, can you call it the fundamental business of a patch-robbed monk? You must let go your hands over a mile-high precipice and appear with your whole body throughout the universe.

Tokusan said to his group, "According to my view, there are neither buddhas nor patriarchs. Bodhidharma was a greasy-smelling old barbarian; bodhisattvas of the tenth stage are dung haulers; the perfectly and inconceivably enlightened ones are immoral fools; enlightenment and nirvana are donkey-tethering stakes; the canonical teachings are ghost tablets, paper for wiping sores; the four grades of



saints and three grades of sages, from initiates to those of the highest stages, are ghosts hanging around graves, unable to save even themselves." Tokusan can function beyond the crowd, clearly analyzing past and present, casting the all embracing net of the school to bring in latecomers. [raising his staff] Even so, his nose has been pierced by this staff of mine so that he has no way to breathe. Is there anyone in the crowd who can show some energy? [planting his staff once] Those with eyes discern.

### ADDRESS AT THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER RETREAT

Going high beyond the ten stages of bodhisattvahood without going through countless eons of practice, things and self oneness, mind and body equanimous, not keeping company with myriad things, not on the same road as the thousand saints; this is bringing forth the whole potential of buddhas and patriarchs, alone revealing the true eye of humans and gods, just dwelling on the summit of the solitary peak, forbidden to leave, yet extending your hands at the crossroads, killing and giving life freely, capturing and releasing freely. But tell me: is there anything in this that is in accord with the holy precepts? [a silence] No interchange in daily activities, right in your being there is shutting down and opening up.

### INFORMAL TALK AT THE END OF SUMMER RETREAT

The great potential and great function, free in all ways, not lingering in the sages' barriers of potential, not falling into the nest of the patriarchs, clean and naked, with no defilement, bare and unhindered, with nothing concealed—the original face, the scene of the fundamental ground, speaking without sound, shattered along with the words, not anything before form, merging together with things, opening the cloth bag, smashing the iron gate barrier, wielding the blown-hair sword, coming from the south going north, your state thoroughly peaceful, treading on reality with every step. But tell me: what is the expression of walking on reality? If you don't enjoy the purity of ice, how can you appreciate the purity of snow?

# INSTRUCTIONS OF NATIONAL TEACHER SHOITSU

## TO EMINENT KUMYO

In the direct teachings of the ancestral masters, there are no special techniques, just to lay down all entanglements, put to rest all concerns, and watch the tip of your nose for six hours in the daytime and six hours at night; whenever you wander into distinctions among things, just raise a saying—don't think of it in terms of the way to enlightenment, don't think of it in terms of purification, don't consciously anticipate understanding, don't let feelings create doubt or despair, but go directly in like cutting through an iron bun with a single stroke, where there is no flavor, no path of reason, without getting involved in other thoughts. After a long time, you will naturally be like waking from a dream, like a lotus blossom opening. At this moment, the saying you have been observing is just a piece of tile to knock at the door—throw it over on the other side and then look instead at the sayings of the enlightened ancestors and buddhas expressing activity in the world of differentiation. All of these are just to stop children crying; the one road going beyond does not let a single thread through, but cuts off the essential crossing between ordinary and holy, while students toil over forms like monkeys grasping at the moon. We might say that if you forget your own body and go frantically searching outside, when can you ever find it? Sitting peacefully on a cushion, day and night seeking to become buddhas, rejecting life and death in hopes of realizing enlightenment, is all like the monkey's grasping at the moon. If you want some real help, it's just that not minding is the way; yet it's not the same as wood or stone—always aware and knowing, perfectly distinctly clear, seeing and hearing are normal; there are no further details.

Elder Kumyo sits facing a wall day and night and has asked for

some words to urge him on. Not begrudging the way of my house, I have let my brush write this, 1267.

### TO ELDER NYO

Buddha after buddha extended their hands, not only for others; it was of their own power of gratitude. A square peg fitting into a round hole, a clod of earth washed in the mud, communicated patriarch to patriarch, an empty valley answering a voice, calling south north, three ways across and four ways up, sitting one and walking seven, difficulty and confusion is unavoidable. In the dark dim semiawakeness before a single breath has appeared, if you can trust completely, you are still in the secondary—if you don't get it until the indiscernible is already distinguished, you have fallen into the third level.

See for yourself. Directly transcend the principles and activities of the buddhas and patriarchs, go through the forest of thorns, transcend the barriers of potential described by the ancestral teachers, pass through the silver mountain and iron wall—then for the first time you will realize there is a transcendent fundamental endowment; you can sit and wear clothes, helping people solve their sticking points and untie their bonds.

Elder Nyo has been in the assembly for years and now returns to his native place. He wouldn't turn back even if called; he cannot be trapped or held. He returns barefoot. So I write this to send him off.

### TO EMINENT CHIZEN

In the school of the ancestral teachers we point directly to the human mind; verbal explanations and illustrative devices actually miss the point. Not falling into seeing and hearing, not following sound or form, acting freely in the phenomenal world, sitting and lying in the heap of myriad forms, not involved with phenomena in breathing out, not bound to the clusters and elements of existence in breathing in, the whole world is the gate of liberation, all worlds are true reality. A universal master knows what it comes to the moment it is raised; how will beginners and latecomers come to grips with it? If you don't get it yet, for the time being we open up a pathway in the gateway of the secondary truth, speak out where there is nothing to say, manifest form in the midst of formlessness. How do we speak while there is nothing to say? "A mortar runs through the sky." How do we manifest form from formlessness? "The west river sports with a lion."

During your daily activities responding to circumstances in the realm of distinctions, don't think of getting rid of anything, don't understand it as a hidden marvel—with no road of reason, no flavor, day and night, forgetting sleep and food, keep those sayings in mind.

If you still don't get it, we go on to speak of the tertiary, expounding mind and nature, speaking of mystery and marvel; one atom contains the cosmos, one thought pervades everywhere. Thus an ancient said:

Infinite lands and worlds  
 With no distinctions between self and others  
 Ten ages past and present  
 Are never apart from this moment of thought

Chizen brought some paper seeking some words, so I dashed this off, senile and careless; after looking at it once, consign it to the fire.

### TO ZEN MAN CHIMOKU

Since the buddhas and patriarchs, there have been three general levels of dealing with people. On the uppermost level there are no further techniques, no meaning of principle; verbal understanding is impossible. If you can take it up directly at this, then there is no difference from "the cypress in the garden," "three pounds of hemp," "swallow the water of the west river in one gulp."

On the second level, it is just a matter of bringing out a question, going along to break through; this is like Rinzai questioning Obaku and getting hit sixty times.

On the third level, we enter the mud and water, setting down footnotes, blinding people's eyes, destroying the lineage of the Buddha.

But a true patch-robed one must search out and investigate the living word, not go for the dead word. Eminent Chimoku, you are pure and true; if you can attain realization at the living word, you can be teacher of buddhas and patriarchs. Not begrudging my family way, I have shown you three levels of device.

### TO ELDER KAKUJITSU

The fundamental style of the ancestral teachers, the one expression of transcendence, plunging into the other side with a heroic spirit, then being free wherever you are, inconceivable activities unhin-

dered. Wielding the jewel sword of the diamond king, cutting off difficulty and confusion, using the killing and reviving staff to eliminate affirmation and denial. Striking and shouting at appropriate times, sitting one walking seven; by this that tawny-faced old teacher Shakyamuni assembled all kinds of people over three hundred and sixty times—able to act as king of the teaching, he was free in all respects. The blue-eyed first patriarch sat for nine years facing a wall and offered instruction for later students—“outwardly ceasing all involvements, inwardly no sighing in the mind, mind like a wall, thereby one may enter the way.” These and their like are elementary techniques; later you realize on your own—casting off all involvements, letting myriad things rest, is the foremost technique. If you stick to this technique, then it is not right. It cannot be helped, to give meticulous explanations, to mix with the mud and water, to use a stake to extract a stake, to use a state to take away a state; a thousand changes, myriad transformations, seven ways up and down, eight ways across. If you take the words as the rule, you will produce interpretations along with the words and fall into the clusters and elements of physical-mental existence, the world of shadows; if you don't even know techniques, how could you know the true source?

Elder Kakujitsu is extraordinary by nature, a completely pure person. He asked for some words of exhortation, so I wrote this.

### TO A ZEN MAN

On the forehead, at the feet, it is necessary to realize here is a great road through the heavens. Without establishing the practice and vows of Samantabhadra or speaking of the active knowledge of Manjusri, hold Vairocana still so that all traces of ordinary or holy disappear—then afterward the great capacity and great function will come into being wherever you may be; on the hundred grasses speaking of the provisional and the true, in the heap of sound and form setting up illumination and function, giving helpful techniques, freely and independently. But if you have a clear-eyed person look at this, it is still only halfway—it is still wearing stocks presenting evidence of your crime.

However, even so, you must know there are methods of offering help and guidance; one is the technique of sitting meditation, the other is the technique of direct pointing. Sitting meditation is the



great calm; direct pointing is the great wisdom. Before the empty eon, on the other side of the ancient buddhas, self-enlightenment without a teacher, without any such techniques—this is what Bodhidharma taught, the hidden transmission of personal experience. After the empty eon, there is enlightenment and delusion, there are questions and answers, there are teachers and students; all these are guiding techniques.

The buddhas have come forth, with “merging of inner reality,” “barriers of potential,” “transcendence,” “reintegration,” “coming from light, merging in darkness,” “sun face Buddha, moon face Buddha,”—taking in the hand a talisman that lights the night, wielding the diamond sword with the eye of an adept, using tongs and hammer in accord with the situation, not needing verbal explanations, not needing devices or objectives, those of superior knowledge with sharp faculties penetrate through to direct realization; they can be said to be like the sky covering all, like the earth supporting all; vast and open as empty space, shining in all directions, like sun and moon. An ancient said, “In the community of the fifth patriarch, seven hundred eminent monks all understood Buddhism. There was only workman Lu who didn’t understand Buddhism.” This is the way of direct pointing; as for the technique of sitting meditation, you are already thoroughly familiar with this and don’t need my instruction. As you come with some paper asking for a saying, I scribble this senile confusion.

Awakening on your own without a teacher before the empty eon and being awakened by a teacher after the appearance of the buddhas and patriarchs, that is awakening and being awakened, are both techniques of guidance. All that has been communicated from buddhas to patriarchs, inconceivable liberated activity, is all just the mutual accord of states and words.

Great Master Bodhidharma crossed the sea and crossed the river, sat upright for nine years facing a wall, and returned alone with one shoe—this, too, was in the sphere of accord of words and actions. Eminent, if you want to attain accord, you must cut off the root of birth and death, break up the nest of sage and sainthood, become clean and naked, bare and untrammled, not relying on anything; only then will you have some realization. Now when I speak this way, is there any accord? Is there none? If you can search it out, don’t say I didn’t tell you.

## SAYINGS OF NATIONAL TEACHER DAIO AT KOFUKU ZEN TEMPLE

### INFORMAL TALK AT THE BEGINNING OF WINTER

Everything is the original law; every day the morning sun clears the sky, in every mind there is no separate mind, in every place the pure wind circles the earth. If you can understand immediately in this way, then there is no need for Shakyamuni to appear in the world or for Bodhidharma to come from the west—in everyone it towers like a mile-high wall, flashing a great precious light in everyone's presence. One thought ten thousand years, ten thousand years one thought, eating when hungry, sleeping when tired, who worries about the alternation of light and dark, the change of seasons? Who talks about ice forming from each drop of water, who says when the weather is cold the people are cold? Even if you go on this way, this is still ordinary behavior; how can ultimate transcendence be revealed? [hitting with his whisk] If winter isn't cold, wait and see after the twelfth month.

An ancient worthy said, "If you want to know the meaning of enlightened nature, you must watch the causal relations of time and season; when the time has arrived, the truth is manifest of itself." Now it is the beginning of the winter season; tell me, what is the truth that is revealed? [striking with his whisk] When one sun rises, myriad species are born.

### ADDRESS IN THE TEACHING HALL

A monk asked Joshu, "What is the path?"

Joshu said, "The one beyond the fence."

The monk said, "I'm not asking about that path."

Joshu said, "What path are you asking about?"

The monk said, "The great path."

Joshu said, "The great path goes to the capital."

Daio said in verse: "He points it out so clearly, face to face without deception; the great path is straight as a bowstring, but travelers make trouble for themselves."

### INFORMAL TALK ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

Hanging high the jewel mirror, ranging myriad images before the eyes, holding the sharp sword sideways, cutting off all impulses beyond conception, covering heaven and earth, passing through form and sound, shutting down and opening up at will, killing and giving life according to the occasion, in full command of holding fast or letting go. This is whereby patch-robed monks explain what cannot be practiced and practice what cannot be explained, changing in thousands of ways freely—even disrupting the order of time and wiping out the elemental spirits is not beyond their capability. But even so, tonight I forgo the first move; when the twelfth month is over, as of old, it is up to spring to return. Why? I want you people to take care at all times.

### ADDRESS IN THE TEACHING HALL ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF THE NEW YEAR

[describing a circle in the air with his whisk] Lighting this lamp, all lamps immediately shine; the dense web of myriad shapes and forms has nowhere to hide. If under an overturned bowl, how can you blame me? [a long silence] But tell me: what lamp is it?

### ADDRESS IN THE TEACHING HALL ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF BUDDHA'S DEMISE

The single heart not dwelling in extinction point—lessly sells off the golden body; up till now the ugliness has been impossible to conceal—what a mess, every year, the peach-blossom spring.

### ADDRESS IN THE TEACHING HALL ON THE FIRST DAY OF MARCH

Speaking of Zen, expounding the way, talking about marvel and mystery, is all gouging wounds in healthy flesh. Ultimately, what? "I always remember southern China in the spring, the fragrance of the hundred flowers as the partridges cry."

## ADDRESS IN THE TEACHING HALL

Great Master Ummon said to his group, "Monks, don't think falsely; mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers."

Then a monk came forward and said, "How is it when I see that mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers?"

Ummon said, "Why is the Buddha shrine passing through here?"

The monk said, "Then I am not thinking falsely."

Ummon said, "Give me back the words."

[citing this, Daio said] So then what is easy to open is the beginning and ending mouth; what is difficult to maintain is the heart of the dead of winter. When that monk heard Ummon say, "Why is the Buddha shrine passing through here?" if he had just said, "It should be so," he would not only have shown his own light, he would have also seen through Ummon's standpoint.

ADDRESS ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF BUDDHA'S  
MAHAPARINIRVANA

The Buddha body fills the cosmos, manifest to all sentient beings everywhere. [raising his whisk] This is a whisk; where is the Buddha body? People, if you can set a single eye here, you will see the solemn assembly on Spiritual Mountain has not yet dispersed, but if you hesitate and doubt, the ancient Buddha is long gone.

## NATIONAL TEACHER DAIO'S LETTERS TO MEDITATORS

### TO ZEN MAN GENTEI

The World Honored One raised a flower, Kasyapa smiled—gold is not exchanged for gold, water does not wash water; since then it has come down from generation to generation, taking in an echo from empty space, one person communicating it to one other. Hence we see Zen teachers doing things like going east to west, west to east, Hoshan beating a drum, Bimo raising his forked stick. Xuefeng rolling balls, Judi raising his finger, three pounds of hemp, the cypress tree in the garden, and myriad other illustrations, hundreds of thousands of actions using it, all coming forth in the same pattern, strung through on one thread. If one is a genuine patch-robed monk, who would care whose ladle handle was long or short? If you don't dump the gourd, the vinegar becomes sharper and sharper. Just go by your own sight; live on your own. Eminent Gentei, quickly set your eyes to see before the World Honored One raised the flower; keep watching whatever you do until this work becomes pure and refined to the point where in one moment you merge and see the original face, the scenery of the original ground. At that time, tawny old Buddha and the golden ascetic Kasyapa will both stand downwind of you. That is why it is said that a powerful man is the ancestor of mind before heaven and earth. Think of this, eminent Tei, think of this.

### TO KYOEN, LATTER ABBOT OF MANJU MONASTERY

When Rinzai left Obaku long ago, Obaku said, "Where are you going?" Rinzai said, "If not south of the river, then north of the river." Obaku then hit him. Rinzai grabbed the staff and slapped him. Obaku



laughed loudly, called his attendant, and said, "Bring me the meditation brace and whisk of my late master Hyakujo."

Rinzai called to the attendant, "Bring me fire." After all, a good son doesn't use his father's money.

Obaku said, "Just take them away; later you will cut off the tongue of everyone on earth." This old fellow cared so for his child that he did not mind being unseemly.

Eminent Kyoen has been with us on this mountain for four years, and his determination and mindfulness in investigation of the way are solid and firm; in his daily actions he is never off balance. Now he is going to another mountain and has come to take leave of us. Though the eminent has the ability to ask for fire, I have no meditation brace or whisk to hand over. But tell me: is this the same as the ancients or different? If you should encounter someone at a crossroads in a village of three families, don't misquote this.

## TO NUN GENTAI

Sister Gentai, from the capital. Her determination in seeking the way is keen, and she often comes to inquire further into the basis and conditions of this great matter. One day I said to her, "At the top of the hundred-foot pole, go forward."

She said, "At the top of the hundred-foot pole, there is no place to go."

I said, "Where there is no place to step, go a hundred thousand steps farther—only then will you be able to walk alone in the red skies, pervading the universe as your whole body." She agreed and smiled; that's all. Although she has not yet gotten the gist of it, she is not the same as ordinary folk who get stuck on even ground.

Now you want to return to your old capital and have come with incense in your sleeve to ask for a saying. I once made a verse of praise on the master of Ikusan in Daryo,\* so I will write that:

\*The master of Ikusan worked on a koan—"How to proceed forward from atop the hundred-foot pole? Uh!"—for three years, when one day, as he was crossing a valley stream on a donkey, the bridge plank broke and he fell, whereupon he was greatly enlightened. Atop the pole means at the peak of meditation, or personal detachment and liberation, or it can be used to refer to the farthest point of any aspect of work on the way. It usually refers, however, to the esoteric death, after which the "step forward," return to life, at one with the world, is the beginning of the next, usually more difficult, phase of Zen study.

Atop the pole, walk on by the ordinary route—  
 It is most painful, when taking a tumble in a valley  
 Earth, mountains, and rivers cannot hold you up  
 And space suppresses laughter, filling a donkey's cheeks

I ask you, Zen nun, to bring this up and look at it time and again; how to go forward from atop the pole? Suddenly, when the time comes, you can go forward a step, and space will surely swallow a laugh. Remember, remember.

### TO BATH STEWARD GENAN

The peak experience, the final act; as soon as you try to pursue it in thought, there are white clouds for a thousand miles. But even if you go back upon seeing the monastery flagpole at a distance, or head off freely upon seeing a beckoning hand, this is still only half the issue; it is not yet the strategic action of the whole capability.

Bath steward An has traveled and studied various places and spent a long time in monasteries. Don't stick to the ruts in the road of the ancients—you must travel a living road on your own. East, west, foot up, foot down, using it directly—only then will you know the peak experience illumines the heavens and covers the earth, illumines the past and flashes through the present. This is your own place to settle and live. When I say this, I am only using water to offer flowers, never adding anything extra. This of this, eminent, think of this.

### TO ZEN MAN KUSHO

The cause and conditions of the one great concern of the enlightened ones is not apart from your daily affairs; there is no difference between here and there—it pervades past and present, shining through the heavens mirroring the earth. That is why it is said that everything in the last myriad eons is right in the present. We value the great spirit of a hero only in those concerned—before any signs become distinct, before any illustration is evident, concentrate fiercely, looking, looking, coming or going, till your effort is completely ripe and in the moment of a thought you attain union, the mind of birth and death is destroyed and suddenly you clearly see your original appearance, the scene of your native land; each particular distinctly clear, you then see and hear just as the buddhas did, know and act as the enlightened ancestors did. Only then do you really manage to avoid

defeat in your original purpose of leaving home and society and traveling for knowledge and enlightenment. Zen man Kusho, work on this.

## TO ZEN MAN GENCHU

Since ancient times, the enlightened ancestors appearing in the world relied just on their own fundamental experience to reveal something of what is before us; so we see them knocking chairs and raising whisks, hitting the ground and brandishing sticks, beating a drum or rolling balls, hauling dirt and stones—"A ten-ton catapult is not shot at a rat."

Even though this is so, eminent Genchu, you have traveled all over and spent a long time in monasteries; don't worry about such old calendar days as these I mentioned—just go by the living road you see on your own; going east, going west, like a hawk sailing through the skies. In the blink of an eye you cross over to the other side.

If you are not yet capable of this, then look directly at before the enlightened ones were present, before the world was differentiated, twenty-four hours a day, walking, standing, sitting, reclining, carefully, continuously, closely, minutely, look, look, all the time. When this directed effort becomes fully developed and pure, suddenly in an instant you are united, the routine mind is shattered and you see the fundamental countenance, the scenery of the basic ground. Everything will be distinctly clear; it is as if ten suns were shining. When you get to this state, you should be even more careful and thorough going. Why? At the last word you finally reach the impenetrable barrier.

Eminent Genchu has been with our group for a summer and suddenly wants to go to another mountain. Just before leaving, he asked for some words, so I wrote this, letting the pen write what would, to fulfill his request.

## PRAISES OF KANNON BY DAIO

the sphere of perfect communion is clear everywhere  
the pitcher water is alive, the willow eyes are green  
there are also cold crags and early green bamboo  
why are people these days in such a great hurry?

the cliffs are high and deep, the waters rush and tumble  
the realm of perfect communion is new in each place  
face to face, the people who meet her don't recognize her  
when will they ever be free from the harbor of illusion?

lotus blossoms always in her hands, she stands alone  
magnificent  
a boy comes to all  
wordless, eyes resemble eyebrows  
know that outside of joining the palms and bowing the head  
how could this thing be explained to him?

the sound of the rushing spring is cool and subtle  
the colors of the mountain crags are deep but distinct  
in every field the realm of perfect communion  
how can Sudhana know?

the dense crags jut forth precipitous  
the waterfalls spew an azure loom  
in each land the sphere of perfect communion  
those who go right in are rare

the clouds are thin, the river endless  
the universal door appears without deception  
questioning the boy, he doesn't yet know it exists  
he went uselessly searching in the cold of the mist and waves  
in a hundred cities

## NOTES FROM JAKUSHITSU

### TO WAYFARER ZENTATSU

The sixth patriarch of Zen in China, in replying to a question from a government inspector, Mr. I, said, "Deluded people invoke a buddha's name seeking to be reborn in that buddha's land, but enlightened people purify their own minds. That is why the Buddha said that as the mind is pure, so is the Buddha land pure. Mr. inspector, you are a man of the East; as long as your mind is pure, you are faultless. Even people of the West [in the direction of paradise], if their minds are not pure, still have something wrong with them. When people of the East commit crimes, they invoke Amitabha Buddha's name seeking to be reborn in western paradise; when people of the West commit crimes, what land should they seek to be born in by invoking Buddha's name? The ignorant don't comprehend their own nature and do not recognize the pure land within their bodies, but wish for the West, for the East" and so on.

Essentially invoking of Buddha names is for liberation from birth and death; investigation of Zen is for realizing the nature of mind. We have never heard of anyone who awakened to the nature of mind who was not liberated from birth and death; how could someone freed from birth and death misunderstand the nature of mind? It should be realized that Buddha name remembrance and investigation of Zen have different names but are essentially the same.

Nevertheless, as an ancient said, "The slightest entanglement of thought is the basis of the most miserable types of behavior; if feelings arise for a moment, they lock you up for ten thousand eons." So even Buddha name remembrance is producing dust on a mirror, even investigating Zen is putting rubbish in the eye. If you can just trust completely in this way, then you will not be deceived.

Wayfarer Zentatsu has diligently practiced concentration on Buddha name remembrance for years, and has suddenly come to my



house asking for a robe and bowl, and to receive the great precepts; as he needs some admonitions for his daily life, so I hurriedly wrote this and gave it to him.

### TO BLIND TSUMEI

In ancient times Aniruddha used to indulge in sleeping, so the Buddha scolded him, "You're like a clam." So he didn't sleep for seven days and awakened the power of clairvoyance, whereby he could see the whole universe like looking at a fruit in his hand.

If you have real will regarding the great matter of birth and death, you should take the koan "mind itself is Buddha" and bring it up time and again to awaken you, summoning it up wherever you are. One morning you will suddenly break through the lacquer bucket of ignorance—this is called "having the eye of the truth on your forehead." At that time will you fly around seeing the worlds of the universe? Hundreds of millions of polar mountains, infinite Buddha fields, you see on the tip of a hair—there is nothing else. This is my ultimate bequest to you.

### TO WAYFARER RYOSEI

A monk asked great master Baso, "What is Buddha?"

Baso said, "The mind itself is Buddha."

That monk was greatly enlightened at these words. It seems that what is so close that it is hard to see is the mind, and what is so far and yet easy to approach is buddhahood. If you misunderstand your mind, you are an ordinary man; if you realize your mind, you are a sage. There is no difference at all whether man, woman, old, young, wise, foolish, human, animal, whatever. Thus, in the Lotus of Truth assembly, was it not the eight-year-old Naga girl who went directly south to the undefiled world Amala, sat on a jewel lotus flower, and realized universal complete enlightenment?

In ancient times, master Ganto once was a boatman. A woman came with a child in her arms and asked, "I don't ask about plying the pole and rudder—what about the child in this woman's arms, where does it come from?" Ganto immediately hit her once. The woman said, "I have nursed seven children; six did not meet a real knower, and this one can't appreciate it." Then she threw the child in the river. This woman found out the way that mind itself is Buddha.

## SKELETONS BY ZEN MASTER IKKYU

It is in the written word that all things can be seen together.

In the beginning of mental evolution, one should concentrate on sitting meditation.

Whatever is born in any land all becomes naught.

One's own body is not primary; not even the original face of sky and earth and all nations and lands is primary—all come from emptiness. Because it has no form, it is called Buddha, enlightened. Various names such as enlightened mind, mental buddha, mind of reality, buddhas, enlightened ancestors, spiritized ones—all come from this. Unless you realize this, you're going right to hell.

Also, according to the teaching of good people, we do not return after going separate ways into the lands of darkness; those who are close and those who are inconstant both revolve in the flow of the three realms—feeling ever more weary of this, I left my native village, going nowhere in particular.

Coming to an unfamiliar abandoned temple, even as I wrung out my sleeves, I realized it was already nightfall. With no way to get together even a grass pillow for a nap, as I looked around here and there, there were mossy graves at a distance from the path, near the foot of the mountain, where the fields of meditation were sparse. One especially miserable-looking skeleton came out from behind the hall and said:

The autumn wind has risen in the world,  
in the fields and mountains where you'll go  
when the fall flowers beckon.

What can be done for the body,  
as a black-dyed sleeve  
in the heart of a man who wastes it?<sup>1</sup>

Everyone must sometime become naught. Becoming naught is called "returning to the fundamental." When you sit facing a wall, the thoughts which arise from conditioning are all unreal. The Buddha's fifty years of teachings are not real either. It's just to know people's minds.

Wondering if there were anyone who understands this suffering, I went into the hall and spent the night there, even lonelier than usual, unable to sleep.

Around dawn, as I dozed off a bit, in a dream I went out behind the hall, and saw a crowd of skeletons all acting in different ways, just like people in the world. As I watched with a sense of wonder, some skeletons came up and said:

When it passes  
 without a memory,  
     this worthless body  
         becomes a dream.

If you divide the way of enlightenment  
 into buddhas and kami,  
     how can you enter the truth path?<sup>2</sup>

As long as it travels the road of life  
 in the present for a while,  
     the corpse in the fields  
         seems elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

Anyway, as I got familiar with them and relaxed, the feeling I'd had of separation between myself and others disappeared. What's more, my skeleton companions wanted to give up the world and seek the truth; seeking separation from excess, going from shallow to deep—in searching out the source of one's own mind, what fills the ears is the sound of wind in the pines, what blocks the eyes is left on the pillow under the moon.

When are we not in a dream, when are we not skeletons, after all? Male and female forms exist only as long as these skeletons are wrapped up and put to use inside five-tone flesh; when life ends and the body bag breaks, there are no such forms—neither are high or low distinguished. Under the flesh which you now care for and enjoy, this skeleton is wrapped up and set in motion; you should acquiesce to this idea—in this there is no difference between high and low, old and

young. Only when you awaken to the condition of the one great matter will you know the imperishable truth.

If a stone is good enough  
 for an effigy after death,  
 hang a scrap of writing  
 on a monument of five elements—

What is it? Oh! A frightening figure of a man!

While you have the single cloudless moon  
 how have you come to the darkness  
 of the fleeting world?

You must think it true; when the breath stops and the skin of the body comes apart, everyone turns out like this—your body cannot live forever.

A sign of how long is your time  
 are the pines of Sumiyoshi  
 planted before.

Give up the mind that thinks there is a self; just go with the wind driving the floating cloud of the body, and come this way. You want to live indefinitely, to the same age; you would really think so—this is the same frame of mind.

Since the world is a sleepless dream,  
 in vain do people start awake  
 upon seeing this.

It is useless to pray for a definite lifespan. You shouldn't keep anything on your mind except the One Great Matter. Since life in the human world is uncertain, it is not a matter of awakening to this just now for the first time. Since it is a way to become detached, the sorrow of the world is quite happy.

Why adorn a mere temporary form?  
 Didn't you know it had to be [temporary] like this?

The original body must return  
 to the original place;  
 don't seek out where you won't go.

Nobody understands life;  
 there is no dwelling place—  
 when you return, you must become  
 the original earth.

Although there are many paths  
 up the base of the mountain,  
 we see the same moon on the high peak.

Since where you are going  
 you don't establish a home there,  
 there's not even a road to get lost on.

Having no beginning or end,  
 one's mind should not be thought of  
 as being born, or dying.

Left to do as it will,  
 the mind doesn't even think things through—  
 better to have controlled it  
 and given up the world.

Rain, sleet, snow, ice—  
 as such they may be different,  
 but when melted they're the same valley stream  
 water.

Although the path of the liberated mind may change,  
 behold the same law  
 of the cloud dweller.<sup>4</sup>

A straight path buried under the fallen pine needles,  
 hardly do we realize it is a house where people dwell.

How hopeless, the trip to the funeral pyre—<sup>5</sup>  
 as the fallen, they must stay.

[Is it transitory, the trip to the burning pyre?  
 as the fallen, they must stay.]

Tired of the world,  
 how long will you see the evening smoke of the pyre  
 as another's sorrow?



How fleeting, the faces of the people  
 whom we saw only yesterday,  
 as they vanish into the smoky evening.

So sad, the evening smoke of the funeral pyres;  
 only the sky is left behind by the wind,  
 as it was before.

Of what becomes ash when burnt, earth when buried,  
 what could be left as sin?

The sins committed up till the age of three  
 all disappear together.  
 as does eventually the self.

This must be what is certain in the world. Thinking how vain are those who do not realize that even today, right now, there must be such helplessness and death, and are startled by it, if asked how their lives should be, some say that these days, unlike the past, they are leaving the temples. In olden times, those who aspired to the way would enter a monastery, but nowadays they are all leaving the monasteries.

When you look at them, the monks have no knowledge, they don't like to sit and meditate; without making any efforts, they admire utensils, adorn cushions—full of conceit, they make their reputation just by wearing the robe, but even wearing the robe of monkhood, they are surely just lay people in disguise. Even though they wear the robe and surplice, the robe becomes a rope tying them up, and the surplice becomes an iron rod thrashing them, so it seems.

If we look carefully into the meaning of the cycles of birth and death, destroying life leads to hell, by greed we become hungry ghosts, by ignorance we become animals, by anger we become titans; by maintaining the five precepts<sup>6</sup> we are born human, and by carrying out the ten virtues<sup>7</sup> we are born divine. Above these states are the four holy ones<sup>8</sup>—added all together, they make ten realms.

Looking at this single moment of thought,<sup>9</sup> it has no shape, it abides nowhere for its duration, and there is nothing in it to despise and reject. It is like clouds in the vast sky, like bubbles on the water. Just because there are no thoughts arising, there is nothing to do either. Thoughts and things are one emptiness. I don't know about people's doubts.

People's parents are like striking fire: the steel is the father; the flint is the mother; the spark is the child. Setting this to a wick, when the sustenance of fuel and oil is exhausted, the fire goes out. When the father and mother make love, that is like the fire coming forth; since father and mother have no beginning, eventually they fade away in the mind where the fire has gone out. Openly embracing all things through emptiness, all forms are produced. When you let go of all forms, this is called the basic ground. All forms—of plants, trees, and land—all come from emptiness, so as a temporary metaphor it is called the fundamental ground.

When you break up a cherry tree and look,  
 there are no flowers at all;  
 the flowers are brought by the spring wind.

Even though you soar boundlessly  
 even beyond the clouds,  
 just don't rely on  
 the teachings of Gautama.

If, hearing the teachings spoken by Gautama over fifty years, you want to try to put the teachings into practice, what Gautama said at the end was that from the beginning to the end he had not said a single word; instead, he raised a flower in his hand, whereas Kasyapa smiled faintly. Then Gautama said, "I have the straightforward heart of the true teaching," and put down the flower. If you wonder what it means, Gautama said, in effect, "What I have been teaching for some fifty years is like when you're cuddling a baby pretending to be holding something in your hand; my fifty-odd years of teaching was like this call to Kasyapa."

Therefore the teachings which he transmitted were like the cuddling of the baby. But this flower cannot be known by means of the body, nor is it the mind; even speaking of it, you cannot know it. You should understand this body and mind thoroughly. Even if you are called a knowledgeable person, you cannot [therefore] be called a Buddhist. As for this flower, the teaching of the one vehicle of all the buddhas of past, present, and future appearing in the world refers to this flower. From the twenty-eight patriarchs in India and six patriarchs in China up till now, there has never been anything but the fundamental ground. Because everything is beginningless, it is called great; all modes of consciousness are produced from emptiness.

Even the summer, fall, and winter of the flowers of spring, the colors of the plants and trees, also are made from emptiness.

Also, the so-called four gross elements are earth, water, fire, and air. People hardly know what these are. Breath is air, warmth is fire, body fluid is water; if you burn or bury this, it becomes earth. There, too, because there is no beginning, nothing remains at all.

Whatever it is  
 is nothing but the world of delusion  
 since even "death" does not turn out  
 to be a real vacation.

Everybody, everybody, in the eyes of illusion though the body dies the spirit does not die—this is a great mistake. In the language of the enlightened, they say that the body and the seed die as one. Even "Buddha" means emptiness. You should return to the basic ground of sky, earth, land, and everything.

Giving up the eighty thousand teachings of all the scriptures, just understand this all rolled into one. You will become people of great peace and happiness.

Even written down,  
 they're just marks made in a dream;  
 after waking up, there is no one else who asks.

4/8/1457 Ikkyu-shi Sojun, seventh generation after Xutang, in Daitoku Temple before the eastern sea.

### *Notes to Ikkyu's Skeletons*

1. The black-dyed sleeve symbolizes renunciation, as the robe of the homeless. A verse of Saint Ippen (1239–1289), a pure land sage of earlier Japan, says, "Giving up the body as well as the idea of giving up, an unthinking black-dyed sleeve in the world." Contained in homonymy and association is the sense "You should live in the world after renunciation, giving up even the idea 'I abandon.'" This is why Ikkyu still warns against wasting it.
2. Kami are nature spirits associated with Japanese earth and life consciousness; they were thought to protect, accept, and uphold Buddhist teachings. The aforementioned Saint Ippen received his major revelations through the mediumship of kami, and later taught the fundamental

meaning of prayer underlying all forms of respect. Many eminent Buddhist teachers also preached the nonduality of the spirit and Buddha ways.

3. The corpse in the fields that seems elsewhere is the living body. A verse of Saint Ippen says: "Is it meaningless? While the corpse has not yet decayed, the meadow earth seemed to be elsewhere." This he spoke at the ruins of his grandfather's grave.
4. The law of the cloud dweller is impermanence; in ancient texts it is sometimes used for absolute transcendence or absolute indifference—we might say, death, as the most personal and cutting expression of impermanence. The great Zen master Hakuin wrote that one who sees into death is safe.
5. The Japanese uses the name of a mountain where bodies were taken to be burned. The variant English reading in parentheses is to highlight the allusion to the sense of the permanence of impermanence.
6. The five precepts are not to kill on purpose; not to steal in any way, even indirectly; not to be greedy or overindulgent in the course of human life; not to drink or sell liquor; and not to lie.
7. "Ten virtues" can have several references. Commonly they refer to the preceding five moral precepts, plus not talking about people's faults, not praising yourself and degrading others, not being stingy or predatory, not being angry without shame, and not repudiating the three treasures of the enlightened ones, their teaching and their communities. In the most ancient teachings, it is said that the Buddha had monks restrain useless mundane talk, but rather discourse on the merits and virtues of ten things: effort, little desire and being content, bravery, learning and the ability to explain the teaching to others, being fearless and unawed, being impeccable in conduct, being accomplished in meditation, wisdom and knowledge, liberation, and the vision and knowledge of liberation. In the esoteric teachings, in which terms Ikkyu sometimes wrote, there are two explanations: one is not regressing from the determination for enlightenment; not abandoning the three treasures to seek outside ways; not slandering the three treasures and the scriptures of the three vehicles; not doubting places in the very profound scriptures of the great vehicle where you don't understand them; not discouraging anyone determined on enlightenment or causing them to tend to self-enlightenment; not causing uninspired people to go into the lesser vehicles of self-enlightenment; not speaking hastily about the great vehicle in front of those following the lesser vehicles or wrong ideas; not inspiring false ideas; not saying in the presence of outsiders that you have the wonderful precepts of enlightenment; not doing anything harmful or useless to sentient beings. A second set: not abandoning the true teaching; not giv-

ing up the spirit of enlightenment; not being stingy with the teachings; not doing anything that is not beneficial to sentient beings; not slandering any of the teachings of the three vehicles; not begrudging teachings; not having false views, like nihilism; encouraging people not to give up their aspiration for enlightenment; not preaching unsuitable teachings to people without consideration of their faculties; not giving people anything that will harm them.

8. The four holy states are sainthood (arhat), self-enlightenment (pratyekabuddha), bodhisattva, and buddhahood.
9. The ten realms are born of a single moment of thought.



## SERMON OF ZEN MASTER BASSUI

I you want to avoid the pains of transmigration, you should directly know the way to become enlightened. The way to become enlightened is to realize your own mind. Since your own mind is the fundamental nature of all sentient beings, which has never changed since before your parents were born, before your own body existed, it is called the original face.

This mind is originally pure: when the body is born, it shows no sign of birth; and when the body dies, it has no sign of death. Neither is it marked as male or female, nor has it any form, good or bad. Because no simile can reach it, it is called the enlightened nature, or Buddha nature.

Furthermore, all thoughts arise from this inherent nature like waves on the ocean, like images reflecting in a mirror. For this reason, if you want to realize your inner mind, first you must see the source of thoughts arising. Whether awake or asleep, standing or sitting, deeply questioning what thing is your inner mind with the profound desire for enlightenment, is called practice, meditation, will, and the spirit of the way. Questioning the inner mind like this is also called zazen.

One moment seeing your own mind is better than reading ten thousand volumes of scriptures and incantations a day for ten thousand years; these formal practices form only causal conditions for a day of blessings, but when those blessings are exhausted again, you suffer the pains of miserable forms of existence. A moment of meditational effort, however, because it leads eventually to enlightenment, becomes a cause for the attainment of buddhahood.

Even someone who has committed the worst crimes is a buddha if he instantly transforms and becomes enlightened, but that doesn't mean that you should do wrong on the pretext that you should become enlightened; when you delude yourself and degenerate into evil

ways, even the buddhas and patriarchs can't help you. It's like the case of a child sleeping next to its father, having a bad dream about being beaten or falling sick; though he calls to his parents to help him in his distress, since they can't go into his dreams, even his father and mother cannot help him. Even if they are going to give him medicine, they have to wake him up. If a man can awake on his own he can avoid suffering in dreams without the help of others; in the same way, if you realize that your own mind is Buddha, you can suddenly avoid repeated involvement in routines of birth and death. If the buddhas could help up, how could anyone go to hell? You must realize the truth of this yourself.

Now, then, when you look what is the host, the master who is now seeing colors, hearing sounds, raising hands and moving feet, though you realize that all this is the doing of your own mind, actually you don't know what its inner reality is. If you say it is nonexistent, yet it is clear that it is free to act; if you say it exists, yet its form cannot be seen. As it is simply inconceivable, with no way at all to understand, when your ideas are ended and you are helpless, this is good work; at this point, if you don't give up and your will goes deeper and deeper, and your profound doubt penetrates the very depths and breaks through, there is no doubt that mind itself is enlightened. There is no birth and death to detest, no truth to seek; space is only one's mind.

For example, it is like getting lost in a dream, losing the road to return home, asking people or praying to gods and buddhas to find the way back, until you awaken, when you find you've been in your own bedroom all along; then you realize that there was no other way to return from your dream journey except to awaken. This is called "returning to the fundamental," and it is also called "birth in the world of peace and ease."

This is the way of understanding through attainment of power from a little bit of cultivation; everybody who cultivates meditation and works at it, whether householders or homeless, has at least such experience. This already is beyond the ken of people who do no meditation. This is already real enlightenment, but if you think you have no doubts about reality, you're greatly mistaken. This would be like giving up the search for gold when you see copper. When you have such a tendency, you should resolutely deepen your effort by observing your body as an illusion, like a bubble, like a reflection and see

your mind as like space, with no form. Here, hearing sound in the ear, what is the host that cognizes the echo? Tenaciously, profoundly, wholly doubting, when no cognizable principle exists anymore and you have forgotten about the existence of your body, when your former views and understanding die out and your doubt has become complete, your enlightenment will be complete, just as no water remains in a bucket when its bottom falls out. It will be like a dead tree bursting suddenly into bloom. If you can be like this, you will realize freedom in the midst of things and become greatly liberated.

But even if you have such an enlightenment, you must give up every enlightenment you realize and time and again return to the awakening host, go back to the fundamental; if you can guard it firmly, as sentimental consciousness dies out, your inherent nature will become clear just as a jewel becomes more lustrous with polishing; eventually it will illumine the worlds in all directions. Don't doubt this; if your determination is not deep, even if you don't awaken in this way in this life, people who face death in the midst of meditation will surely become enlightened easily in the coming life, just as a journey prepared for yesterday is easily traveled today.

When working on sitting meditation, don't suppress the arising of thoughts, but don't enjoy it; just search out the inner mind, source of thought. Realizing that whatever drifts through the mind or appears to the eyes is illusory, not real, you shouldn't fear, esteem, like, or dislike; if your mind is like empty space not affected by things, then when you die also you will not be attacked by the devil of heaven. Also, when doing meditation work, it should only be a question of what your own mind is, without keeping such-and-such a thing or such-and-such a principle on your mind.

Also, when you realize what the host is who hears all sounds right now, this mind is the fundamental source of all buddhas and sentient beings. Kannon is called Seer of the Sounds of the World because she attained enlightenment by way of sound. Just see what it is that hears this sound, whether standing or sitting, look for this; when you don't know what you're hearing anymore and your direction is ended and you are diffused and far out, even here as long as sound is being heard, when you look deeper and deeper, even the appearance of vague diffusion dies out and it is like a clear cloudless sky. Herein there is nothing that can be called self. The host who hears cannot be seen, either. This mind is the same as universal space, yet there is no place that

can be called space. At this time you think this is enlightenment, but you should doubt even more; who hears this sound? If you go on investigating without producing a single thought, the realm where seems like nothing exists, like empty space, also dies out, there is no more taste at all; where it is dark as night, if you exert all your power to fully doubt what it is that hears this sound, then when the doubt shatters and you are like someone who has completely died coming back to life, this then is enlightenment, *satori*.

## SAYINGS OF ZEN MASTER BUNAN

People see others in terms of themselves. The vision of fools is dreadful. If there is ambition in oneself, one will see others on the basis of that frame of mind. He who lusts looks with lust. Unless one is a sage, seeing is dangerous. Even though there are people on the great way, people who can see and know are rare. What a waste. A wise man discerns the potential of others, though they may not be equal to him, and makes use of their level of understanding.

To acquiesce to the teaching of enlightenment, as it is, directly abandon all things, merge with the body of thusness and experience peerless peace and bliss, is no more than a matter of whether or not you think of the body. Although there are people who think this teaching is true, it's hard to find someone who strives to make it his own.

It is easy to keep things at a distance; it is hard to be naturally beyond them.

There are no mountains to enter outside of mind, making the unknown your hiding place.

While deluded, one is used by this body; when enlightened, one uses this body.

ASKED OF THE SUPREME VEHICLE, BUNAN SAID, To let the body be free and not to cling to anything. For this reason it is a great matter; thus it is a rare thing in this age.

Whether man or woman, you should first make them see reality, and have them sit in meditation for that; when their seeing of reality is complete, then you should teach them to respond to any event.



When virtually enlightened, have them preserve that, so that bad thoughts do not arise; if they nurture this for a long time, they will become people of the way.

When virtually enlightened, if you teach them that all things are it, most people will turn bad. Those who only preserve enlightenment mostly are trapped in sitting meditation and become devotees of discipline. Whether it's good or bad to expound the great way immediately depends on who you're talking to. You must teach with understanding, not misunderstanding.

You should always act with kindness and compassion. People think that kindness and compassion mean doing things, but actually giving people things is the foremost kindness and compassion. Never to do or say what is painful to others is kindness and compassion.

When you do things which are unpleasant and painful to others, even if you have a mountain of treasure it will eventually be ruined. There is no doubt about this. Thus, working diligently, there comes to be no Buddha, no teaching; though living you are not here, neither do you die, you don't remain in this world or go to the next world—having become like empty space, you don't even think of empty space. There is no body, nothing at all—there is no thought of nothingness or of being.

O my body,  
Used to being used at will,  
Since there is no using body or me.

Fire is something that burns; water is something that wets; a Buddha is someone who practices compassion. Teaching people to be kind and compassionate to others means imitating the Buddha. If you just practice compassion, you will certainly become good. The basis of compassion is purity of the mind. Purity of the mind is "not a single thing." "Not a single thing" means nothing at all; it is beyond the reach of speech, beyond affirmation and negation. If there is any affirmation or negation in your heart, it will be obstructed by that affirmation and negation; if there is no affirmation or negation, then heaven and earth are one. If there is something, it separates you from heaven—this you should well understand.

The mind which knows nothing  
Is a Buddha  
By a different name.

Since you will surely eventually die, you should set your mind diligently on the way of enlightenment. There is no enlightened Buddha outside your own heart; always keep a pure and clean mind and heart. When thoughts of your own body come up, as long as such bad thoughts are always there, this life is but a little while and you will fall into a hell and suffer forever and ever; but even leaving that aside, in this life you will suffer in many ways.

When the heart is pure and compassionate, there is no Buddha outside of this.

Once you have been greatly enlightened, there is no great enlightenment; when praying, there is no prayer; when rejoicing, there is no one to rejoice. Living, there is nothing living; dying, there is nothing that dies; there is nothing existent or nonexistent. Though you have physical form, you have no form; beyond being and nonbeing, you let existence and nonexistence be, beyond affirmation and negation, you let right and wrong be—

While deluded,  
     It is things that are things;  
     When enlightened,  
         You leave things to their thingness.

#### THINGS PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS WRONG ABOUT:

Hating to be fooled by others while liking to be fooled by oneself.

Knowing others die but not realizing one's own death.

Discriminating others' right and wrong while not acting properly oneself.

Suffering from want and not knowing how to avoid it.

Thinking that original nothingness is nothing.

Setting up something in the way of enlightenment.

Unless you enter the way of enlightenment, you cannot preserve your body.

There are those who perform memorial services without respecting the Buddha in their own bodies.

Considering enlightenment to be the teaching of the Buddha—those who are enlightened are rare.

Not knowing how to overturn bad impulses.

## BUNAN'S REGULATIONS FOR DISCIPLES

A monk is the greatest evil on earth; he goes through the world without labor—he is a great thief.

When the fruits of discipline and practice are fulfilled and one may be a teacher of others, he is a precious jewel in the world. There are innumerable teachers of the ways of the world, but teachers of the Great Way are rare.

Do not use unwisely even a piece of paper or half a penny.

Be constantly austere with the body, and do not do things for the sake of the body. The enemy of Dharma and Buddha is the body.

Look upon accepting things from others as like poison. When you have completely realized the great way, then you should accept those things which people hold dear; this is because it helps those people.

During the period of practice and effort, should you be beaten and trampled by others, you should rejoice that the effects of the deeds you yourself produced in the past are being exhausted.

When master Joshu was asked if a dog has enlightened nature or not, he said No. If you can really understand this No, you will surely be free from doubts about anything in or out of this world. For example, when you first enter, you shatter being and nothingness. Having shattered being and nothingness, if you nurture it energetically, you break through the body. Having broken through the body, if you work hard, you break through the mind. Having broken through body and mind, the original mind appears. When you reach that, then there is no doubt about what the world-honored Buddha taught: there are hells; there are heavens; there are enlightened ones and devils, hungry ghosts and animals; there is retribution. You will have no doubts at all about the scriptures.

As for fundamental nothingness, when for example they sit and meditate people think that control of body and mind is the basis of "not a single thing," but they are all wrong. "Originally not a single thing exists" refers to the absolute nonexistence of "body" and "mind." When you reach here, paradises and hells spoken of by the Buddha are certain; hungry ghosts and animals certainly exist. Those who don't reach here talk in various ways to become well known, but since it doesn't come from truth, their words and actions are not in accord.

*Bunan used to say to his group,*

There is no special principle in the study of the way; it's only necessary to see and hear directly. Directly seeing, there is no seeing; directly hearing, there is no hearing. You must fuse inside and outside into one solid thoroughly peaceful state before you can do this.

Although you people are buddhas right now, yet you don't realize it. If you know you go against the buddhas and patriarchs, if you don't know you revolve in the routine of birth and death. At this point, if you don't have the transcendental eye, how can you attain realization?

Knowing the fundamental,  
 Detached from myriad things;  
 Who knows that which is outside words,  
     Which the Buddhas and Patriarchs didn't  
     transmit?

Although our school considers enlightenment [satori] in particular to be fundamental, that doesn't necessarily mean that once you're enlightened you stop there. It is necessary only to practice according to reality and complete the way. According to reality means knowing the fundamental mind as it really is; practice means getting rid of obstructions caused by habitual actions by means of true insight and knowledge. Awakening to the way is comparatively easy; accomplishment of practical application is what is considered most difficult. That is why the great teacher Bodhidharma said that those who know the way are many, whereas those who carry out the way are few. You simply must wield the jewel sword of the adamantine sovereignty of wisdom and kill this self. When this self is destroyed, you cannot fail to reach the realm of great liberation and great freedom naturally.

If you can really get to see your fundamental mind, you must treat it as though you were raising an infant. Walking, standing, sitting, lying down, illuminate everything everywhere with awareness, not letting him be dirtied by the seven consciousnesses. If you can keep him clear and distinct, it is like the baby's gradually growing up until he's equal to his father—calmness and wisdom clear and penetrating, your function will be equal to that of the buddhas and patriarchs. How can such a great matter be considered idle? Now the reason that

we consider human life best is for no other reason than being means to realize true liberation in this lifetime. However, if you seek profit and support, considering these the ultimate truth, in every moment of thought used by delusive ideas, vainly ending your life, at the time of death nothing you can do will be any use. The Buddha came into the world to guide those on the paths of illusion, directly pointed to the fundamental mind, letting them leave behind birth, death, and myriad things. While this body clearly exists, clearly realizing this body doesn't exist, while there are clearly seeing, hearing, discernment and knowledge, clearly realizing there are no seeing hearing discernment or knowledge—this is called the effect of true investigation; how could it be easy?

When you go near fire, you are warm; when you go near water, you are cool; and when you go near people imbued with the way, they naturally make your mind die and conceptions dissolve, causing all wrong thoughts to cease. This is called the spiritual effect of complete virtue. You all call yourselves people of the way as soon as you enter the gate. Really, you should be ashamed.



## SAYINGS OF NATIONAL TEACHER BANKEI

*The master said to an assembly,*

What I tell people about is nothing special; it's the unborn enlightened mind innate in everyone. What is it about? While you're all here listening to my sermon, when a dog barks outside the temple you know it's a dog, and when a crow caws you know it's a crow. And also you can distinguish the colors black and white, and see the difference between men and women—even though you are not thinking about hearing dogs or crows or seeing black, white, men, or women, during the talk, nonetheless right here you can see and hear them all before conceptually discriminating them. Then even if a thousand or ten thousand people should tell someone that a dog's bark is a crow's caw, that person would hardly be deceived by them. Isn't this enlightened mind, with its inconceivable qualities of clear awareness, something to be grateful for?

Because people don't know that everyone has such wonderful qualities and power they get confused by one thing or another. That confusion ultimately arises from self-importance. Self-importance means, for example, that you get angry and upset when you hear your neighbor criticize you, and only dislike and maltreat that person; this is because of self-importance. Also when you hear your neighbor praise you, you think well of that person, and act nicely; this, too, is because of self-importance.

Considering the root source of this self-importance, when people are born they have no bad thoughts of hatred or liking for anyone; it's just that as they grow up they learn and cultivate various bad things and bad thoughts by seeing and hearing them, piling them up into mental habits. Always putting these mental habits to use, various kinds of confusion and error begin.

Hating people or being jealous of them is the condition of hell;

anger and rage is the condition of demonia; lustful thoughts of greed and stinginess are the condition of hungry ghosts. Regretting afterward and longing for what's ahead is folly, the condition of animals. These are called the four bad dispositions. These bad dispositions are not inborn at all; originally there is only the unborn enlightened mind. But because of the outside dust of mental habits, the most important enlightened mind is turned into the bad conditions of hells and whatnot. Born in the honorable human state, taking the quality of clarity which discerns good and bad, right and wrong, and turning it into something worthless, is a miserable, pitiful thing, is it not?

I set my heart on the way of enlightenment since youth, sought teachers everywhere, sometimes sat all the time without lying down, sometimes lived in the mountains, doing various difficult and painful practices, finally to awaken to the root source of the enlightened mind; but you all are lucky, to have deep affinity with the enlightened ones, that you can sit here without doing any practice and hear how to attain buddhahood easily.

*A layman asked,*

Though I'm grateful for your teaching of birthlessness, thoughts from constantly applied mental habits readily come up, and I get lost in them and have difficulty remaining continually unborn. How can I apply wholehearted faith?

*The master replied,*

If you try to stop arising thoughts, the stopping mind and the stopped mind become split in two and you never have any peace of mind. Just trust that thoughts are originally nonexistent but temporarily arise and cease conditioned by what is seen and heard, and have no real substance.

*A layman asked,*

By ignorance and folly one becomes an animal, going from darkness into darkness, unable to realize buddhahood, so I hear; but when an animal doesn't know in its own heart that it is miserable and doesn't cognize his condition as painful, after all can't he be happy?

*The master replied,*

To transform the enlightened mind and body innate in everyone into the miseries of hell, yet not to realize how wretched that is, is a sad thing, is it not? For example, when you beat and scold a dog who took a chicken the day before, even though he doesn't realize it is happening because he took the chicken yesterday, he certainly howls and suffers when he gets punished. Because he is an animal, he doesn't know the principle of cause and effect and gets pain from pain without limit. Because knowledge is clear in human beings, when they meet a guide, they can easily realize enlightenment. Are we not grateful to be born in a human body, easy to accomplish buddhahood with? This one great matter is right before your eyes; don't waste time.

*A layman asked,*

When I wipe out arising thoughts, they keep coming up from the traces, never stopping. How can I control these thoughts?

*The master replied,*

Wiping out arising thoughts is like washing blood with blood; though the first blood may be removed, the washing blood still stains; no matter how much you wash, the stain is not removed.

This mind is originally unborn and undying and without illusion; not realizing this, thinking that thoughts are existent things, you roam around in the routines of birth and death.

Realizing that thoughts are only temporary appearances, you should let them be as they start and stop, without grasping or rejecting them. It is like images reflected in a mirror; since the mirror is clear and bright, it reflects whatever comes before it but doesn't keep the images. The enlightened mind is infinitely brighter and clearer than a mirror and is also radiantly aware, so all thoughts dissolve in that light without leaving a trace. If you can believe and trust in this truth, no matter how much they come up it won't be a hindrance.

*A farmer asked,*

I was born with a short temper and am easily stirred to angry thoughts. As a farmer, I get involved in my work and find it hard to become unborn. What should I do to realize the unborn mind?

*The master replied,*

Because everyone is the innate unborn enlightened mind, there is no way to realize it now for the first time; just doing a farmer's tasks without other thoughts is called the activity of the unborn mind.

When you're hoeing, you can talk to people and still hoe at the same time; getting involved in conversation does not make you unable to hoe. You can even hoe when you're mad, but as anger is a bad condition of hellish existence, the task is difficult and painful. If you hoe without any delusions like anger, it is easy to do, pleasant work; this is the activity of the enlightened mind, unborn undying activity.

*A monk asked,*

The ancestral teachers since ancient times were greatly enlightened through difficult and painful practices, and I have heard that you, too, accomplished the great teaching through various difficult practices. But people like me, who don't cultivate practice and are not enlightened, just realizing that my very state is the unborn enlightened mind does not really settle anything.

*The master replied,*

It's like the case of travelers who cross the peaks of high mountains where there is no water and become thirsty. Someone seeks out water in a distant valley, breaking his back searching here and there. Finally he finds water and brings it back to give to the others to drink. Even though they have not struggled so, those who drink are refreshed just the same as the one who went through the trouble before. As for those who are doubtful and will not drink, there is no way for their thirst to be quenched.

Because I didn't meet someone with enlightened eyes, I mistakenly wore myself out, finally discovered the buddha in my own mind, and am telling everyone about the buddha of their own mind without them having to do anything difficult, just like drinking water and having their thirst quenched.

Using the enlightened mind inherent in everyone just as it is, having found peace and bliss without the difficulties of confusion—is this not a sacred true teaching?

*A monk asked,*

All wild thoughts of mundane passions are hard to subdue; how can they be quieted?

*The master replied,*

Thinking of trying to annihilate wild thoughts is also wild thought. Although wandering thoughts are originally nonexistent, they are produced by your own conception.

*Someone asked,*

Though I don't doubt that there are no confused thoughts in reality, thoughts come up all the time and it's hard to become unborn.

*The master replied,*

That's because although you were only the unborn enlightened mind when you were born, as you grew up you saw, heard, and learned the mentality of ordinary people and over a period of time became deluded by familiarity to the point where the deluded mind has become independent and self-willed.

Because thoughts are not originally inborn, they die out in the mind which accepts and trusts the unborn buddha of the mind itself. For example, when someone fond of alcohol gets sick and can't drink liquor, even when the opportunity to drink is there and he wants to, as long as he doesn't drink the liquor it won't affect his illness and he won't get drunk; thus by abstaining even in the midst of his desire, he eventually becomes free from sickness. Confused thoughts are also like this—if you let them be as they come and go, and do not act upon them or dislike them, wandering thoughts will in no time disappear in the unborn mind.

*Someone asked,*

Last year when I asked you how to stop the arising of mixed-up thoughts, you told me to let thoughts be as they arise and cease. Afterward, faithfully trying to put this into practice, it's hard to get to let them be as they arise and cease.

*The master replied,*

It's hard to attain because you think there is a rule to let thoughts be as they arise and cease.

*The Soto Zen master Yuie came to see Bankei and asked,*

I was inspired when I was seventeen or eighteen, and for over thirty years have sat long without sitting, becoming single-minded; yet er-



rant thoughts and deceptive consciousness are hard to erase. In recent years, my mind and knowledge have been clear, and I have realized peace. How did you apply your mind in the past?

*The master replied,*

When I was young, I, too, had a lot of trouble with thoughts, but I suddenly realized that the source of our school is the enlightened eye; and even among the ancients there was none who helped people as long as his own eyes were not clear. From the beginning, transcending all considerations of self, I worked only on attainment of the enlightened eye. For this reason, I can freely discern whether people have the eye or not.

*Someone asked about zazen (sitting meditation); the master replied,*

Zazen means merging with the inconceivable wisdom innate in everyone, before getting involved in considerations and discriminations—this is called zen, “meditation”; outward detachment from all things is called “sitting.” Just sitting with your eyes closed is not sitting meditation; only sitting in communion with inconceivable knowledge is worthwhile meditation.

All delusion is routine misunderstanding because of relying on thoughts. When angry thoughts appear, you become demons; lust makes animals; greed makes hungry ghosts. If you die without giving these up, you’ll wander around forever, taking on all sorts of forms, revolving in birth and death. But when you are detached from thought, because there is no confusion there is no cause and effect; and because there is no cause and effect, there is no transmigration.

While you have thoughts, if you practice virtue there will be good causes and effects; and if you do evil, there will be bad causes and effects. If you detach from thought and harmonize with inconceivable knowledge, there are no causes or effects of birth and death. Now, when I speak this way, it may seem like a view of nothingness, nothing at all, but it is not so; the reason is that when I speak this way, you all hear—even though you have no particular thought of hearing this, because the original knowledge inherent in everyone is aware and clear, you can hear distinctly. When you touch fire or water, everybody knows without learning that fire is hot and water cool because this is activity apart from thought, even though without

thought it cannot be said to be nothing. This fundamental inconceivable knowledge is beyond the dual idea of existence and nonexistence and freely communes with all things, like a clear mirror distinctly reflecting the images of things.

Thus, what conceptualization do you need? Conceptualization is discrimination because of confusion; if you reach nonconceptual knowledge, you illumine and distinguish things before conception and never get confused. Therefore we esteem nonconceptual knowledge. Therefore the sitting meditation of unborn inconceivable knowledge is considered the highest practice. Zen folk don't set up expressions and analyze principles, talking about secondary things; for this reason, Buddhism is sometimes criticized for being a far-out teaching, beyond the conventions of human society and lacking social consciousness. But this criticism is because of failure to realize the basis of the path. The reason that social virtues exist in name is that there are antisocial thoughts and teaching is established to encourage virtue. If you reach the state of no delusion, what lack of social virtue is there? Antisocial behaviour is because of confusion, and confusion is judgment and discrimination. In a person without discriminatory thoughts, what antisocial feeling can there be?

*Once the master said,*

When I first set out to realize enlightenment, I did a lot of painful austerities because I didn't meet a good teacher and friend, wasting away; sometimes I cut off all contacts with humanity and lived in seclusion, sometimes I sat inside paper enclosures or in dark rooms behind screens—never lying down, sitting cross-legged, my thighs festered, leaving scars which still remain. Also, when I heard there was a man of knowledge someplace in some province, I would go there directly to meet him. I did this for several years, walking through most of Japan; all this was because I didn't meet an enlightened teacher. After my mind opened one day, I realized for the first time that my years of effort and pain were useless, and I found peace.

Now I tell you about how you can attain realization without breaking your backs, but you don't really believe completely; this is because you are not really earnest for truth.

*Also once he said,*

The inner truth which I discovered when I was living in a hermitage when I was twenty-six did not differ in the slightest from the

truth when I met the Chinese Zen master Daoje and got his testimony of enlightenment, or right now, today. However, as far as complete illumination of the eye of objective reality and mastery of the supreme teaching and realization of great freedom is concerned, I am as different now from when I met Daoje as sky is from earth. Believing in and acting on this, you should seek the day of fulfillment of the eye of reality.

*Someone asked,*

Is the complete illumination of the eye of reality accomplished with time and season, or is it realized even in one day?

*The master replied,*

It is not a matter of time and season; it is accomplished only when the eye of the way is clear, without any gap. It is accomplished by the practice of single-minded devotion to nurturing it.

*Issan, one of Bankei's senior disciples, once asked,*

Is reading the Buddha's scriptures and patriarchs' records of use in studying the way?

*The master replied,*

There is a time for reading the records of the patriarchs. When you read seeking the truth of the scriptures and records, you blind your own eyes; when you read with insight into the truth, they provide proof.

In 1684, during a retreat in Korinji in Tokyo, one day in the meditation hall Issan had an overwhelming transformation of state and went to see Bankei alone. He said,

Up till now I have believed your teaching and been fooled by your words. Today I don't depend on the teacher's words; I have come to know my own business directly. Even so, all this is just what you have always been saying. It's hard to express in words.

*The master replied,*

Even though you don't say it, I know it.

*Issan said,*

You always say there is no such thing as great enlightenment, but today as I see by myself, if people don't have their own knowledge they cannot apprehend the truth. Already Rinzai was in Obaku's community, where he asked three times about the essential meaning of the teaching of the enlightened ones and was beaten each time, but still didn't discover anything. However, at one word from Daigu he was transformed and said that really there is not much to Obaku's Buddhism—this was Rinzai's own knowledge.

*The master replied,*

The change that took place at Daigu's was Rinzai's point of entry. Those who study and investigate Zen, past and present, all have entry sometime; however, if you stop there, you have gotten a little and consider it enough. After this, if you are not most earnest it will be hard to accomplish the complete illumination of the eye of reality.

*Issan said,*

I do not presume to doubt your statement, but I now have no doubts about the truth; there is no way to apply effort beyond this.

*The master replied,*

It is easy to get to the state where there is no doubt and no questioning, but the truth is exceedingly profound, knowledge and wisdom extremely deep; the farther you go, the deeper they are. For this reason it is my custom not to give a lifetime's approval at one word. Most important, if you watch an enlightened guide, your realization will grow deeper and deeper.

*Issan said,*

I humbly hear your command. In the past when I read the Altar Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch, in the paragraph on Nangaku, the Sixth Patriarch says, "What thing thus comes?"

Nangaku said, "To liken it to something would miss it."

The patriarch said, "Then can it be cultivated and realized or not?"

Nangaku said, "It's not that there are no practice and realization, but if defiled, you won't attain."

The patriarch said, "Just this nondefilement is what all the buddhas safeguard; you are thus and I am thus."

The Sixth Patriarch's witness of Nangaku was in the realm which only a buddha can share with a buddha. However, Nangaku attended the Sixth Patriarch for fifteen years, daily going further into the mysterious profundity; since it is the sphere communicated by a buddha only to a buddha, I wondered what reaching of mysterious depths there could be, but now by the master's knowing words my former doubts have stopped.

*Issan once asked Bankei,*

I have always had many mental habits; should I stop them by always keeping my mind concentrated?

*Bankei answered,*

If you just realize that mental habits are originally nonexistent, what will you stop?

*Issan said,*

I certainly agree without doubt that mental habits are originally nonexistent; but even so, in my present daily experience, should I concentrate my mind on this?

*Bankei answered,*

That is not really agreeing.

Issan said that after faithfully applying the master's kind words, he verified this in experience.

Jakua was the abbot of Bukkoin temple in Ikaruga; a tiger of the doctrines of the Tendai school, he was quite famous. At the urging of the local people, he went to Ryomon Temple to see Bankei; after repeated questions and answers he eventually submitted to Bankei. One time when he went to Ryomon, as he was about to return, Bankei said to Jakua, "Do you hear the sound of the bell of the neighboring temple?"

Jakua, not understanding, went back to his own temple; for ten days he was fused into one solid whole during all his activities, when suddenly he heard the bell of the neighboring temple. He went that very day to Ryomon hoping to be approved by master Bankei.



Bankei came out and said, "You have heard the sound of the temple bell."

Jakua agreed and then spoke to Bankei of it. Also, when he wanted to lecture on the interpretation of the four teachings in Osaka at the request of the Tendai groups there, he went to Bankei and told him of his intent. Bankei raised one finger and said, "How would you explain this scripture?" Jakua had no reply.

Afterward, Jakua changed his vestments and entered Ryomon Temple as one of Bankei's disciples. Eventually he became recognized as the first of Bankei's enlightened disciples.

Zeshin dwelt in a hermitage on Mt. Yoshino for a long time, just sitting. One morning his mind opened and he forgot all knowledge. In a nearby temple there was an elder of the Soto school, to whom he went to present his understanding. The elder told him that master Bankei was the enlightened guide of the present generation and told him to go see him.

Zeshin went right to Jizo temple east of Kyoto, but Bankei was in seclusion and not seeing anyone Zeshin came every day and sat outside the gate till evening, when he would return to the capital; he did this for thirteen days, when the proprietor of the inn where he stayed directed him to another master, Dokusho. Zeshin went and presented his understanding to Dokusho, who just told him to protect it well. Zeshin then went back to Yoshino, where he stayed for several months.

Zeshin set out again for Kyoto to see Bankei, when he heard that Bankei was staying in Tokyo. Zeshin went to Korin Temple in Tokyo, where Bankei saw him right away and Zeshin offered his understanding. Bankei said, "And ultimately?"

Zeshin hesitated and hung his head. This happened three times, when Zeshin said, "Is there an ultimate?"

Bankei said, "You don't know how to use it."

Zeshin again hesitated and lowered his head. After three times like this, Zeshin finally said, "How to use it?"

At that moment, an oriole cried in the garden; Bankei said, "When the oriole cries, you hear it." Zeshin leaped for joy and bowed three times.

Bankei said, "After this, don't open your mouth in vain."

At the end of the summer, Bankei returned to Ryomon Temple, and Zeshin also went there. For several days, as Bankei interviewed

new arrivals, Zeshin also came and sat before the master, but Bankei didn't deal with him at all. For three days he appeared and so did Zeshin, but Bankei said nothing. Finally, after the crowd had gone, Bankei said to Zeshin, "You're lucky—if you hadn't met me, you would have become a braggart."

## EXPLICATION OF THE FOUR KNOWLEDGES OF BUDDHAHOOD BY HAKUIN

Some ask, "Are the three bodies and four knowledges inherent, or are they in the sphere of knowledge attained after awakening? Are they realized all at once or are they cultivated gradually?"

The answer is that although these are fundamentally complete in everyone, unless brought to light, they cannot be realized. When the student has accumulated effort in study and investigation and the enlightened nature suddenly appears, all at once he realizes the essence of inner reality; when one is actualized, all are actualized. But though one reaches the stage of buddhahood without passing through steps and stages, if one doesn't cultivate practice gradually, it is impossible to fulfill omniscience, independent knowledge and ultimate great enlightenment.

What does realization at once mean? When the discriminating mind is suddenly shattered and the enlightened essence suddenly appears, the filling of the universe with its boundless light is called "the great perfect mirror knowledge, the pure body of reality." This is the transmuted eighth [storehouse] consciousness.

That all things in the six fields of sense—seeing, hearing, discernment, and knowledge—are your own enlightened nature, is called "the knowledge of equality, the fulfilled body of reward."

Discerning the principles of things by the light of true knowledge is called "the subtle analytic knowledge"; this is the body of reward and also includes the transformation body.

Coughing, spitting, moving the arms, activity, stillness, all doings in harmony with the nature of reality is called "knowledge of accomplishing tasks." This is called "the sphere of freedom of the transformation body."

However, even so, still your seeing the way is not yet perfectly clear and your power of shining insight is not yet fully mature. Therefore, if you don't cultivate practice, you will be like a merchant who keeps his capital and doesn't engage in trade; so he not only never gets rich, but eventually goes broke spending to keep up the pretense of wealth. What do I call gradual practice? It is like a merchant devoting himself to trade, spending a hundred gold pieces to make a thousand in profit, until he accumulates boundless wealth and treasure and becomes free to do what he wants with his blessings. Though there is no difference in the nature of gold, without this business it's impossible to get rich; even if your perception of reality is genuine, when your power of shining insight is weak, you cannot overthrow the barriers of habitual actions. Unless your knowledge of differentiation is clear, you cannot benefit sentient beings in accord with their potentials. Therefore you must know the essential road of gradual practical cultivation.

What is the great perfect mirror knowledge? It means when the beginning student wants to comprehend this great matter, first he must conceive a great will, great faith, and, with the determination to see through the originally inherent enlightened nature, should always question who is the host of seeing and hearing. Walking, standing, sitting, reclining, active or silent, whether in favorable or adverse situations, plunge your spirit into the question of what it is that sees everything here and now? What is it that hears? Questioning like this, pondering like this—ultimately what thing is it? When you keep on doubting continuously, with a bold spirit and a sense of shame surging on, your effort will naturally become unified and solid, turning into a single mass of doubt throughout heaven and earth; the spirit is suffocated, the mind distressed, like a bird in a cage, like a rat that's gone into a bamboo tube and can't escape—at that time, if you keep on going without retreating, it will be like entering a crystal world; the whole mass, inside and outside, mats and ceilings, houses and pillars, fields and mountains, grasses and trees, people and animals, utensils and goods, all are as they are like illusions, like dreams, like shadows, like smoke. When you open your eyes clearly with presence of mind and see with certainty, an inconceivable realm appears which seems to exist yet also seems not to exist in a way. This is called the time when the conscious essence becomes manifest. If you think this is wonderful and extraordinary and joyfully become

infatuated and attached to this, after all you will fall into the nests of the two vehicles, outsiders, or troublesome devils, and can never see the real enlightened nature.

At this point, if you do not fondly cling to your state but arouse your spirit to wholehearted effort, from time to time you will experience such things as forgetting you're sitting when you're sitting, forgetting about standing when you're standing, forgetting your own body, forgetting the world around you. Then if you keep going without retreating, the conscious spirit will suddenly shatter and the enlightened nature will appear all at once—this is called “the great perfect mirror knowledge.” This is the meaning of complete perfect enlightenment at the first stage of inspiration; you can discern the source of eighty thousand doctrines and their infinite subtle meanings all at once. As one becomes, all become; as one decays, all decay—nothing is lacking, no principle is not complete.

Even so, as a newborn child of Buddha, the initiate bodhisattva reveals the sun of wisdom of the enlightened nature; but the clouds of his doings have not yet been cleared away. Because his power in the way is slight and his perception of reality is not perfectly clear, the great perfect mirror knowledge is associated with the eastern direction and called “the gate of inspiration.” It is like the sun appearing in the east; although the mountains, rivers, and land get some rays, they still are not yet warmed by the sunlight. Though one day you see the way clearly, when your power of shining insight is not great and strong, you are prone to hindrance by instinctual and habitual afflictions and are still not free and independent in both favorable and adverse circumstances. This is like someone looking for an ox who may one day see through to the real ox, but if he doesn't hold the halter firmly to keep it in check, sooner or later it will run away.

Therefore, once you see the ox, you make oxherding methods your main concern; without this cultivation and practice after enlightenment, many people who have seen reality miss the boat. Therefore the knowledge of equality of reality does not linger in the great perfect mirror knowledge; going on and on, you concentrate on practice after enlightenment. First, use the intimate experience of the very essence you have seen to illumine all worlds with radiant insight. When you see something, shine through it; when you hear, shine through what you hear; shine through the five clusters of your own body, shine through the six fields of sense experience—in front and



behind, left and right, through seven upsets and eight downfalls, entering absorption in radiant vision of the whole body, seeing through all things internal and external, shining through them, when this work becomes solid perception of reality is perfectly distinctly clear, like looking at the palm of your hand. At this point, using this clear knowledge and insight more and more, entering afflictions you shine through afflictions, entering enlightenment you shine through enlightenment, entering favorable circumstances you shine through favorable circumstances, entering adverse situations you shine through adverse situations; when greed or desire arises, you shine through greed and desire, when anger and hatred arise you shine through anger and hatred, when folly arises you shine through folly. When the three poisons of greed, hatred, and folly cease to exist and the mind is pure, then you shine through that pure mind. At all times, in all places, be it desires, senses, gain, loss, right, wrong, views of Buddha or of Dharma, in all things, shine through with your whole body; if your mind doesn't regress from this, the nature created by your actions naturally dissolves, inconceivable liberation is realized, your actions and understanding correspond, principle and fact merge completely, body and mind are not two, essence and appearance do not obstruct each other—attaining this, managing to attain the realm of true equanimity, is called “the knowledge of the equality of the nature of reality.”

This does not mean the nondual merging into one view of equality of signlessness; what is called knowledge of equality of reality refers to the point of true equanimous liberation, realized by constant refinement of one's state. Though the range of the views are equal in principle, in actual fact they are not yet equal; if you get involved in objects of old habitual afflictions, your insight and power in the way will naturally get stuck and you won't be completely free. Therefore this refined practice after enlightenment is called “knowledge of equality of real nature” and is associated with the southern direction and called “the gate of practice.” It is like when the sun is over the southern direction, its light full, illumining all hidden places in the deep valleys, drying up even hard ice and wet ground. Though a bodhisattva has the eye to see reality, unless one enters this gate of practice it is impossible to clear away obstructions caused by actions and afflictions, and therefore impossible to attain to the state of liberation and freedom—what a pity that would be, what a loss.

Next, the subtle observing analytic knowledge; having reached the nondual sphere of equality of true reality, the essential point is to clearly understand the profound principles of differentiation of the enlightened ones and master techniques for helping sentient beings. Otherwise, even if you have cultivated and attained unhindered knowledge, you will remain after all in the nest of the lesser vehicle and be unable to realize omniscience, unhindered knowledge, freedom to change in any way necessary to help sentient beings, enlighten yourself and enlighten others, and reach the ultimate great enlightenment where awareness and action are completely perfect.

For this reason, it is essential to conceive an attitude of great compassion and commitment, to help all sentient beings everywhere; in order to penetrate the principles of things in their infinite variety, first you should study them day and night through the verbal teachings of the buddhas and patriarchs. One by one ascertaining and analyzing the profundities of the five houses and seven schools of Zen and the wondrous doctrines of the eight teachings given in the five periods of Buddha's teaching career, if you have any energy left over, you should clarify the deep principles of the various different philosophies. However, if this and that get to be a lot of trouble, it will just waste your faculties to no advantage; if you thoroughly investigate the sayings of the buddhas and patriarchs which are difficult to pass through, and clearly arrive at their essential import, perfect understanding will shine forth and the principles of all things should naturally be completely clear. This is called "the eye to read the scriptures."

Now, the verbal teachings of the buddhas and patriarchs are extremely profound and should not be considered exhausted after one has gone through them once or twice. When you climb in the mountains, the higher you climb they higher they are; when you go into the ocean, the farther you go the deeper it is—it's the same in this case. It's also like forging iron to make a sword; it is considered best to put it into the forge over and over, refining it again and again. Though it is always the same one forge, unless you put the sword in over and over and refine it a hundred times, it can hardly turn out to be a fine sword. Penetrating study is also like this; unless you enter the great forge of the buddhas and patriarchs, difficult to pass through, and make repeated efforts at refinement, through suffering and pain, omniscience and independent knowledge cannot come

forth. Just penetrating through the barrier locks of the buddhas and patriarchs over and over again, responding to beings' potentials everywhere with mastery and freedom of technique, is called subtle observing analytic knowledge.

This is not investigation by means of intellectual considerations; knowledge to save oneself and knowledge to liberate others, when completely fulfilled and mastered, is called subtle observing analytic knowledge. This is the state of the perfectly fulfilled body of reward; it is associated with the western direction and called the gate of enlightenment. It is like the sun having passed high noon, gradually sinking toward the west. While the great wisdom of equanimity is right in the middle, the faculties of sentient beings cannot be seen and the teachings of differentiations among things cannot be made clear. If you do not stop in the realm of self-enlightenment as inner realization and cultivate this subtle observing analytic knowledge, you have done what you can do; having done your task, you reach the land of rest. This is not the meaning of the sun setting; it has the meaning of accomplishment of all the knowledges, the fulfillment of enlightenment, because enlightening self and others, fulfillment of awareness and action, is considered real ultimate enlightenment.

Next, the knowledge of accomplishment of works; this is the secret gateway of mental command, in the realm of ultimate liberation. This is called "undefiled knowledge" and also "uncreated virtue." If you don't realize this knowledge, you won't be capable of great freedom in doing what is to be done to benefit yourself and others. So what is called effortless? Because the preceding subtle observing analytic knowledge is accomplished by successful practice and is in the realm of cultivation, realization, attainment by study, it is called knowledge with effort. This knowledge [of active accomplishment] transcends the bounds of practice, realization, attainment through study, and is beyond the reach of indication or explanation. For example, the subtle observing knowledge is like the flower of complete enlightenment and practice blooming; while this knowledge of doing what is to be done is like the flower of complete enlightenment and practice dropping away and the real fruit forming. This you cannot see even in a dream unless you have passed through the final pass of transcendence of our school. That is why it is said that at the final word you come at last to the unbreakable barrier.

The way to point out the direction is not in verbal explanations; if

you want to reach this realm, just refine your subtle observing analytic knowledge in the differentiating and difficult to pass through stories, smelting and forging hundreds and thousand of times over and over. Even if you have passed through some, repeat over and over, examining meticulously—what is this little truth beyond all convention in the great matter of transcendence? If you don't regress in your examination of the sayings of the ancients, someday you may come to know this bit of wonder.

Even so, if you don't seek an enlightened teacher and personally enter his forge, you cannot plumb the profound subtleties. The only worry is that real teachers of Zen are extremely few here and hard to find. But if someone exerts his energy to the utmost in this and penetrates through clearly, he attains freedom in all ways, transcends the realms of buddhas and devils, yet roams freely in the realms of buddhas and devils, solving sticking points, removing bonds, pulling out nails and pegs, leading people to the realm of purity and ease. This is called "the knowledge to accomplish works"; it is associated with the northern direction and called "the gate of nirvana." It is like when the sun reaches the northern quarter, when it is midnight and the whole world is dark; reaching the sphere of this knowledge, it is not within understanding or comprehension—even buddhas can't see you, much less outsiders and devils.

This is the thoroughly peaceful state of pure reality of the buddhas and patriarchs, the forest of thorns which patch-robed monks sit, lie, and walk in twenty-four hours a day. This is called "great nirvana" replete with four attributes (self, purity, bliss, eternity), and also called "the knowledge of the essential nature of the cosmos," in which the four knowledges are fully complete. The center has the meaning of totalizing the four knowledges, and the essential nature of the cosmos represents the sense of the king of enlightenment, master of the teachings, being king of the Dharma, free in all ways.

I hope that Buddhists with great faith will conceive great trust and commitment and cultivate the great practice for the fulfillment of these four knowledges and true enlightenment. Don't lose out on the great matter of myriad eons because of pride in your view of the moment.



## THE ESSENTIAL SECRETS FOR ENTERING THE WAY—WORDS OF MASTER TOREI

In what the Zen school calls ascending directly from the state of ordinary man to buddha, there are five discriminations: one is the meaning of same nature, second the meaning of different paths, third the meaning of urgency, fourth the meaning of progressive practice, and fifth the meaning of returning to the basis. This is the essential road.

First, same nature: the fundamental nature inherent in sentient beings is not other than the fundamental nature of all the buddhas of the past, present, and future. Their range of powers and qualities are also equal, their lights are radiant; their knowledge, wisdom and miraculous powers are all the same. This may be likened to the light rays of the great solar disc shining everywhere on the mountains, rivers, and plains, so nothing is not illumined. Gold and jewels are bright in themselves even when they are in mud. However, blind people do not see, are not aware of this light, even though they are in its very midst; they are to be pitied.

Second, different paths: although in their fundamental nature buddhas and sentient beings are the same substance, no different, the directions of their minds are different. Buddhas shine inward to illumine the basic mind, whereas sentient beings turn outward and get involved with myriad things. That is why sentient beings create greed and lust for things they desire, anger and rage towards people they dislike, and become fools by becoming congealed in their thoughts; confused and stupefied by these three poisons, they have lost their very fundamental mind.

Those in whom greed and lust run deep turn into hungry ghosts, those in whom anger and rage run deep become antigods, and those deep in folly and delusion become animals; those in whom the three



poisons are equal fall into hell and suffer various miseries. These are called the four bad dispositions; they are most dreadful.

Even though they have greed, anger, and folly, those who restrain themselves and are not self-indulgent are human, and in this way will not lose this bodily form life after life. Those in whom greed, anger, and folly gradually quiet down, and who are not self-indulgent even though they don't restrain themselves are born in heaven, known as gods of the six heavens of desire. Those in whom the nature of the three poisons has died out, but though they have qualities of calmness and wisdom, they have views attached to calmness and have residual habits of aversion and ignorance, are born among the eighteen kinds of heaven of pure form. When the love for calmness is done with but one has not yet opened up the knowledge and insight of the enlightened ones, this is called the four formless heavens; those who practice discipleship and self-enlightenment are in these latter heavens. If you are wondering how this all comes about, you create these worlds with your minds deeply afflicted by greed, anger, and folly, producing such bodily forms as a result. Therefore, unless you extinguish these afflictions and their active expressions, you cannot be liberated; unless you are liberated from the world of suffering of these six dispositions, there is no real peace.

If you want to be free from this world of suffering, first you must contemplate impermanence. Those who are born must inevitably die. Even the young are not exempt; even the strong are in danger. Even the rich and prosperous decline, even the noble and exalted cannot remain that way. Even a long life does not last more than eighty years or so. Thus, this world being impermanent, there is nothing enjoyable. The poor suffer from lack, the rich suffer from possessions, the high suffer from their high status, the low suffer from their low status; they suffer over food and clothing, suffer over wives and children, suffer over wealth, suffer over official rank. Anyway, if you don't annihilate the nature of afflictions somehow and arrive on the path of liberation, even if you ascend to the rank of sovereign of a nation, great minister, deity, spirit, or wizard, it is still evanescent as lightning and morning dew, lasting only for a while.

When conditions meet, everything sure seems to exist; but when the conditions disintegrate, emptiness. This body is gotten through the relationship of father and mother, comes from their conditions—solidity becomes skin, flesh, ligament, and bone; fluidity becomes

spittle, tears, pus, and blood; heat becomes warmth and flexibility; air becomes breath and movement. When these four conditions suddenly are exhausted, the body gets cold and the breath stops—there is nothing called “me.” At that time this body is really not our own; it is only a temporary inn. How can we be so greedily attached to this temporary inn that we ignore eternity?

Contemplating these four transcendences—impermanence, suffering, emptiness, selflessness—seeking the way of enlightenment, is called “the teaching of four realities, for disciples.” This is the essential gateway to beginning entry into the way for all enlightened ones.

Also the twelve causal conditions, for those who can become enlightened by understanding conditionality, are as follows. When the original mind is in the dark, it produces various activities; these are the two [conditions]: ignorance and action. As actions accumulate, they become instinctive; the parents copulate and the embryo dwells within; these are consciousness and name and form. When the body is complete and its six faculties finally developed, this is called “the six media [of sense].” Being born, yet not yet distinguishing good and bad, is called “contact.” After the age of two or three, people already enjoy good tastes and beautiful colors; this is called “sensation.” After the age of ten, there is longing for goods and sex; this is called “craving.” Past fifteen or sixteen, people greedily cling to one thing after another; this is called “grasping.” From the age of twenty, when you do your adult work without fear of wrongdoing, is called “becoming.” When you are doing what you do and piling up faults, the condition of your future life, for good or bad, is decided therein; this is called “birth.” Doing such things all your life, you get old and feeble and die. These are called the twelve causal conditions of human life. Those who are enlightened by understanding these conditions examine them, put an end to passion and affliction, and enter enlightenment. These are all techniques of the enlightened ones for entering the way. When you understand the mind darkened by ignorance and see its real nature, then ignorance becomes identical to the enlightened nature, action is the way, consciousness becomes the power of knowledge. Then the twelve causal conditions all accord with the right way and eventually arrive at the great realization of liberation.

Also the six transcendences of bodhisattvas are generosity, morality, tolerance, effort, meditation, and wisdom. The preceding two gateways of practice, of disciples and those enlightened by under-

standing conditions, benefit oneself only individually and do not have the principle of helping others. Bodhisattvas include the teaching of others in practicing the way for their own benefit as well. They do not spare their wealth when it is for the true way; they make offerings to teachers and give donations to the poor. This is called "material generosity." According to their own depth of knowledge and virtue, they teach and influence others; this is called "generosity with the teaching." Practicing these two kinds of giving to all sentient beings is called "the transcendence of generosity."

Inwardly guarding your spirit of the way, observing fundamental ethics and their ramifications, is called "the transcendence of morality."

Accepting the truth you see, not affected by circumstances of blame or praise, not giving birth to a single thought of anger or resentment, is called "the transcendence of tolerance."

Growing day by day in the great work of helping yourself and helping others, warding off laziness and diligently progressing, is called "the transcendence of effort."

Concentrating wholeheartedly on directed effort in sitting meditation and becoming free from all illusions is called "the transcendence of meditation."

Exhaustively studying the principles of the teachings and examining the intent of the Buddha, consciously breaking up all delusive feelings, is called "the transcendence of wisdom." These are called "the six transcendences of bodhisattvas."

These practices of disciples, those enlightened through disruption of the causal chain, and bodhisattvas—those who struggle for everyone's enlightenment—are called "the three treasures"; they are also called "the three vehicles." They are techniques of the buddhas for realizing the path, principles that do not change for a thousand ages. When students of the one vehicle of buddhahood say these are teachings of the three treasures of the lesser vehicle and reject them, it is to break up the biased view of the lesser vehicle and awaken them to the wonderful truth of the great vehicle. If you believe in the wonderful truth of the great vehicle, then the gateways of practice of the three vehicles are all helpful wings of the great vehicle. It is like the case of the people and slaves, who are of lower class than the lords and rulers; when the people and slaves are rejected, the lords and rulers lose their authority. Because the people are many, the ruler is

noble. Because of the fulfillment of the lesser vehicles, the great vehicle is broad and far reaching. Even the buddhas of the past, present, and the successive generations of enlightened ancestors reached actualization of truth by way of the practical entrances of the three vehicles.

Now people with minds should think clearly; among the pains and troubles of the four bad dispositions, which would you not fear? The blessings and powers of humanity and godhood cannot be relied on either. Anyway, the four realities of disciples are good practice for each of them; everything in this world is misery. Impermanent, it is a desolate house. Whatever may be eventually returns to emptiness. Even one's body is not one's own possession—how much less wives, children, valuables, or kingship, followers, oxen, horses, and so forth! When you die, you go alone; who goes with you? What can you take along with you?

Strangers in the present were parents and children, husbands and wives in former lives; parents and children and husbands and wives of the present are strangers of the future. Oxen, horses, fish, and birds of the present are relatives of former lives; relatives now are oxen, horses, fish, and birds of the future. Drawn by force of actions, following circumstances, it's hard to judge what form of life, what kind of body one may have to experience. Therefore, once you are separated from your parents and children, husbands or wives, those closest to you in the present, you don't know where they are or what they turned out to be. The closeness of bone and flesh even is only for fifty years. It is like deeply loving an overnight guest, disliking other people. When the night is over and the friend leaves, that friend goes east or west, wandering on alone. The people you didn't like before become friends for a night.

The only thing worthy of prayer and trust is enlightenment; the only thing to be sought is the actualization of buddhahood. This body is a skin bag of habitual obstructions produced by the twelvefold routine of conditioning. First you must break up the root of ignorance; once the root is broken, the branches and leaves cannot remain. Practice generosity with goods and teaching, according to your means. Keep the Buddha's precepts without violating them. Tolerate people and don't become angry. Pray and pledge to the buddhas and spirits morning and night; progress diligently without forgetting thought after thought. If you have free time, sit in meditation. When you hear



the true teaching, consciously break through illusion. These are the practices of the six transcendences of bodhisattvas.

Although their fundamental natures are the same, buddhas turn inward while sentient beings run outward—from this moment of error, they have divided into sentient beings of nine realms; hell beings, hungry ghosts, antigods, humans, and deities, the six dispositions, and disciples, those enlightened by conditions, and bodhisattvas, the three vehicles. This is the meaning of different paths. If you return to the source, these are of the same substance as the buddhas; is this not to be hoped for?

Third, the sense of urgency means that if you want to realize the same nature of all buddhas, first you must clearly understand the root of ignorance. This is done by questioning your own fundamental nature. How to do this? Seeing colors with the eyes, hearing sounds with the ears, feeling cool and hot with the body, discerning pleasant and unpleasant in the mind. This is called seeing, hearing, awareness, knowing; these are the seeds of practice. Ordinary people get confused by form when they see it, get confused by sound when they hear, get confused by cold and hot when they feel, get confused by pleasant and unpleasant when they cognize; this is what I call “sentient beings turning outward.”

As for the practice of bodhisattvas, when they see forms, they question what it is that sees; when they hear, they question what hears; when they feel, they question what feels; when they cognize, they question what cognizes. This is what I call the “buddhas turning inward.” When you practice like this, your orientation is different from that of ordinary people, as mentioned before—it is the same as the orientation of the buddhas, and even if you don’t fully realize their wisdom and powers, you should realize that a fledgling bodhisattva has entered the intermediate state.

Always make great vows to the buddhas, pray to the spirit luminaries and make pledges to the ancestral teachers; in this way fulfill the great matter once and sport in the ocean of vows to help self and others. When you get up in the morning, no matter how hurried you are, first arouse this one thought; try this meditation work in seeing and hearing, and after that go about your business. When you eat, make this thought first and try this meditation. When you go to the toilet, make this thought first and try this meditation. When the day is over and you are going to bed, first sit awhile in bed with this



thought foremost; try this meditation before lying down to sleep. This is the practice of the true and straight road of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Disturbed by the fact that you have lost the original nature which is of the same substance as all the buddhas and come to wander through the six dispositions and four kinds of birth, turn to your fundamental nature and urge on your meditational efforts. This is called "the sense of urgency."

Fourth, the meaning of progressive practice means that as you urge on your meditation on the fundamental as just described, you should progress moment after moment, practicing in everything. Summoning forth the state of correct mindfulness in meditation, when you walk you practice while walking, when you rest you practice while resting; when speaking with people you practice while speaking, and when silent and quiet urge on your correct mindfulness all the more. When seeing things, doubt the seer; when hearing things doubt the hearer; when things are busy and it's easy to get distracted, doubt that which is distracted; when you question what it is that gets distracted, then even when distracted you do not lose the right mindfulness of your meditation effort. When sick, you should use your misery as a seed of meditation effort. Anyway, even when things are busy, this, too, should be a way of progressing in meditation; if things are quiet all the time, there won't be energy in your meditation. Without energy in meditation, there is no empowerment.

When quelling disturbance in the country, when everything is at stake and in the midst of the danger of battle you fight back and forth without fear, that is when you win victory. The Dharma battle of meditation work is also like this; when distracted by various things and disturbed by various thoughts, that is a good time to decide victory or defeat. In this frame of mind, without laziness, you should progress. When things are quiet, this is really a matter of practicing military arts inside the castle; so understanding, you should cultivate practice with utmost sincerity. When things are busy, this is the time to decide victory or defeat on the field of battle; so understanding, you should concentrate your effort on directing meditation. Even if you don't attain power, in doing this, in both cases you will be people prepared for the straight and true road of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

For example, someone in the prime of life is able to walk miles a day, whereas someone who is weak can walk only a short way. In

going to a distant country, the strong one may easily get there in a few days, while the weak one may take a few weeks; nevertheless, once they are arrived they are in the same country, among the same people. Whether one has sharp or dull faculties or disposition is like this, too; it is the same as being sickly and having a hard time getting there or being strong and going with ease—depending on whether people are sharp or dull, whether their faculties are strong or weak, there will be differences in how quickly or slowly they become enlightened and find the way. [But] when it comes to the attaining of the way through practice, there is no difference. Should we not take this opportunity? I hope that whether you are smart or stupid, noble or mean, you will make preparations for journey on the way by this direct practice.

There is another meaning within this progressive practice; when effort is pure and ripe, without thinking of it or considering it, you will find empowerment. Even though you get power, you shouldn't be lazy about cultivating practice. If you concentrate energy, empowerment comes of itself, so there are great and small empowerments; lesser enlightenment, after all, turns out to be a hindrance to great enlightenment. If you give up lesser enlightenments and don't cling to them, great enlightenment will surely be realized. If you grasp little enlightenment and don't relinquish it, great enlightenment will surely be ignored. This is like someone so greedy for a little profit that he doesn't get a big profit; if he doesn't cling greedily to a little profit, great profit will eventually be realized; if he accumulates small profits, eventually it will amount to great profit.

If you cling to a lesser benefit and do not progress, spending your whole life within the limits of only a small realization, you can't reach the realm of great freedom and great liberation. Unless you arrive at great enlightenment and find the path of great freedom, fact and principle do not harmonize, so you enter into outside paths with false views. This is dreadful. Once you have some small enlightenment, if you use this as a seed to progress further and further, the great reward of all the buddhas will be revealed. You pass naturally through the barrier locks of the ancestral teachers, fact and principle truly accord, with action and understanding not different, you reach the sphere of great liberation and great independence. This is called "the essential secret of progressive practice."

Exhausting the inner principles of all things, perfecting all virtues

of the way as a benefactor of all sentient beings everywhere, explaining the truth, teaching and influencing according to potential and situation yet without anything lacking, one arrives together with others at the shore of four qualities (self, purity, bliss, eternity) of great nirvana. With this great practice and great vow, make self-help and helping others your task in every life in every world, never turning back for all time.

In the meantime, though you may make mistakes and regress, if your legs are weak and the road slippery, you fall and you'll die there if you don't get up; yet if you keep getting up when you fall and keep going on, eventually you'll get there. When it says in the scriptures that when we commit a fault we should repent right away before the buddhas, and again proceed on the path, this is what it means.

Fifth, the meaning of returning to the basis; as the work previously described progresses and your practice becomes wholly mature, eventually you return to the nature of the same one substance of all the buddhas. This is called fulfilling buddhahood. This is what is referred to in the Zen schools as seeing real nature and fulfilling buddhahood. When the first thought goes wrong and instead of turning inward to the basic mind it ranges outward to myriad objects, floating and sinking in the six paths of hells, hungry ghosts, animals, antigods, humans, and gods, lives apart, generation after generation, revolving in these routines for a thousand lives over myriad eons, like the wheel of a cart. We have experienced the same pains and troubles countless times; if the bones of every life were piled up, they would be higher than a mountain, and if their pus and blood were stored, they would be more than the waters of the ocean; so the realized one has explained.

Now, having a human body, so difficult to get, and having encountered the teaching of enlightenment, which is especially hard to encounter, and therein to have heard the inconceivable true teaching of the great vehicle, is the greatest fortune anyone can have. If you mistakenly ignore this, it would be the greatest wrong you can do. It is said that once you lose the human form, it is as hard to get it again as to drop a thread from the highest heaven to thread a needle at the bottom of the ocean with it.

Also, the routines of transmigrations in the six ways of life are not only a matter of other lives; even in one day there is floating and sinking. Those whose minds are upright and actions not evil are hu-

mans; when they get angry at opposition, they are antigods. If they cling to things they like, they are hungry ghosts. When their minds are stifled by worry and longing, they are animals. When their longings are deep and their greedy attachments are strong and the flames of their rage never die down as they pain people and harm beings, they are hell fiends. This is called losing the human form and creating the seeds of the three mires.

Then, again, sometimes the mind is still. There is no anxiety, and the heart is clear throughout. Then it is said that even though the body is in the human realm, the mind roams in heaven. Thus in one day an ordinary person transmigrates countless times, during which he rarely keeps the human mind, much less roams in heaven. To begin with, they wander mostly in the three mires of animal anxiety, ghostly greed, and ungodly wrath; often they enter hellish ways, causing suffering to people and injuring beings. Truly we should see how much we wander in what paths in the course of a day.

First of all, the mentalities of the evil ways are two parts of three; humans keep one part, and hell is also mixed in there. So even in the ordinary state of mind, these bad ways are hard to avoid. In this one day, arouse the determination to cultivate practice of the four realities of disciples, of the method of contemplation of the twelve causal conditions as the self-enlightened ones do, and of the great way of the six transcendances of the bodhisattvas; with this mind, you should cut off the seeds of the three mires. Those who work to progress in the effort of the great vehicle, even if they don't yet attain enlightenment, eliminate the mentality of the three mires, transcend the sport of humans and gods, and climb into the ranks of the bodhisattvas.

Even disciples and self-enlightened ones should be honored; how much more the way of bodhisattvas. Even the way of bodhisattvas is a rare fortune; how much more so the teaching of the one vehicle of buddhahood. Seeing reality and realizing the path is the crowning meditation of the buddhas; those who set their minds on this are direct children of Buddha. In every moment of consciousness they carry out unexcelled practice of virtue; with every step they reach the ineffable action of transcendent wisdom. As far as wisdom is concerned, even the merit of reading or reciting words of wisdom is great; how much the more so to carry them out!

Even having others read and recite prevents danger of disasters; how much the more for those who actually practice themselves! The

buddhas will rejoice; the bodhisattvas will take their hands; the spirits of sky and earth will protect these people; malicious ghosts and spirits will be frightened just seeing their shadows. Psychic energies and unseen spirits, when coming in contact with such people, will conceive the thought of obtaining the seed of liberation. This is called "the most worthy and most eminent, the foremost teaching"; it should be practiced to the best of one's ability.





TIMELESS SPRING

*A Soto Zen Anthology*



## INTRODUCTION

Chan, or zen buddhism, has been called the school of the enlightened mind, the true school of no attachment, the gate of the source, the fundamental vehicle; it teaches direct insight into the essence of mind, realization of its ineffable nature, and awakening of its dormant capacities. In its deepest sense, chan is not a school of buddhism but the inner meaning of buddhism, the science of enlightenment; outwardly it presents psycho-physical technology for unlocking the secret of fundamental enlightenment. In speaking of chan and zen, therefore, it must be borne in mind that both transcendent and relative aspects are referred to, whether it be primarily one or the other or both equally.

The origins of chan in China were from among people like the Mahasiddhas in the Indian sphere and the Sufis from Central Asia to Europe, who were dedicated to actualizing the living meaning of the teachings of the sacred scriptures and traditions of the sages. More or less alienated from priestly or monastic bureaucracy, token ritualism and literalist scholarship, originally they were often scorned, even persecuted, for nonconformity and nondogmatic, even antidogmatic speech and action; eventually they became the most vibrant spiritual forces in their world areas.

By the end of the seventh century, chan masters were being celebrated as 'Teachers of the Nation of China,' and chan was being taught and practiced all over China, in large urban centers as well as remote rural areas. This was two centuries after Bodhidharma, an Indian monk considered to be the first patriarch of chan in China; it was still several centuries before the peak of the profuse flowering of chan literature which grew up through the heritage of the eminent Tang and Sung dynasty masters.

During the Tang dynasty, which lasted from the seventh through the ninth centuries, a number of monks and scholars came from Japan

to study in China, as the political and cultural influence of the Tang empire was being felt all the way from the kingdoms of Annam, Nanchao, and Tibet in the south and west, among the Turkic and Mongolian federations in the west and north, through the nations of Korea and Japan in the north and east. Although this was the time of the later chan patriarchs and the subsequent rise of the so-called Five Houses, sometimes considered to be the golden age of chan, the Japanese pilgrims did not seem to make much, if any, contact with the mainstreams of chan activity at this time. The pilgrims studied mostly in the capital areas or ancient monastic centers on famous mountains, where the doctrinal schools of buddhism were active; chan was largely scattered throughout mountainous areas of southern China, far from the traditional homeland of Chinese civilization. Early in the ninth century one pilgrim did, however, make contact with two streams of chan which became extinct not long after in China; he transmitted their teachings to Japan, including it among the four transmissions of Japanese Tendai buddhism. This teaching was revived for a time in Japan in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as the Bodhidharma sect or buddha mind sect; many of the members of this school eventually become disciples of zen master Dogen, who in 1227 returned from China as an enlightened successor of the chan transmission.

During the Sung dynasty, from the tenth to the thirteenth century, chan and Pure Land buddhism were in effect the only buddhist movements surviving the government persecutions of the ninth and tenth centuries; most of the leading buddhist teachers of the times were chan masters, who often were well versed in the scriptural schools of buddhism and even learned in confucianism. A number of chan masters also cultivated and encouraged Pure Land practice of Buddha name invocation; this trend grew in popularity later on. Many chan masters were excellent poets, calligraphers, scholars and speakers, and many secular poets, artists, and scholars practiced chan meditation and sought the association and instruction of chan adepts. Hence during the Sung dynasty, continuing the trend of the Tang, chan made a tremendous impact on Chinese culture. Even now, the ancient chan dictum of "no work, no food" and the practice of sitting meditation for therapeutic calming of mind and body are still in evidence in China, where the last vestiges of buddhism as a religion have been virtually obliterated.



Under the Sung dynasty a system of public chan monasteries, known as the Five Mountains and Ten Fields, was organized and run under officially recognized monastic regulations. In former ages, the chan schools were continually scattering, as enlightened successors left the parent school to continue traveling or to live in anonymity until circumstances exposed them to the opportunity to teach; whether a monastery was maintained or not as a focus of chan practice depended on the presence of a teaching master. Under the Five Mountain and Ten Field system, a vacant abbacy in one of these large public monasteries was filled by consulting the well known chan masters in the land to find a suitable replacement from among the chan adepts. This system avoided the projection of sectarianism on the variety of chan lineages, but unavoidably exposed people to the trap of institutionalization and competition that pristine chan had broken away from earlier, after buddhism became in effect the state religion of China. In both China and Japan, however, while eminent masters appeared from time to time in the famous monasteries, attracting huge numbers of students, the transmission was continuing outside of the religious, cultural, and political centers as well.

As in China, where chan came to light after centuries of buddhist influence, so too in Japan zen took root and grew on its own after long experience with the scriptural schools of buddhism. Most students of chan in China and zen in Japan were familiar with the major buddhist scriptures, and as time went on, many steeped themselves in the literature of chan-zen tradition. Several of the pre-Tang patriarchs of Tientai buddhism and Tang patriarchs of Huayen buddhism were recognized as chan masters, and two eminent Sung dynasty chan masters are recognized as patriarchs of Pure Land buddhism, as these various traditions were always in contact. In Japan, most of the early zen students and the Japanese masters were deeply learned in the exoteric and esoteric Tendai buddhist teachings; in later times many practitioners of Buddha name recitation came to hear the teachings of the zen masters, and a number of zen masters also taught and practiced the invocation of Amitabha Buddha. The source of chan and the Teachings is one; the vaunted iconoclasm of chan and zen is a practical application of the adage that "when the illness is gone, the medicine is removed," which applies to chan teaching as well—as the saying of a famous master goes, "we have no sayings—there is no doctrine to give people."

The chan patriarchy seems to have been obscure until the time of the fourth patriarch Daoxin (580–651). The founding father, Bodhidharma, is thought by some to have been one of the Mahasiddhas; a yoga master, he came to China at a very advanced age, after having taught in India for fifty years, and spent another fifty years in various parts of China, teaching as the occasion arose. Near the end of his life he went to Shaolin monastery in northwest China and sat for nine years facing a wall; this is one of the primary ways in which he is remembered in illustrative zen history. The second patriarch (Huike 487–593) had studied confucianism and taoism, finally turning to buddhism; after eight years in meditation he went to see Bodhidharma and stayed there at Shaolin for another six years, becoming the foremost of Bodhidharma's few known disciples. The second patriarch communicated the chan transmission of the seal of the enlightened mind to ten disciples, several of whom were laymen, including Sengcan (d.606), who was to be the third patriarch. Tradition says that Sengcan did not communicate it to anyone except Daoxin, but he is also said to be the author of the *Shin-shin-ming*, a poem on faith in the mind, which may rightfully be called the first chan classic, widely appreciated for more than a thousand years.

The fourth patriarch Daoxin established the first self-sufficient chan mountain center, as more than five hundred students gathered around him; he wrote books on meditation and bodhisattva precepts and became the first nationally known chan father. Daoxin also is noted for setting the example of not obeying the imperial summons to the capital. Daoxin's only successor, Hongren (602–675), continued to teach on the same mountain, on a different peak, and eventually produced eleven enlightened disciples, a number of whom became prominent teachers. Huineng (638–713), perhaps the most famous of the patriarchs, had over forty successors, and was the source of the streams of chan that were to continue the mind to mind communication of chan for over a millennium.

According to the classic chan history *Transmission of the Lamp*, the foremost of Huineng's disciples were chan master Xingsi of Qingyuan mountain (d.740). In a dialogue that later became a well known chan public case, he asked the patriarch, "What should be done so as not to fall into stages?" The patriarch said, "What have you done?" He said, "I don't even strive at the holy truths." The patriarch said, "Then what stage do you fall into?" He said, "If even the holy truths

are not practiced, what stages are there?" The patriarch said, "So it is, so it is. Keep it well."

Despite the great popularity of the sixth patriarch, as many of his heirs lived in obscurity, the flourishing of chan is said to have started with Shitou (700–790) and Mazu (709–788). Mazu was the successor of Nanyue (677–744), another of Huineng's enlightened disciples, while Shitou was the successor of the aforementioned Qingyuan (as Xingsi is known, according to custom, after a place he lived). Mazu and Shitou came to be called the "two gates of elixir," and their enlightened disciples spread throughout China.

In his boyhood, Shitou showed an unusual character, once destroying a sacrificial altar in an aboriginal village and leading away an ox that was to be killed. Later he went to meet the sixth patriarch and was ordained as a disciple; before he had received full ordination, the patriarch died and the boy was directed to Qingyuan, eventually to become his foremost disciple and sole heir. Subsequently he went to Hengyue (also called Nanyue), one of the holy mountains of China, and built a hut on a flat boulder beside a temple there; because of this he came to be known as Shitou Heshang, "The Monk on the Rock." Shitou's famous composition *Merging of Difference and Unity* is a seminal work of chan dialectic, highly appreciated and subject to numerous ancient and modern commentaries.

Shitou had twenty one enlightened successors, from whom three of the five houses of chan were descended—the Cao-Dong, Yunmen, and Fayen. Shitou's heir Tienhuang Daowu, from whom the latter two chan houses were descended, also succeeded to Mazu, as did a number of eminent chan masters of the time.

Most of the masters in the third generation of Shitou's lineage were disciples of Yaoshan Weiyen (745–828). Once Shitou said, "Speech and movement are irrelevant," and Yaoshan responded, "Not speaking or moving is also irrelevant." Shitou said, "Here a needle cannot be pushed in." Yaoshan said, "Here is like planting flowers on a rock." Shitou deeply approved of him. There is a famous verse, often quoted in chan literature, which was originally composed by Shitou in praise of Yaoshan:

Though we've been dwelling together, I don't know his name:  
 Going along accepting the flow, just being thus,  
 Even the eminent sages since antiquity don't know him—  
 How could the hasty ordinary type presume to understand?

Once as Yaoshan was reading a scripture, master Baiyan, one of Mazu's successors, said to him, "You should stop fooling people." Yaoshan rolled up the text and said, "What time of day is it?" Baiyan said, "Just noon." Yaoshan said, "There's still this pattern." Baiyan said, "I don't even have nothing." Yaoshan said, "You are too brilliant." Baiyan said, "I am just thus; what about you?" Yaoshan said, "I limp along, ungainly in a hundred ways, clumsy in a thousand, still I go on this way."

Yunyan Tansheng (781-841) studied with Baizhang Huaihai (720-814) for twenty years, serving as his attendant. Baizhang was a leading successor of Mazu and is credited with the formal establishment of the unique chan monastic system. After Baizhang's death, Yunyan went to Yaoshan, where he soon became enlightened. Among Yunyan's own chan successors was the reknowned Dongshan Liangjie (807-869), who came to be honored as the father of one of the Five Houses of classical chan buddhism.

Dongshan began to study buddhism as a boy; taught to recite the popular Heart of Wisdom scripture, which says there are no eye, ear, nose, etc. he felt his face and asked his teacher why the scripture said there are none, when he had them. The scripture means that the senses, their fields and consciousnesses, have no independent natures and cannot be grasped, and the teacher, realizing he could not solve this problem for the boy, sent him to a chan master, Lingmo (746-818), one of Mazu's disciples. At the age of twenty one Dongshan was fully ordained and went traveling for enlightenment. He first called on Nanquan (747-834), one of Mazu's latest and greatest successors; while still a young monk, Dongshan became highly respected in the community of his eminent master.

Subsequently Dongshan called on Guishan Lingyou (771-853) and asked about the saying of a past master that inanimate objects expound the Dharma. Dharma means the teaching, here the buddhist, or enlightening teaching, and it also means principle, quality, and phenomena; it is said that all dharmas, all things, are enlightening dharmas. Guishan lifted his whisk and asked Dongshan if he heard it; Dongshan didn't understand, and asked what scripture the expression came from. Guishan cited the saying of the *Hua Yen*, or Flower Garland scripture, that all things in all worlds in all times expound the Dharma. Finally Dongshan asked Guishan to direct him to another



man of the way, and Guishan, who had been a disciple of Baizhang, told him about Yunyan.

When Dongshan questioned Yunyan, Yunyan told him that the insentient could hear the inanimate preaching. The ancient master had explained to his original questioner, "Right now in the midst of all activities, if there is just no arising and disappearance of the twin streams of ordinary and holy, this is subtle consciousness which clearly perceives without belonging to either existence or nonexistence; you just perceive without hangups and attachments to feelings and consciousness. That is why the sixth patriarch said, 'The six senses discriminating in reference to objects is not consciousness.' " Dongshan asked Yunyan if he could hear the inanimate teaching." Yunyan said, "If you don't even hear my teaching, how can you hear the teaching of the inanimate?" According to one version, Dongshan then presented his understanding to Yunyan in a verse, but another version has it that he again asked Yunyan what scripture the teaching of the inanimate was based on, and Yunyan cited the Amitabha scripture saying that all the rivers, birds, trees and forests invoke Buddha and Dharma, whereupon Dongshan understood and presented the verse, saying,

Wonderful! Wonderful!  
 The sermon of the inanimate is inconceivable.  
 If you try to hear it with your ears  
 After all you'll hardly understand  
 Only when you hear it in your eyes  
 Will you be able to know.

Baizhang has spoken of the inanimate, or insentient, having buddha-nature in similar terms, explaining "insentience" as a metaphor for non-attachment; he says, "Right now, in regard to the two spheres of ordinary and holy, and all things, existent or nonexistent, just have no grasping or rejecting mind at all, and also have no knowledge or understanding of not grasping or rejecting; this is called insentient having buddha-nature. It is just that there is no bondage by feelings, that is why it is called insentience."

After Dongshan left Yunyan, he still had some doubt, until one day he happened to see his reflection when he looked into a river as he crossed over and was suddenly greatly enlightened. Then he uttered his famous verse,



Just don't seek from another  
 Or you'll be far estranged from self.  
 I now go on alone  
 Meeting it everywhere  
 It now is just what I am  
 I now am not it.  
 You must comprehend in this way  
 To merge with thusness.

Not seeking anything outside of fundamental completeness, one realizes the self that is self because there is no other, and the self that is no self because there is no other. In harmony with nature, seeing reality—thusness—everywhere, yet one does not identify, remaining fluid and free, not pinned down to anything. Zen master Keizan explained, "If you know you go by yourself alone wherever you are, you accord with all suchness as is. Therefore an ancient said, 'There is no knowledge outside of suchness that is proved by suchness, no suchness outside of knowledge that is cultivated by knowledge.' Suchness is immutable, it is clear constant eternal knowledge; therefore it is said that completely illumined knowledge does not depend on thought."

Dongshan continued to travel for many years, famed throughout the monasteries as a school in himself; toward the end of his life he stayed and taught at Xinfeng Mountain and later at Dong Mountain (Dongshan), by which name he is known to posterity. Dongshan had twenty six successors, and his lineage came to be called the Dong succession, or the Cao-Dong school, after Dongshan and his great disciple Caoshan. Dongshan's long poem *Song of the Jewel Mirror Awareness*, is, like Shitou's *Merging of Difference and Unity*, a seminal classic, and contains the matrix of the "five ranks" teaching design associated with the Cao-Dong tradition.

Among Dongshan's numerous successors were two outstanding teachers of the age; Caoshan Benji (840–901) and Yunju Daoying (d.902). Caoshan originally studied confucianism, then left home at age nineteen to become a monk. He met Dongshan late in the latter's life, and visited him repeatedly to ask for guidance. He stayed around Dongshan for several years and was especially skillful at expounding chan in terms of Dongshan's 'five ranks' device, making commentaries on Dongshan's verses on the five ranks as well as other formula-

tions of chan processes. Caoshan's final conversation with Dongshan succinctly captures the teaching of integration of absolute and relative that is at the heart of the five ranks: when Caoshan took leave of him, Dongshan asked, "Where are you going?" Caoshan said, "To an unchanging place." Dongshan said, "If it's an unchanging place, how could there be any going?" Caoshan said, "Going too is unchanging."

Yunju's community of disciples is said to have always numbered fifteen hundred people; he wrote nothing, and relatively few of his sayings are left to posterity, but the succession of Dongshan lived on through Yunji's lineage after those of Dongshan's other heirs had died out. Yunju's sayings are forceful and direct, and he does not touch upon the five ranks as a formulated system.

By the fifth generation of Dongshan's lineage there were only a few known chan masters of the Cao-Dong style left, and most of them left no successors. Dayang Qingxuan, an outstanding teacher descended from Yunju, had had fifteen enlightened disciples, but all of them died before he did. An outstanding chan master, Fushan Fayuan, an intrepid pilgrim and successor to two great Linji chan masters, came to see Dayang; as they were in accord, Dayang entrusted Fushan with finding a successor for him and preserving the Cao-Dong style of chan transmission. Later Dayang passed the bequest of Dayang on to an enlightened student, Touzi Yiqing, from whom all subsequent generations of chan masters bearing the Cao-Dong transmission are descended.

In the *Five Lamps Merged in the Source*, a standard chan collection of the thirteenth century, we find much more material on Dayang, Touzi, and his successors, than on the masters since Dongshan and Caoshan. Touzi made a collection of one hundred public cases of chan records, summing up each with a simple verse of his own. In the latter thirteenth century chan master Linquan Conglun gave a series of talks on his collection, adding introductions, remarks and lectures, in the fashion of the well-known classic *Blue Cliff Record*. This was recorded, to become the *Empty Valley Collection*. Later Linquan gave similar talks on a collection of one hundred cases with verses by Danxia Zichun (d. 1119), successor to one of Touzi's heirs, producing the *Vacant Hall Collection*.

Touzi's most distinguished successor was the great Furong Daokai (1042-1118). He asked Touzi, "The sayings of the buddhas and patriarchs are like everyday food and drink: apart from this, is there any

special way to help people?" Touzi said, "You tell me, does the command of the emperor in his realm depend on the ancient kings?" As Furong was about to speak, Touzi hit him in the mouth with his whisk and said, "As soon as you produce an idea, already you've got thirty blows of the cane." At this Furong awakened.

Furong became an outstanding chan teacher of the age, and was abbot at the large public monastery of Tienning until he was exiled for declining imperial honors. Furong, the mountain after which he is usually known, was his abode in exile; there he delivered an address to the assembly which was canonized as the *Standards of Jetavana*, with fundamental guidelines for the spiritual community, harkening back to the time of Shakyamuni Buddha in the Jeta Grove. Furong's teaching flourished, and he had twenty six enlightened disciples.

Danxia Zichun, successor to Furong, the poet of the *Vacant Hall Collection*, was teacher of Changlu Zhenxie Qingliao (n.d.) and Tiantong Hongzhi Zhenjue (1091-1153), two outstanding chan masters. The record of Hongzhi is far larger than any other Cao-Dong chan master in China. When he was abbot at the great monastery at Tiantong mountain, students came from all over, swelling the ranks of the community to over fifteen hundred. Included in Hongzhi's record are hundreds of comments and poems on ancient chan stories and sayings. A later master, Wansong Xingxiu (1166-1246) lectured on two collections of one hundred cases each, made by Hongzhi. One, with Hongzhi's poems, became the nucleus of the *Book of Equanimity*, and the other, with Hongzhi's prose comments, became the nucleus for the *Record of Further Inquiries*; the former is designed like the *Blue Cliff Record* while the latter consists of the ancient story, Hongzhi's remarks with Wansong's comments and talks.

Wansong studied chan first with master Shengmo, who told him, "Studying this path is like refining gold; when it's impure, the pure gold doesn't show. As I look between your eyebrows, there is very much something there. If you don't 'pierce through cold bones' once, you won't be able to cast this thing off. Hereafter, see for yourself; it is not a matter of my speaking much." And Shengmo had him contemplate Changsha's saying, to turn yourself back into the mountains, rivers, and earth. For six months he couldn't get into it. Shengmo said, "I only hope you'll understand late." After a long time, one day he suddenly had insight, but he still couldn't understand why an ancient master had said of the monk who was enlightened upon

seeing peach blossoms, "Quite right, but I dare say the old brother isn't through yet."

Eventually Wansong went to Xueyuan, a sixth generation successor in Furong's line, where he became greatly enlightened. He said, "It is so near—all my former cleverness burnt up in one fire, for the first time I see how Shengmo helped people." In his talks on chan cases, Wansong quotes Shengmo as well as Xueyuan, telling what they said about the stories. Wansong stayed with Xueyuan for two more years investigating the subtleties, and finally was entrusted with carrying on the teaching. From that time on he became famous; in 1193, at the age of twenty seven, he was summoned by the emperor of the Jin dynasty, the Jurchen rulers of northern China. Later he served as abbot of several monasteries by imperial appointment under the Jurchen Jin and Mongol Yuan dynasties. In his latter years he retired to the House of Equanimity, after which his best known work is named.

Rujing (1163–1228), a contemporary of Wansong, was another famous chan master who served as teaching abbot of several of the public monasteries, but it was not known who his chan teacher was until at the end of his life he revealed that he had acknowledgement of the transmission from Xuedou Zhijian, a descendant of Danxia Zichun. Rujing's practice was just sitting; he lived in a monastery from the age of nineteen, gave up the study of scriptures, never returned to his native place, never spoke to the villagers, not even to people next to him in the monk's hall, didn't go to any of the various halls and rooms but just sat in the monks meditation hall, vowing to wear out a diamond seat. He said, "No more need to burn incense, make prostrations, invoke buddhas, perform repentance ceremonies, or read scriptures—just sit and liberate mind and body."

There were several enlightened people in Rujing's assembly, including the famous Japanese zen master Dogen (1200–1253), who inherited the patched robe of Furong. Dogen was a profound scholar of the buddhist teachings and also practiced Rinzai (Linji) zen in Japan for nine years before he and his zen teacher went to China in 1223 to seek further guidance. After traveling around to various monasteries, hearing the teachings and meeting the chan abbots, Dogen saw Rujing at last and stayed to study with him. There Dogen sat still day and night, and finally became greatly enlightened. After two more



years with Rujing, in 1227 Dogen returned to Japan, where he taught and wrote and is considered the first patriarch of Soto (Cao-Dong) zen.

Dogen spent about ten years living in various places, then spent another ten years at Kosho Horin temple near Kyoto, where a group of students began to gather around him. It was during these years that Dogen gave the talks collected by his disciple Ejo under the title *Record of Things Heard from the Treasury of the Eye of the True Teaching*. In his last years he lived at Eiheiji, the monastery he founded in the mountainous snow country, facing the China Sea.

Dogen endeavored to recrystallize the ancient verities of buddhism. He criticized the decadent tendencies of past and present, wrote principles and rules for monastic organization and conduct, made detailed analyses of many significant passages from scriptures and chan lore, commented on hundreds of public cases, wrote and delivered numerous talks on the fundamentals of zen practice. He especially emphasized the unity of practice and realization, that true practice is not seeking, but practice of realization, and particularly exhorted pure sitting. Like the founding fathers of chan in China, Dogen was opposed by members of established groups, and his teaching was not so widespread in his time as was his influence through his descendants, but he left a tremendous body of writings and speeches which have inspired zen students for seven centuries.

In Soto zen tradition Dogen is known as The Eminent Ancestor, and the fourth generation patriarch, Keizen Jokin (1268-1325) is known as The Great Ancestor, as it was with him that Soto zen began to flourish, with his zen successors spreading the way throughout Japan. Keizen taught as abbot at several monasteries, then finally walked off to roam till the end of his life, teaching according to the occasion as crowds of people came to see him. Keizen also wrote many works; his treatise on sitting meditation and his *Esoteric Shobogenzo*, a set of ten zen stories with Keizen's reflections, are intended to convey his teaching in quintessential form.

According to Geppa Doin (1644-?), one of the eminent Soto teachers of the Tokugawa period revival of zen in Japan, the school of Dogen, from its beginnings in the 1230's and 40's, flourished from the late 1200's to the early 1400's, faded in the mid-fifteenth century, declined after the late fifteenth century, and had been continuing weakly for two hundred years. Geppa's *Biographical Extracts of the Original Stream* chronicles the highlights of the succession of his



lineage through twenty-four generations from Dogen to the seventeenth century zen master Guon, Geppa's final teacher. As zen is not a doctrinal school but a succession of living exemplars, the chain of transmission has a profound meaning in zen which has nothing to do with school or sect. This book is both conventional and illustrative history, tracing evidence of the communication of the inmost mind of zen through the vicissitudes of centuries.

Zen method is often described in terms of dying and returning to life; as Shitou said, a sage has no self, but there is nothing that is not himself. This is analogous to the development of the individual lesser vehicle to the collective greater vehicle of buddhism; according to the *Mahaparinirvana* scripture,

It is like when a woman rears an infant and the infant gets sick, she worries and looks for a doctor. When the doctor arrives he compounds three kinds of medicine . . . and gives it to the child to take; then he tells the woman not to breast-feed the child until the medicine has been digested.

Then the woman paints her breasts with bitter taste and tells the infant, 'My breasts are covered with poison; don't touch them anymore.' The infant thirsts for her milk, but hearing that the milk is poisonous, it gives up and goes away.

When the medicine has been digested, the mother than washes her breasts and calls the child to give it milk. Now the infant, though it hungers and thirsts again, having heard before it is poisonous, therefore doesn't come.

The mother now says, 'Because you had taken medicine, I painted my breasts with poison; now that your medicine is dispersed, I have washed—so now you can drink milk with no trouble.' After hearing this, the infant gradually comes back to drink.

Good people, the buddhas are also like this: for the transcendence of all, they teach sentient beings to cultivate the state of selflessness. Having thus cultivated, they forever end the selfish mind and enter *nirvana*. This is to get rid of all conventional false views, and to show a truth which goes beyond the world, and also to show that the conventional idea of self is false and not truly real; to cultivate pure body of the selfless state. Just as the woman, for the sake of her child, painted her breasts with

bitter flavor, so too do the buddhas, for the sake of the cultivation of emptiness, say that all things have no self. Just as the woman, having washed her breasts, calls her child to bring it back to drink, so too does the buddha speak of the womb of the realization of thusness.

Therefore mendicants should not be afraid—like that little child, hearing its mother's call, coming back gradually to drink, so should the mendicants discern for themselves the hidden treasury of the realization of thusness, which must be there.

In the ancient scriptures we read that the Buddha taught all sorts of meditations, from absorption in colors to such refined states as formless absorptions in infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, beyond cognition and noncognition, and even the end of sensation and perception, Yet none of these is *nirvana*, none is a goal in the buddhist context; they are means of freeing mind and body from routine and habitual thought and activity, to open the practitioner to the possibility of *nirvana*, the turning point of the enlightened life.

By shedding attachments to things and thoughts, one may come to realize that they have no binding nature, that value systems are originally mental constructions; the miraculous ability to "change earth to gold and gold to earth" spoken of in zen texts represents such freedom in the world. If the naive realistic view is not shattered by transcendent wisdom and the sublime meditative states themselves are made objects of attachment, forever pitted against the affairs of the mundane world, true enlightenment and liberation cannot take place. When the mentally constructed facade of identity projected on persons and things is dropped, there is only "thusness"—as Yaoshan said, "Now that I've shed my skin completely, only one true reality alone is there."

When the fourth patriarch first came to the third patriarch, it is said, he was asked what he was seeking; when he replied that he sought liberation, the third patriarch simply said, "Who binds you?" The fourth patriarch replied that no one was binding him, whereupon the third patriarch said, "Then why seek liberation?" At this the fourth patriarch's mind opened. Similarly, the later chan master Guishan would say, "If feelings do not attach to things, how can things hinder people?"

But not being attached is easier said than done, and therefore considerable emphasis is often placed on what is called in the teachings the "gate of sweeping away" and in zen the "killing sword." There are many passages in buddhist texts which exhaust the possibilities of human life and show the pithless nature of our doings, to help us agree to loosen intellectual and emotional bonds. In the famous parable of the *Lotus* scripture, the children are too involved in playing with their toys to notice that the house is on fire; so their father promises them better toys, *nirvana* and liberation, if they will come out of the house.

In the scriptures of great vehicle buddhism, extinct *nirvana* is called "the illusory citadel," used to relieve fatigue and despair on confronting the endless way; it is also called "the deep pit of liberation" and "reducing the body to ashes, obliterating knowledge," as its ineffable serenity is so intoxicating that one may utterly forget the mundane world and never return. There are many analogous terms and sayings in zen literature, warning against one-sided views, putting the "great death" in perspective as part of a process. In the *Lotus* scripture it says that it is those in whom desire rages who seek peace and quiet as bliss; in the great way, the middle way, there is neither grasping nor rejection.

Transcending the world in its very midst, being in the world but not of it, one might call a hallmark of the buddhist way. If zen teaching seems paradoxical, perhaps it is just because it presents both poles, "the solitary peak" and "the bustling market place," and deals with subtle levels of integration. In principle, Caoshan explains it this way:

The absolute state is the realm of emptiness, where fundamentally there is not a single thing. The relative state is the realm of form, where there are myriad images and shapes. The relative in the absolute turns from noumenon to phenomena; the absolute in the relative relinquishes phenomena and enters noumenon: mutual integration mysteriously responds to myriad circumstances without falling into the various states of existence; it is not defiled or pure, not absolute or relative: therefore it is called the empty mysterious great way, the true school of no attachment.

As a practical process by which one achieves this, Caoshan says that at first one turns inward, casts out sense data and attains tranquility; after having accomplished this, one does not cling to objects of sense, but lives among them without being hindered by them. As Bunan, a seventeenth-century Rinzai master said, "While alive, become thoroughly dead, then do whatever you will, all is good." Similarly, as in Dongshan's famous line, "On a withered tree flowers bloom in a spring beyond time," the bequest of the great life after the great death is spoken of in many zen sayings and writings. Dogen said,

The great way of the buddhas is profound, wondrous, inconceivable; how could its practice be easy? Have you not seen how the ancients gave up their bodies and lives, abandoned their countries, cities, and families, looking upon them as like shards of tile? After that they passed eons living alone in the mountains and forests, bodies and minds like dead trees; only then did they unite with the way. Then they could use the mountains and rivers for words, raise the wind and rain for a tongue, and explain the great void, turning the incomparable wheel.

Thus it is not really a paradox when on one hand it is said one should be like wood or stone, yet it is also said one should not be like wood or stone. Baizhang spoke of the practical process in terms of three phases; "Just detach from all sound and form (etc.), and do not dwell in detachment, and do not dwell in intellectual understanding—this is practice." But as people are different and are not unified even as individuals, the application of this formula, as all zen formulae, depends on the person's condition: Baizhang said, "If you teach people only one phase, you'll make them go to hell; if you teach them all three phases at once, they'll go to hell by themselves."

Still, as Baizhang also points out, teaching of practice and realization is still not comprehensive; delusion and enlightenment are from the same source, and the way itself transcends this dualism. Ryusui said,

Emptiness is a name for nothingness, a name for ungraspability, a name for mountains, rivers, the whole earth. It is also called the real form. In the green of the pines, the twist of the brambles, there is no going or coming; in the red of the flowers and

the white of the snow there is no birth and no death. Joy, anger, love, pleasure—these are beginningless and endless; delusion, enlightenment, practice, realization—these are inexhaustible and boundless. Thus. Thus emptiness is the name for nothing else—all things are the real form, in all worlds in all directions there is no second, no third. Therefore, in the fundamental vehicle there is no delusion or enlightenment, no practice or realization—even to speak of practice and realization is a relative view; in our school from the first entry this point should be practiced whether sitting, lying down, or walking around. When sleeping, just sleeping, there's no past or future; when you awaken, there's no sleep either. This is called the absolute host.





## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Timeless Spring is an anthology of Chan-Zen writings and records illustrating diverse aspects of the rich and manysided teachings of Zen Buddhism. The selections presented here have been translated from the voluminous canon of Zen Buddhism, and trace manifestations of a major Zen teaching lineage over a period of nearly one thousand years in China and Japan. Sources for this anthology include the following Zen classics:

The Transmission of the Lamp  
The Five Lamps Merged in the Source  
Record of Further Inquiries  
The Empty Valley Collection  
The Vacant Hall Collection  
Recorded Sayings of Hongzhi  
Recorded Sayings of Rujing  
Recorded Sayings of Dogen  
Recorded Sayings of Geppa  
Complete Works of Josai Daishi



*Timeless Spring*





## SHITOU SAID,

Our teaching has been handed down by the ancient buddhas; we do not speak of meditation or spiritual progress, only the arrival at the knowledge and vision of buddhahood. Mind itself is buddha; mind, buddha, sentient beings, enlightenment, affliction, are all different names for the same thing. You should know that your own mind's aware essence is neither finite nor eternal, by nature neither defiled nor pure. It is still and complete; it is the same in ordinary people and saints, responding effectively without patterns, apart from mind, intellect, and discriminating consciousness. The three realms—desire, matter, and immaterial—and six states of being—animals, hell beings, hungry ghosts, titans, human beings, gods—are only manifestations of your own mind; the moon in the water, images in a mirror—how can there be any birth or death? If you can realize this, you will be complete in every way.

Once as Yaoshan was sitting, Shitou saw him and asked, "What are you doing here?" Yaoshan said, "I'm not doing anything." Shitou said, "Then you are just sitting idly." Yaoshan said, "If I were idly sitting, that would be doing something."

Shitou said, "You said you are not doing; what aren't you doing?" Yaoshan said, "Even the saints don't know."

## MERGING OF DIFFERENCE AND UNITY

### CAN TONG QI

Composed by Shitou Xiqian

The mind of the great sage of India  
Is intimately communicated between east and west.<sup>1</sup>  
People's faculties may be keen or dull,  
But in the path there are no 'southern' or 'nothern' patriarchs.<sup>2</sup>  
The spiritual source shines clearly in the light;  
The branching streams flow in the darkness.<sup>3</sup>

Grasping things is basically delusion;  
 Merging with principle is still not enlightenment.  
 Each sense and every field  
 Interact and do not interact;  
 When interacting, they also merge—  
 Otherwise, they remain in their own states.  
 Forms are basically different in material and appearance,  
 Sounds are fundamentally different in pleasant or harsh quality.  
 'Darkness' is a word for merging upper and lower;  
 'Light' is an expression for distinguishing pure and defiled.  
 The four gross elements return to their own natures  
 Like a baby taking to its mother;  
 Fire heats, wind moves,  
 Water wets, earth is solid.  
 Eye and form, ear and sound;  
 Nose and smell, tongue and taste—  
 Thus in all things  
 The leaves spread from the root;  
 The whole process must return to the source;  
 'Noble' and 'base' are only manners of speaking.  
 Right in light there is darkness, but don't confront it as  
     darkness;  
 Right in darkness there is light, but don't see it as light.<sup>4</sup>  
 Light and dark are relative to one another  
 Like forward and backward steps.  
 All things have their function—  
 It is a matter of use in the appropriate situation.  
 Phenomena exist like box and cover joining;  
 Principle accords like arrow points meeting.<sup>5</sup>  
 Hearing the words, you should understand the source;  
 Don't make up standards on your own.  
 If you don't understand the path as it meets your eyes,  
 How can you know the way as you walk?  
 Progress is not a matter of far or near,  
 But if you are confused, mountains and rivers block the way.  
 I humbly say to those who study the mystery,  
 Don't waste time.

## Notes to *Can Tong Qi*

1. Commentators say that 'intimate' here does not mean secret, but that there is nothing hidden—this communication takes place everywhere, in everything.
2. The cliché about sudden chan of the south and gradual chan of the north in ancient China is probably well known to students of zen.
3. Light and dark are both 'turning words' used in both ways. Light can represent distinction, discriminating knowledge, life, etc.; then darkness represents merging, nondiscrimination, nirvana, etc. (there is more than one word in Chinese used to represent merging that is also semantically associated with darkness). In this respect Shitou is saying that the spiritual source, which is said to be like a quiet effulgence, is clear even in the midst of all sorts of distinctions and differences; these are all temporary, existing relative to one another, ultimately equal in that what begins ends and the whole is going nowhere. Hence the 'branching streams'—the world of differentiation flows on in ultimate equanimity. One famous zen master explains that the spiritual source is mind, light is enlightenment, the branching streams are discriminating consciousnesses, and darkness is illusion; 'clearly seeing the purity of the mind, then knowledge suddenly appears, and in darkness becomes flowing consciousness, and passions arise.' (*Sandokai dokko, Tenkei rojin hoon shu I*) These two interpretations say the same thing; unless the spiritual source and the branching streams fuse, one's supposed enlightenment is in fact partial; the heart of nirvana and the knowledge of differentiation are both essential to mastery of zen. If one clings to a state or quality of mind as a desired object and cannot function efficiently outside the conditions necessary to that state, a higher level of integration between the calm of nirvana and the experience and knowledge of the everyday world must be achieved. The primary motive force in this integration seems to be compassion.
4. We have discussed how merging, nondiscrimination, is a relative enlightenment; so this 'darkness' of unity should not be taken as darkness of insensibility; the emptiness in form is in the form itself, not an existing gap where no form exists. Hakuin said that the light of the mirror consciousness, the transformed storehouse consciousness, is 'pitch black'—if one abides by this as correct, he will be onesided and biased in his views. The knowledge of the objective world, though it cannot reasonably be overlooked, can never 'capture' anything outside the range of a limited receiving faculty and therefore could never be 'total' even before any abstract concerns arise. The terms 'sobriety' and 'intoxication' used by Sufi

teachers are analogous to the zen terms light and darkness and are used as well on different levels, even plain meditation states.

5. Phenomena exist relative to one another, completing one another in terms seen as function, time, space, etc. This relativity is the principle itself; emptiness is figuratively described as the spaceless space which is the meeting point of two arrowheads. Two arrowheads meeting also connotes equivalence, equality; this sameness of reality is inherent in relative phenomena themselves—the principle cannot exist without the phenomena, even be it the phenomenon of the meditative state in which all sensation and perception disappear, symbolized by dying and seeing the way.

The commentaries consulted for this translation were Shigetsu's *Sandokai funogo*, Tenkei's *Sandokai dokko*, and *Sandokai katto shu* by Kishizawa Ian.

## SONG OF THE JEWEL MIRROR AWARENESS<sup>1</sup>

BAOJING SANMEIKE

Composed by Dongshan Liangjie

The teaching of thusness  
 Has been intimately communicated by buddhas and patriarchs;  
 Now you have it,  
 So keep it well.  
 Filling a silver bowl with snow,  
 Hiding a heron in the moonlight—  
 When you array them, they're not the same;  
 When you mix them, you know where they are.<sup>2</sup>  
 The meaning is not in the words,  
 Yet it responds to the inquiring impulse.  
 If you're excited, it becomes a pitfall;  
 If you miss it you fall into retrospective hesitation.  
 Turning away and touching are both wrong,  
 For it is like a mass of fire.  
 Just to depict it in literary form  
 Is to relegate it to defilement.  
 It is bright just at midnight;  
 It doesn't appear at dawn.<sup>3</sup>  
 It acts as a guide for beings—

Its use removes all pains.  
 Although it is not fabricated,  
 It is not without speech.  
 It is like facing a jewel mirror;  
 Form and image behold each other—  
 You are not it  
 It actually is you.  
 It is like a babe in the world,  
 In five aspects complete;<sup>4</sup>  
 It does not go or come,  
 Nor rise nor stand.  
 "Baba wawa"—  
 Is there anything said or not?  
 Ultimately it does not apprehend anything,  
 Because its speech is not yet correct.<sup>5</sup>  
 It is like the six lines of the double split hexagram;  
 The relative and absolute integrate—  
 Piled up, they make three;  
 The complete transformation makes five.  
 It is like the taste of the five flavored herb,  
 Like the diamond thunderbolt.<sup>6</sup>  
 Subtly included within the true,  
 Inquiry and response come up together.  
 Communing with the source and communing with the process,  
 It includes integration and includes the road;  
 Merging is auspicious;  
 Do not violate it.<sup>7</sup>  
 Naturally real yet inconceivable,  
 It is not within the province of delusion or enlightenment.  
 With casual conditions, time and season,  
 Quiescently it shines bright.  
 In its fineness it fits into spacelessness;  
 In its greatness it is utterly beyond location.  
 A hairsbreadth's deviation  
 Will fail to accord with the proper attunement.  
 Now there are sudden and gradual,  
 In connection with which are set up basic approaches.  
 Once basic approaches are distinguished,  
 Then there are guiding rules.



But even though the basis is reached and the approach  
 comprehended,  
 True eternity still flows.  
 Outwardly still while inwardly moving,  
 Like a tethered colt, a trapped rat—  
 The ancient saints pitied them,  
 And bestowed upon them the teaching;  
 According to their delusions,  
 They called black as white—  
 When erroneous imaginations cease.  
 The acquiescent mind realizes itself.  
 If you want to conform to the ancient way  
 Please observe the ancients of former times;  
 When about to fulfill the way of buddhahood,  
 One gazed at a tree for ten aeons,<sup>8</sup>  
 Like a tiger leaving part of its prey,  
 A horse with a white left hind leg.  
 Because there is the base, [there are]  
 Jewel pedestals, fine clothing;  
 Because there is the startlingly different, (there are)  
 House cat and cow.  
 Yi, with his archer's skill,  
 Could hit a target at a hundred paces;  
 But when arrowpoints meet head on,  
 What has this to do with the power of skill?<sup>9</sup>  
 When the wooden man begins to sing,  
 The stone woman gets up to dance;  
 It's not within reach of feeling or discrimination—  
 How could it admit of consideration in thought?  
 A minister serves the lord,  
 A son obeys the father.  
 Not obeying is not filial,  
 And not serving is no help.  
 Practice secretly, working within,  
 As though a fool, like an idiot—  
 If you can achieve continuity,  
 This is called the host within the host.

## Notes to Song of the Jewel Mirror Awareness

1. Samadhi, concentration, meditation, trance, absorption, here we render awareness because, of convenience, to avoid any suggestion of paranormality. The great Baizhang, with whom Dongshan's teacher Yunyan studied for twenty years, did not use the term samadhi for the mirror awareness, which he called the source, the king, the elixir of immortality; as long as it is not disturbed by anything in any circumstances, passing through all color and sound without lingering, it is the guide; yet he said one should not remain in the state of the mirror all the time. Though one must some time return to the source, it is still necessary, as Lopu said, to 'see the king in the busy marketplace.' In Dongshan's song, he speaks of this awareness sometimes as a medicinal trance, or simply basic awareness empty letting the flow through.
2. Silver and snow, herons and moonlight—all are white, yet not the same color. This symbolizes sameness and difference, and their interfusion. Sameness, symbolized by the common whiteness, is equality, equanimity, absence of ultimate reality; in relativity can be seen the merging of sameness and difference—without difference there can be no relation; in being dependent and conditional all are the same. Also this symbolizes absolute purity; when the mind is pure, all worlds are pure—this too is 'snow in a silver bowl'.
3. This means the same as the *Can Tong Qi's* saying 'right in light there is darkness . . . right in darkness there is light.'
4. In the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* true thusness is likened to a baby in that it does not come or go, rise or stand and cannot speak. Also this can mean complete with five senses, without conceptualization—this is the mirror trance. Ippen, the Japanese pure land saint, once said that the practice of invoking the name of the buddha to be reborn in the pure land affected the sixth consciousness; ending all discrimination of pure and impure, pleasant and painful, one realizes great bliss beyond extremes and sees the world as the field of the vow of the buddha of infinite light and life.
5. Baba wawa is to represent baby talk; the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* likens that which is materialized and that which is not—whatever is done becomes undone, and the whole process of doing in the infinite range of cosmoses cannot be described or compared, adequately conceived or thought. It is not doing anything because there is nothing to compare it to, nothing to indicate any direction.
6. The relative and absolute, or partial and true, are also called minister and ruler, son and father, light and darkness; Caoshan called the relative

the world of myriad forms and the absolute the realm of emptiness; the relative is also called the phenomenal, and the absolute the principle. The relative within the absolute is realization of the emptiness of mind, whereby all things are emptied—thus it is the relative absolute containing the absolute relative. The absolute within the relative is the mirror awareness which is revealed by cleaning and polishing the mind by cessation and emptiness; at this point, the focus of concentration can make anything fill the universe, or make the universe into one point of awareness. Relative and absolute depend on each other, so two elements make three, adding their mutual intermingling, the source of the two. The absolute is always being expressed in the relative—this is the true absolute, but it is not always seen. Perfect comprehension of the relative grounded on experience of the absolute culminates in simultaneous realization of knowledge and complete peace and calm. At this point, Dongshan said, one ‘comes back to sit among the ashes,’ living this life as a wayfarer, expressing one’s solidarity with the world in the vow to realize perfect enlightenment with all beings. The five flavored herb and diamond thunderbolt are images of five in one; these so-called ranks or positions, the set of five being the ultimate paradigm of dialectic and an illustration of meditational stages, are all from the same source, hence the association of five in one.

7. Dogen emphasized that practice and realization are not two separate things; the source and the process can be called absolute and relative as a device; integration and merging refer to these—this includes the road, or process itself, merging into the process, having no sense of seeking or acquisition, thus merging into the source. This was the point of the transcendence of wisdom scriptures.
8. Mahabhijanabhibhu, an ancient buddha mentioned in the *Saddharma-pundarika* or Lotus scripture, sat for ten aeons on the site of enlightenment, but did not realize perfect enlightenment or attain buddhahood, even though he sat with his body and mind perfectly still. Then gods from the heavens of the thirty three celestial kingdoms built a seat for him. When he sat on the seat, other gods and goddesses rained flowers around him for ten aeons, then still others played music for ten more aeons. After ten aeons the buddha became enlightened and realized the truth. The scripture calls stillness and quiescence the ultimate nature of all things, but also an illusory citadel for those on the path to rest awhile, not an individual salvation because there is no self. The flowers and music represent the world of particulars, part of the sphere of knowledge of an omniscient buddha. Dongshan seems to use this old story with a slightly different emphasis; he recommends sitting for ‘ten aeons’ to make sure that there is no leaking of views, emotions, etc., when the

celestial flowers begin to fall. This is consistent with the Cao-Dong saying emphasized by Dogen, 'eighty or ninety percent complete,' alluding to eternal bodhisattvahood, remaining in the causal state in this world to help deliver infinite beings to the other shore of the ocean of suffering, without craving personal liberation to the extent of willfully becoming totally extinct.

9. As seen in the *Can Tong Qi*, arrowpoints meeting symbolizes principle—mutual interdependence, absolute equality of dependent forces and entities. The lines before about the excellent and the inferior illustrate relativity. In buddhist science it is traditionally said that the workings of causes and effects are in fact inconceivable; we are in it, making conceptual models and devices to make use of what we can find out, but all of this is just a fragment of reality. In deep meditation one truly plunges into the unknown by not applying any way of knowing or seeing. The meeting of arrowpoints also symbolizes the meeting of minds of teacher and disciple; regardless of what preparation went before, the actual meeting is not contrived, because it is the simple agreement of two minds seeing the same one reality.

(The sayings of Dongshan have been taken from *Dongshan yulu*; the commentaries consulted on the *Baojing sanmei ke* 'song of the jewel mirror awareness' are Tenkei's *Hokyozammai kimpei* and Shigetsu's *Hokyozammai funogo*.)

## SAYINGS OF DONGSHAN LIANGJIE

Dongshan asked a monk, "Where do you come from?" The monk said, "From a trip to a mountain." Dongshan said, "And did you reach the peak?" The monk said, "Yes." Dongshan said, "Was there anyone on the peak?" The monk said, "No." Dongshan said, "If so, you didn't reach the peak." The monk said, "If I didn't reach the peak, how could I know there was no one there?"

Dongshan said, "I had doubted this fellow."

When Xuefeng left Dongshan, Dongshan said, "Where are you going?" Xuefeng said, "I am going back into the ranges." Dongshan said, "By what way did you come out before?" Xuefeng said, "I came by way of flying monkey peak." Dongshan said, "Now that you are returning, which way will you go?" Xuefeng said, "I will go by way of

flying monkey peak." Dongshan said, "There is someone who doesn't go by way of flying monkey peak; do you know him?" Xuefeng said, "No." Dongshan said, "Why don't you know him?" Xuefeng said, "He has no face." Dongshan said, "If you don't know him, how do you know he has no face?"

Xuefeng had no reply.

Once as Dongshan was eating some fruit with head monk Tai on a winter solstice day he asked, "There is one thing, which supports sky and earth; it is black as lacquer, and is always in the midst of activity, yet activity cannot contain it. Tell me, where is there fault?" Tai said, "The fault is in the activity."

Dongshan had an attendant take away the fruit tray.

Dongshan asked a monk, "What is your name?" The monk said it was so-and-so. Dongshan said, "Who is your master?" The monk said, "He is seen when replying." Dongshan said, "How miserable! People these days are all like this—they only recognize what's in front of an ass but behind a horse and take it to be their self. The decline of Buddhism is because of this. You don't even distinguish the host within the guest; how can you discern the host within the host?" The monk asked, "What is the host within the host?" Dongshan said, "Say it yourself." The monk said, "Even if I could say it, this would be the host within the guest—what is the host within the host?" Dongshan said, "It is easy to say this, but to continue is very hard."

Dongshan subsequently spoke a verse to the community, saying,

I regret to see followers of the way today  
 All stay by the gateway—  
 This is like heading for the imperial court  
 But stopping at an outlying pass.

Dongshan asked a monk, "What is the most miserable condition in the world?" The monk said, "Hell is most miserable." Dongshan said, "No. What is most miserable is to wear this robe without understanding the great matter."

Dongshan said to the community, "The late master Wuxie one day took a bath, burned incense, sat upright and said to the assembly, 'The body of reality is perfectly quiescent while giving the appearance of going and coming. The thousand sages are from the same source,



myriad awarenesses are ultimately one. I am now a bubble bursting—what's the use of sadness? Don't trouble your minds; just maintain complete awareness. If you follow this order, you are really requiting my kindness—if you stubbornly go against what I say, you are not my disciples.' At that time a monk asked him, 'Where are you going?' Wuxie said, 'Nowhere.' The monk said, 'Why don't I see?' Wuxie said, 'It is not visible to the eye.' "

Dongshan added, "He was an adept."

Dongshan asked Yunju, "Where have you been?" Yunju said, "Walking in the mountains." Dongshan said, "Which mountain is suitable to live on?" Yunju said, "Which mountain is not suitable to live on?" Dongshan said, "Then you've checked out\* all the mountains in the country?" Yunju said, "No." Dongshan said, "Then you've found an entry road." Yunju said, "There is no road." Dongshan said, "If there is no road, how can you meet me?" Yunju said, "If there were a road, then I would be a life apart\*\* from you." Dongshan said, "Hereafter no one in the world will be able to pin you down."

Yunju built a hut on San peak. For days he didn't come to the monastery hall. Dongshan asked him, "Why haven't you come for meals recently?" Yunju said, "Every day a celestial spirit comes bringing an offering." Dongshan said, "I thought you were a real man, but you still entertain such a view. Come this evening."

Yunju came that evening; Dongshan called to him, "Hermit Ying!" Yunju responded; Dongshan said, "Don't think good, don't think bad—what is this?"

Yunju returned to his hut and sat completely quiet and still—hence the celestial spirit couldn't find him. After three days like this, it disappeared.

As Dongshan was traveling with Mi Shibo, they saw a vegetable leaf floating down a valley stream. Dongshan said, "If there were no one in the deep mountains, how could there be a vegetable leaf here? If we go upstream we might find a wayfarer staying there."

So they decided to make their way through the brush. After going

\*This word can also mean 'occupied'

\*\*Some versions say (a) mountain(s) apart

several miles up the valley, suddenly they saw a strange looking emaciated figure of a man. It was master Longshan (Dragon Mountain), who was also known as Yinshan (Hidden Mountain or hidden in the mountains). They put down their packs and greeted him. Longshan said, "There is no road on this mountain—how did you get here?" Dongshan said, "Leaving aside the fact that there is no road, where did you enter?" Longshan said, "I didn't come by clouds or water." Dongshan said, "How long have you been living on this mountain?" Longshan said, "The passing of seasons and years cannot reach it." Dongshan said, "Were you here first or was the mountain here first?" Longshan said, "I don't know." Dongshan said, "Why not?" Longshan said, "I don't come from celestial or human realms." Dongshan said, "What truth have you realized that you come to dwell here on this mountain?" Longshan said, "I saw two clay bulls fighting go into the ocean and up till now have no news of them."

Now for the first time Dongshan bowed with full respect for Longshan. Then he asked, "What is the guest within the host?" Longshan said, "The blue mountain is covered by white clouds." Dongshan said, "What is the host within the host?" Longshan said, "He never goes out the door." Dongshan asked, "How far apart are host and guest?" Longshan said, "Waves on a river." Dongshan said, "When guest and host meet, what is said?" Longshan said, "The pure breeze sweeps the white moon." Dongshan took his leave and departed.

### *Dongshan's Self-admonition*

Don't seek fame or profit, glory or prosperity. Just pass this life as is, according to conditions. When the breath vanishes, who is the master? After the death of the body, there is only an empty name. When your clothes are worn out, repair them over and over; when you've no food, work to provide. How long can an illusory body last? For its idle concerns would you increase your ignorance?

### *Dongshan's Guidelines*

Buddhist ascetics make the lofty their source; having cut off clinging ties, you should go the way of simplicity and poverty. Cut off gratitude and love for your father and mother, abandon the formalities of sovereign and subject. Shave your hair, dye your clothing; taking the

cloth and carrying the bowl, tread the shortest way out of the dusts and climb the stairway into sainthood.\* Pure as frost, clean as snow, dragons and spirits will honor you, ghosts and sprites will submit to you.

Concentrate singlemindedly; when you requite the profound debt of gratitude to the buddhas, only then will the body born of your parents be saved. How could it be permissible to form a cult, gather followers and associates, take up pen and ink and dash off compositions, toil in pursuit of dust for love of fame and profit, neglect the rules of ethics and destroy proper conduct? Grasping one lifetime of ease becomes myriad aeons of pain; if you develop like this, you are calling yourselves buddhists in vain.

## CAOSHAN ON THE FIVE RANKS

*Caoshan Benji met Donghsan Liangjie near the end of the latter's life, and is said to have received from him the esoteric teaching of the Baojingsanmei and the five ranks or positions of the absolute and relative together, later elaborated with a variety of symbolic pairs. The records of Caoshan and Dongshan seem to have existed in a scattered state for some time and were collected as known today in late medieval Japan; some of the sayings of Caoshan seem to have been attributed also to the second, possibly even third generation Caoshan. Benji was known as Caoshan the former and it was in his school that the five ranks were most elaborated in the early Cao-Dong lineage. The following are some of Caoshan's descriptions of the five ranks of absolute and relative.*

### COMING FROM WITHIN THE ABSOLUTE

The whole body revealed, unique; the root source of all things, in it there is neither praise nor blame.

\*This passage refers to leaving family and society and becoming a monk or nun; shaven heads and black clothing are emblematic of renunciation, and the cloth and bowl are among the few implements considered sufficient for renunciants. The Japanese zen master Dogen, who always praised Dongshan highly, had a great deal to say on the practical ideals of the renunciate life, and followed it himself most of his life.

## ARRIVING WITHIN THE RELATIVE

Going along with things and beings without hindrance, a wooden boat empty inside, getting through freely by being empty.

## THE RELATIVE WITHIN THE ABSOLUTE

A piece of emptiness pervading everywhere, all senses silent.

## THE ABSOLUTE WITHIN THE RELATIVE

The moon in the water, the image in the mirror—fundamentally without origin or extinction, how could any traces remain.

## ARRIVAL IN BOTH AT ONCE

The absolute is not necessarily void, the relative is not necessary actual; there is neither turning away nor turning to.

When mental activity sinks away and both the material world and emptiness are forgotten, there is no more concealment—the whole thing is revealed; this is the relative within the absolute.

Mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers—no one establishes the names, nothing can be compared; this is the absolute within the relative.

Clean and naked, bare and free, the visage is in full majesty—throughout all heaven and earth, the sole honored one, without any other; this is coming from the absolute.

Just as the emperor in his realm does not rely upon the ordinances of wise kings and emperors of the past, the eye sees and the ear hears without using any other power.

As the ear does not enter sound, and sound does not block up the ear, the moment you turn therein, there have never been any names fixed in the world. This is called arrival within both at once. This is not mind or objects, not phenomena or principle; it has always been beyond name or description. Naturally real, forgetting essence and

appearance, this is called simultaneous realization of both relative and absolute.

*Caoshan used terms and images borrowed from ancient Chinese books as well. The five ranks have cosmic as well as meditative and 'metaphysical' implications. The so-called five ranks of accomplishment are slightly different and are all subsumed within the relative until the ultimate point when there is complete integration. The great Rinzai master Hakuin said that there was a great deal of confusion surrounding the five ranks; this teaching can be a useful tool or a swirling vortex.*

## THE THREE FALLS OF CAOSHAN

*The following notes are extracts from the laconic sayings of Caoshan about what he called three 'falls.' Their original form is not known, and here we have taken different sayings from different conversations and put them all together under the fall to which they refer.*

### THE FALL OF ASCETICS

Being a buffalo, wearing hair and horns; not clinging to the business of asceticism or the states of reward of saints. Not staying in the absolute, not choosing one's estate.

### THE FALL OF THE PRECIOUS

Not enjoying food; this ('food') is the fundamental endowment; knowing it exists yet not grasping it is called the fall of the precious. The body of reality, objective reality, are precious things; they too must be overturned—this is the fall of the precious. For example, the White Ox on Open Ground is the ultimate symbol of the body of reality; this too must be overturned so as to avoid settling down in uniformity without discernment.



## THE FALL ACCORDING TO KIND

Not cutting off sound and form. As a beginner, knowing there is one's own fundamental endowment; then turning back the light, shutting out all form, sound, smell, taste, feeling and conception, to attain tranquility. Then, after fully accomplishing this, not clinging to the six sense fields, 'falling' into them without being befuddled, letting be, unhindered. Ordinary feelings and religious experiences ended and forgotten, no more need to cut off anything in the fields of sense experience; then you can take 'food.'

*The fundamental endowment, also called 'one's own thing' as well as 'that man' and 'the original face,' is often spoken of in Cao-Dong chan; that is what they want us to know exists to begin with. Nanquan Puyuan, one of the ancients with whom Dongshan once studied, said, 'First go over to the other side and realize it exists; then come back to this side to practice.'*

## CAOSHAN SAID,

Yunmen asked Caoshan, "Will you receive someone who does not change?" Caoshan said, "I have no such leisure."

A monk raised the question of the officer Luxuan to Nanquan, "What is your surname?" Nanquan said, "Wang (King)." Luxuan said, "Does the 'king' have retainers?" Nanquan said, "The four ministers are not ignorant." Luxuan said, "What position does the king occupy?" Nanquan said, "Moss grows in the jade palace." The monk asked Caoshan, "What does it mean, that 'moss grows in the jade palace'?" Caoshan said, "He does not dwell in the absolute state." The monk asked, "What happens when they come to court from the eight directions?" Caoshan said, "He does not receive their homage." The monk asked, "Then what's the use of coming to court?" Caoshan said, "Any who disobey are killed." The monk said, "Disobedience is on the part of the minister; what about the position of the lord?" Caoshan said, "Even the private councillor doesn't get the message." The monk

said, "Then the accomplishment of harmony and order rests with the ministers." Caoshan said, "Do you know the meaning of the lord?" The monk said, "One on the outside dare not try to assess it."

A monk asked, "How is it when the five ranks face a guest?" Caoshan said, "What state are you asking about right now?" The monk said, "I am coming from the relative state; I ask you to receive me in the absolute state." Caoshan said, "No." The monk said, "Why not?" Caoshan said, "It might fall into the relative."

Caoshan then asked the monk back, "Is this not receiving dealing with the guest or not?" The monk said, "It is already dealing with the guest." Caoshan said, "Right."

## SAYINGS OF YUNJU

Chan master Daoying of Yunju monastery in Hong prefecture was a man from Yudian in Yu prefecture; his lay surname was Wang.

When he was a child he followed a teacher and received instruction. At the age of twenty-five he was fully ordained at the Yanshou monastery in Fanyang. His original teacher made him study the collection of writings for buddhist disciples (books of ancient buddhism). He sighed and said, "Why should a healthy man be fettered by rules of discipline?" So he went and called on Suiwei to inquire about the way. He passed three years there.

A certain cloud-wandering monk came from Yuzhang, profusely extolling the meditation school of the chan master Dongshan Liangjie. Then Daoying went there; Dongshan asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "Daoying." Dongshan said, "Say beyond this." He said, "If I were to say beyond this, I would not name it Daoying." Dongshan said, "No difference from my reply to Yunyan."

Later Yunju asked, "What is the intent of the patriarchs?" Dongshan said, "Later when you have a thatch roof over your head and suddenly someone asks you, how will you answer?" Yunju said, "I am at fault."

One time Dongshan said to Yunju, "I heard that master Sida was born in the land of Japan and became a king; is that true or false?" Yunju

said, "If it were Sida, he wouldn't even become a buddha, much less a king." Dongshan agreed with this.

Dongshan said to Yunju, "In the past Nanquan questioned a monk who was lecturing on the scripture about the birth of the future buddha Maitreya, the loving one; 'When is Maitreya going to come down to be born here?' The monk said, 'Now he is in heaven; in the future he will come down to be born.' Nanquan said, 'There is no Maitreya in heaven; there is no Maitreya on earth.' "

As Yunju heard this recitation he asked, "About this 'there is no Maitreya in heaven or on earth,' who gives the names?" Dongshan's meditation seat rocked; "Reverend Ying!" he said.

Dongshan asked, "The great incorrigible\* kills his father and mother, sheds buddha's blood and disrupts the harmonious community; in these various deeds where is filial care?" Yunju said, "Only these are real filial care." From this point on Dongshan approved of Yunju and made him the leader in the room (inner circle).

One day Yunju went up into the hall and quoted Dongshan's old saying, "Hell is not really painful; wearing this vestment, to fail to understand the great matter, that loss is most painful." The master Yunju then said to the assembly, "You are already within this tradition; a hundred percent is not far from ninety percent; you should exert a little more energy. Then you elders will not tire of your perpetual journey and yet will not turn away from the monastery. An ancient said, 'If you wish to be able to bear this matter, you must go stand atop the highest mountain, and walk on the bottom of the deepest sea. Only then have you some power.' If you have not yet taken care of the great matter, for now you must tread the hidden road."

Someone asked, "What is esteemed by an ascetic?"

Yunju said, "Where mind's consciousness does not reach."

Someone asked, "What are the grades of buddhas and patriarchs?"

\*Great incorrigible is another name for a bodhisattva, who always stays in the world, is never 'saved.' Father and mother symbolize ignorance and lust; shedding buddha's blood symbolizes plunging into the mindless, thoughtless, formless state; disrupting the community symbolizes realizing that all afflictions and passions and compulsions are empty and baseless.

Yunju said, "Both are grades."

Someone asked, "What is the meaning of the coming of Bodhidharma from the west?"

Yunju said, "Meeting no one on the ancient road."

*Yunju taught for over thirty years and had twenty-eight enlightened disciples before he died in 902. It was Daoying's succession that lasted in China and Japan, while the transmission lines of Caoshan, Sushan, Qinglin, and Dongshan's other great disciples died out after several generations. The foregoing excerpts are taken from the biography of Yunju Daoying in the Jingste chuan deng lu, a classic chan history in which Yunju is listed as the first of Dongshan's heirs.*

*After the deaths of Dongshan's great disciples and their heirs, with the eventual return of several teaching lines to inactivity, fewer new teachers succeeded in realizing and transmitting enlightenment. This is a general trend in chan and other forms of buddhism as well as worldly affairs after the passing of great teachers and exemplars.*

*In the fifth through eighth generation of the Dongshan succession there was something of a revival, with the appearance of several distinguished chan masters. There are several collections of kungan, ancient chan stories, along with commentaries in verse and prose, which were products of distinguished leaders of Caodong chan practice during and after this revival. At this point the so-called schools of chan were mixed and fully recognized one another because it is not a fabricated teaching, but there were traditional forms of expression and technique as well as innovations having nothing to do with any school as such. Followers and enthusiasts, however, were talking volubly about the styles of different sects of chan. In the eleventh century the Caodong, Linji, and Yunmen were greatly thriving.*

*In the eighth generation of the Dong succession there appeared the great chan master Furong Daokai (1042-1118), who was famous in the monasteries for his lofty practice of the way. The governor of the capital city petitioned the emperor to honor him so as to elevate his example; Daokai refused the honor, however, on the grounds that when he had left home to seek enlightenment in his youth he promised his parents that he would not do anything for gain or honor, but only investigate the way in all sincerity. It was because*

*of this that his parents allowed him to leave home and abandon society; now the emperor had him banished to southeast China for going against the imperial will for refusing the title and piece of purple vestment that had been bestowed on him officially. Later he was allowed to settle on Mt. Furong (lotus mountain) in Fukien, where many ascetics had practiced meditation and buddhist communities had long existed. Here many people came to him and his teaching was widely reknowned. The following excerpts of his sayings are taken from Wudeng Huiyuan 14.*

### FURONG SAID,

Going into the Jeta Grove by day, the bright moon is in the sky; climbing Vulture Peak\* by night, the sun fills the eyes. The raven is like snow; lone geese form a flock. An iron dog howls through the night, fighting clay bulls go into the sea—at this time, all everywhere are gathered together; what difference is there between others and self? On the terrace of the ancient buddhas, in the house of the patriarchs, everybody puts forth a hand to greet the friends who come and go. But tell me, good people, what does this amount to? (a long silence) Plant more shadowless trees for people of later times to see.

As soon as I get up on the seat to speak, I am already involved in the dusts—if I go on and freeze my eyes, it would just show a flaw. The special transmission in a single statement is taking in a thief who ransacks your house; not losing the fundamental source is like a fox fond of its den. Therefore true thusness, ordinary and holy, is all dream talk; buddhas and sentient beings are expressions of assumptions. When you get here turn the light around to shine back, let go your hands and accept it—even then you still will not have escaped being like a cold cicada clinging to a dead tree, not turning his head when his crying ends.

He raised his staff and said,

If you can get it here, it is all something set up by the buddhas. Even if you can spring up in the east and disappear in the west, open

\*Jeta Grove and Vulture Peak were famous places where Shakyamuni Buddha taught.



out or shut away freely, you still haven't even dreamed of seeing what was before the buddhas. You should know that there is one man who doesn't get anything from others, does not accept any teaching or command, and does not fall within the scope of grade or rank. If you know this man, your life's study is completed. (Suddenly he called out to the assembly and said,) If you freeze your eyes any more, don't bother to see me.

When using words to tell about the path, we are limited to the present time; even if a tongueless man can speak and a legless man can walk, still they cannot merge with 'that man' (mentioned before). Do you understand? When the dragon howls, it's pointless to turn an ear to it; when the tiger roars, it's vain to sink into thought.

Someone asked, "What are words expressing mutual integration?" He replied, "The inconceivable function, wholly employed, encompasses the world; a wooden man strolls through the fire."

## STANDARDS OF JETAVANA

*The following speech was given on Mt. Furong.*

Those who leave home and society do so because they are fed up with mundane turmoil and seek liberation from birth and death. Therefore they rest their minds and stop their thoughts, cutting off clinging involvements; that is why they are called renunciants. How can we bury our daily lives away for gain and honor? You must let go of both sides and cast down the middle, being in the midst of sound and form like flowers planted on rock, seeing profit and fame as dust in the eye. Still it is not that it hasn't been happening since beginningless time, or that we are ignorant of the process, but it is making the head into the tail; why should you suffer so for your greedy attachment in such a situation? If you don't stop now, when are you waiting for? This is why ancient sages taught people to be complete in the present; if you can be complete in the present, what else is there? If you can get to have nothing on your mind, even the buddhas and enlightened ancestors are enemies—all mundane things will naturally be cool and simple. Then for the first time you merge with the other side.

Have you not read how Yinshan (Longshan) would never see people, how Zhaozhou would never ask of people—they gathered loads of chestnuts for food. Damei wore lotus leaves; the Paper-robed Wayfarer just wore paper, and Elder Xuantai only wore muslin. Shishuang

set up a 'dead tree hall' and sat and reclined along with the others\*—he only wanted your mind to die. Touzi had people prepare rice, cooked it with them and ate together with them—he wanted insight into what you're about. Now since ancient times there have been such examples of the sages. If they had no worth, how could they be endured? Good people, if you can see this through here, you will surely not cheat anybody; but if you do not agree to take this up, I fear you will waste effort later.

It is my practice not to take from or add to a monastery; how could I sit around wasting the community property and abruptly forget the bequest of past sages? Now I am following the example of the ancients in acting as abbot; together with you all we have decided not to go down the mountain any more, not to go to feasts, not to send preachers to collect contributions, but just take account of what this monastery's lands produce and divide it into three hundred and sixty equal parts, using one part each day, not increasing or decreasing according to people. If there's enough rice, then make cooked rice; if not enough for rice, make gruel; if there is not enough for gruel, we'll make rice water. New arrivals for interviews will be given hot water only; no snack will be given. Only one tea hall will be set up. Take care of your tasks by yourself—the essential thing is to cut down on entanglements and concentrate wholly on comprehending the way.

Especially when subsistence is ample, the scenery luxurious, the flowers can bloom, the birds can sing; the wooden horse neighs forever, the stone ox gallops, the blue mountains beyond the skies are pale, the gurgling stream by the ear has no sound. Up in the mountains monkeys howl as the dew soaks the midnight moon; in the woods the cranes whoop as the wind returns to the dawn pines.

When the spring wind rises, in a dead tree a dragon murmurs. When the autumn leaves wither and fall, flowers scatter in the cold forest. The jade stairway is spread with moss designs, the people's faces are tinged with smoke and haze. The sound and dust is stilled, all events are the same—one flavor, solitary, there is no way to approach.

Now as I've told about my household in front of everyone, I have already slipped; why should I go on to lecture in the hall, have inter-

\*According to the *Jiungde Chuandeng lu*, Shishuang's community never lay down, always sat—that is why they were called the dead tree congregation.

views in the room, raise my gavel and whisk, shout here and beat there, raise my eyebrows and glare my eyes like a lunatic? I would not only bog you elders down, but I would also go against the sages of former times.

Have you not heard how Bodhidharma came from the West and sat facing a wall for nine years on Shaoshi mountain, the second patriarch came and stood in the snow, and cut off his arm—one could say they fully experienced hardship and pain. But Bodhidharma never said a word and the second patriarch didn't ask anything—can you say Bodhidharma didn't help the man? Can you say the second patriarch did not seek a teacher?

Whenever I get down to speaking of what the ancient sages did, I feel there is no place to put my body—it is shameful how soft and weak people of later generations are, especially when you provide each other with delicious feasts, saying, "We can set our resolve only when we have enough food, clothing, medicine, and bedding." I am just afraid you'll put your hands and feet out of coordination and be lives away. Time is swift as an arrow—one should be very careful of how it is used. Even so, it still is a matter for other people, to figure out together in good time; I cannot teach you by force. Haven't you heard this ancient verse—

Mountain fields yield millet and rice  
 Wild vegetables and thin yellow soup—  
 Eat if you want;  
 If you don't eat, go where you will.

I only hope people on the same path will each work hard on their own. Take care.

## DANXIA SAID,

*Danxia was a successor of Furong Daojie. Wudeng Huiyuan 14*

"Within heaven and earth, in the universe, there is a jewel hidden in the mountain of form." In speaking this way, Sengzhao, master of the teachings, only knew how to point to its traces and talk about its tracks; but he didn't know how to bring it out to show it to people. Today I will break open the universe, shatter the mountain of form,

and bring it out for you. Those who have eyes should discern it. (he set his staff up) Do you see? When a heron stands in the snow they are not the same color; the bright moon and the white reed flowers are not identical.

Deshan said to his community, "My school has no sayings—really there is nothing to give people." Deshan's speaking like this could be called only knowing how to go into the weeds to look for people without being aware of getting his whole body soaked in mud and water. If you examine closely, he only has one eye. As for me, I am otherwise. My school has a saying, with a profound and mysterious message which a golden knife could not cut open—a jade woman becomes pregnant by night.

## SAYINGS OF CHANGLU ZHENXIE QINGLIAO

Danxia Zichun asked him, "What is the self before the empty aeon?" As Changlu was about to reply, Danxia said, "You're still noisy—go away for now."

One day as he climbed Bowl Peak his mind opened up into enlightenment. He took a short cut down and went back to stand by Danxia, who slapped him and said, "I thought you knew it exists." Changlu bowed joyfully.

The next day Danxia went into the hall and said, "The sun illumines the green of the solitary peak; the moon shines in the cold of the valley stream. Don't put the wondrous secret of the ancestral teachers in your little heart." Then he got off the seat. Changlu came directly forward and said, "Your address today can't fool me any more." Danxia said, "Try to recite my address." Changlu remained silent. Danxia said, "I thought you had a glimpse." Changlu then left.

Later, at Gaoning monastery, Changlu said, "At my late master's slap my abilities were exhausted and I couldn't find a way to open my mouth."

Crossing a log bridge on a solitary peak, even if you go right ahead like this, this is still where people's feet are high and low. If you see all the way through, you reach everywhere without going out the

door; without ever going in the door you are always in the room. Otherwise, if you are not yet thus, haul some firewood for the cold.

If you can say the first statement, you will not be fooled by the staff. If you know the staff, this is still a matter of the road. What is the statement of arriving at the destination?

You look everywhere without finding, but there is a place where you find spontaneously without looking. But tell me, what place is that? (a long silence) The thief's body is already showing.

When white mold grows around your mouth,\* you first gain entry into the door; when your whole body is inflamed,\* then you know there is something inside. You should also know that there is one who doesn't go out the door. What do you call a door?

A monk asked, "the buddhas of past, present, and future turn the great wheel of Dharma in flames of fire—is it correct or not?" Changlu said laughing, "I have doubts, after all." The monk asked, "Why do you doubt?" Changlu said, "The fragrance of wildflowers fills the pathways, but the hidden birds don't know it's spring."

Is there anyone who is not defiled by mystic wonder? (a long silence) This one spot could not be washed away even if you dumped the waters of the oceans on it.

From *Wudeng Huiyuan* 14

## HONGZHI SAID,

*Hongzhi was also a disciple and heir of Danxia Zichun, and became one of the most famous Cao-Dong chan masters of all time; a great poet and eloquent speaker, he left a rich teaching, preserved*

\*White mold growing around the mouth means silence, nondoing. A monk asked Yaoshan, 'How is it when a student wants to return home?' Yaoshan said, 'Your parents' whole bodies are inflamed, lying in a forest of thorns; where will you return?' The monk said, 'Then I won't go back.' Yaoshan said, 'You should return! If you return home, I'll tell you a way to end the need for provisions.' The monk said, 'Please tell me.' Yaoshan said, 'At mealtimes, don't chew through even a grain of rice.' The white mold and inflamed body signify total detachment, then subsistence in the world as is, yet free from greed (not 'chewing through').



*by his disciples. The following excerpts are from a collection of Hongzhi's sayings and writings.*

All things originate from the mind. When the whole mind is silent, all appearances end. Which is other, which is self? Because at this time there is no sign of differentiation, not even a single atom can be established. When not a single thought is born, you penetrate through before the womb and after the skin bag; one point of inconceivable illumination, whole and undifferentiated, without corners, edge or traces, this cannot be dimmed; what cannot be dimmed is called inherent knowledge. But the point of inherent knowledge is called the fundamental endowment—after all there is nothing whatever gotten beyond one's lot. Empty, open, subtly aware without any images, really hearing without echoes. Thus it is said, "It is not within reach of eye and ear." This is the ultimate point of reaching mystic accord. Light emanates from there and the universe is reflected everywhere in this—everything is it. All are states experienced alone by patched-robed monks. But essentially we don't borrow some else's household things; it is absolutely necessary to clearly realize it personally. Seedlings of my house must be like this.

When you realize all things are empty, then you are free in all states of mind and penetrate beyond through every atom of dust. The primordial beam of light pervades everywhere, and then transforms according to the energies and situations; everything it meets is the source—subtly illumining all things, empty and without partner; the wind in the pines, the moon in the water—clear harmony, with no wandering mind, no sticking to appearances. The essence lies in being empty inside and having free space, responding outwardly without getting mixed up, like spring bearing flowers, like a mirror reflecting images; in the midst of floods of tumult you will naturally stand serene above it all.

Where your state is thoroughly peaceful and your livelihood is cool and serene, then you will see the emptiness of the ages; there is nothing to be troubled with, nothing that can obstruct. Empty, absolute and radiant, clear, complete and shining—it clearly exists for all ages, never dimmed. If you know the thing here with a nod of the head, you do not follow birth and death or abide in annihilation or eternity. When you want to make an appropriate change, then you transform

along with the myriad forms of the multitude of appearances. If you want to remain tranquil, then you cover and uphold in the same way as sky and earth—appearing or disappearing, shutting down or opening up, all are up to you.

Seeing the sun by day and the moon by night—the time when there is no deception is where a patchrobed monk walks steady in peace—naturally there are no corners or seams. If you want to be this even and peaceful, you must put an end to the subtle pounding and waving in the mind. Do you want to not grumble? You must cut it off ('sit through it') and cast it down. Then you can shine through it all. Light and reflection are both forgotten, skin and flesh fallen off; all senses totally purified, naturally the eyes are clear. Your resources are fully complete, you don't get hung up anywhere, but are in harmony at all times. Right in illumination there is darkness, right in darkness there is illumination. A solitary boat carries the moon; at night it rests in the reed flowers. The one beam of light is after all like this.

Clean, pure, perfectly clear; the power of the eye cannot reach its bounds. Still, silent, empty and vast—the ken of the mind cannot find its edges. One who investigates sincerely and really arrives considers this his fundamental ground; neither buddhas nor demons can enter, dust or dirt cannot defile it. It fits in square or round, its course of action is exactly appropriate. Then infinities of inconceivable functions, complementing each other subtly, spring forth from this ground and come to an end in this ground. Everybody has what is there.

There is utterly no way to study this matter; the essence lies in emptying and opening body and mind so they are vast as space, then you will naturally be complete everywhere. This awareness cannot be dimmed, this clarity cannot be mixed up. The moon follows the flowing waters, the rain goes with the moving clouds. Ultimately there are not so many minds that can produce so many things—just do not hinder things by yourself, and naturally nothing will hinder you. Body and mind one suchness, there is nothing outside the body. The same substance, the same function, one essence, one character. Each and every sense and sensation is immediate and absolute. Therefore it was said that a saint has no self, but there is nothing that is not himself. It is so obvious, so clear; then you realize that gathered

in or let out it has become a white bull on open ground, which you cannot drive away even if you try.\*

The action and repose of people of the way is like flowing clouds without mind, like the full moon reflecting everywhere. They are not stopped by anything—clearly in the midst of myriad forms, they stand out serene. In contact with the course of circumstances, they are not affected or mixed up, having the same function as those which have the same substance as themselves. Words cannot communicate this, thought cannot reach it. Transcendent, absolute, free, beyond effort, it is realized inconceivably outside of intellection and emotion. It is put to use on the road, taken up at home; comprehending birth and death, going beyond cause and condition, real vision is the quality of awareness and fundamentally has no abode. This is why it is said, "The all-pervading mind does not abide anywhere."

When you stop and rest, it is like the ocean taking in the hundred rivers—all come here to one flavor. When you let go and act, it is like the eternal tide riding the rushing wind—it all comes here going along together. Is this not arriving at the real source, attaining manifestation of the great function? Patchrobed monks change appropriately according to the situation—they should be like this. But when did you ever establish your mind and think up material circumstances? You must comprehend this thoroughly.

Walking in the void, forgetting conditions, shining through beyond the shadows, one point of spirituality radiant and undimmed. The mind of past, present, and future is cut off, the entanglements of the gross elements ended. Empty and clear, wondrously bright, shining alone through the ages; when patchrobed monks can be like this, then they are not bound by birth and death. As they act, they let go over the cliff, with nothing to hold on to; the thread under their feet cut off, they totally transcend in one step. The buddhas and patriarchs do not tread one's own real and true wondrously shining ground; this is called oneself—this is the time when one inherits the family business. As soon as you get involved in thought, you get stuck in the flow of routine. Empty, always aware; clear, yet always shining—the whiteness of the reed flowers and clarity of the bright moon merge;

\*The white bull symbolizes the body of reality; its whiteness symbolizes equality, uniformity. The open ground is true thusness. The discipline of raising the bull is to expand a spot of clear awareness to cover the world.

rowing in a solitary boat, blowing free, untrammelled—this time is where it's at. But tell me, who is this? Look quickly to determine.

A patchrobed monk wandering through the world should empty and open his mind, so there is not a speck of dust therein. Only then can he respond skillfully, not be impeded by things, and not be bound by principles—fully appearing and disappearing therein, he has his share of freedom; as soon as one gets involved in intellectual thoughts, one is buried. The essence is to embody it fully—then naturally the wandering sword and myriad states neither clash or avoid each other; the box and lid meet perfectly. Able to gather in from outside and cut off all flowing leaks, this is called a fellow who can manage the family business. After all he comes back from here; the white clouds enter the valley, the bright moon circles the mountains—there is a time when one merges with the 'father.' That is why it is said, "Three people lean on one staff and sleep on one bed."\* Inside and out there are no traces at all—merged into one whole, free as clouds of mist and rain, deep as the waters of dewy autumn. Good people, you must remember this thing before you can attain realization.

Empty, vacant, clear, quiet; cool, austere, pure, real—in this way are cleared up residual habits of many lives. When the defilement of remaining habits is ended, the original light appears, shining through your skull. It does not admit anything else; clear and open, it is like sky and water merging in autumn, like the snow and moon having the same color. This realm has no boundaries; it is beyond location. Vast and solid, without edges or seams, you must still slough off everything completely here before you will realize. When you have sloughed off everything, thought and speech are thousands of miles away; there is no discerning principle—so how could there be anything to point out anymore? Only one whose bucket's bottom has fallen out will believe completely. That is why it is said, "Just realize union; when union is realized you can spring into action and enter the world." The attainment of freedom of action will be clearly evident. Sound and form, shadow and echo, are immediate, without traces.

\*This means that real communication takes place by forgetting self and merging with one reality. By forgetting self and others one merges with the one reality. As noted before, 'father' is a symbol for absolute reality as well as ignorance.



## PUBLIC CASES FROM THE RECORD OF FURTHER INQUIRIES

### *Case*

Baqiao said to the assembly, "If you have a staff, I'll give you the staff; if you have no staff, I'll take your staff away."

**Taintong Hongzhi brought this up and said,** "If you have, then all have; if you have not, all have not. Having or not only depends on the person concerned; is giving or taking away any business of Baqiao? At this moment, what about your staff?"

**Wansong comments,** "Chan master Huiqing of Baqiao Mountain in Ying province succeeded to Guangyong of the Southern Stupa, who succeeded to Yangshan; so Baqiao was a great-grandson of Guishan. In a talk in the hall, he said, 'When I was twenty-eight I came to Mt. Yang and saw the master of the southern stupa there [Guangyong] go up into the hall and say, "You people, if you are the real thing, you would know how to roar like a lion the moment you're born from your mother's womb—wouldn't that be delightful?" At that time, at his words, I set body and mind to rest, and stayed there for five years.'

"Baqiao said to his group, 'If you have a staff, I'll give you the staff.' I say, the patriarchal teacher didn't come from the West, to transmit a wonderful secret at Shaolin; what's the need for Bodhidharma to point directly to the human mind? Baqiao also said, 'If you have no staff, I'll take your staff away.' Even if you don't bring along even a single thing, yet you must even cast that off before you will attain realization.

"Master Che of Dagui said, 'I am not so; if you have a staff, I will take your staff away; if you have no staff, I will give you a staff. As Dagui is like this, can you people use it or not? If you can't use it, then for the time being return it to the original owner.' I say, he poles the boat along with the flow; people of the time know it exists.

"Tiantong brought this out—for a great man, having or not rests



with oneself; it is not subject to Baqiao's judgment and disposition. This has since time immemorial been called the staff of a patchrobed monk. Tiantong feared that the person responsible would avoid it, so he said further, 'At this moment, what about your staff?' Even if you can bring it out, don't let me see it, or I'll break it into eight pieces, burn it up and let the ashes blow away. I am old—it's all right to keep it too. Why? Sometimes it helps one across a river where the bridge is broken; how many times has it accompanied me back to the moonlit village?"

### *Case*

When Yantou took leave of Deshan, Deshan said, "Where are you going?" Yantou said, "For now I'm taking leave of you, Master, and going down the mountain." Deshan said, "After that, then what?" Yantou said, "I won't forget you, master." Deshan said, "By virtue of what do you say this?" Yantou said, "Haven't you heard that when one's knowledge is equal to his teacher's, he has less than half his teacher's virtue; when one's knowledge surpasses the teacher's, only then is he qualified for the transmission." Deshan said, "So it is. So it is. Guard it well on your own."

**Tiantong Hongzhi brought this up and said,** "Deshan usually did not set up buddhas or patriarchs under his cane, but here, in this situation, he was so kind. Even though this is sustenance for an adopted son, how can he avoid getting criticism from people of later times? When (Yantou) said, 'When one's knowledge surpasses the teacher, only then is he qualified for the transmission,' I would drag out a staff and hit him right across the back."

**Wansong comments,** "Chan master Yantou Quanhua, when he first called on Deshan, carried his sitting mat up into the hall and looked up at Deshan, who saw him and said, 'What are you doing?' Yantou scolded him; Deshan said, 'Where is my fault?' Yantou said, 'A double case,' then went down to meditate in the hall. Deshan thought to himself, 'This monk somewhat resembles a pilgrim.' So at the end, when he took leave of Deshan, Deshan said, 'Where are you going?' and Yantou said, 'For now I'm leaving you and going down

the mountain.' Deshan said, 'After that, then what?' Yantou said, 'I won't forget you, master.' All of this is proper to teacher and apprentice, no different from anywhere else. Deshan also asked, 'Based on what do you say this?' Yantou said, 'Haven't you heard that when one's knowledge is equal to his teacher, he has less than half the teacher's virtue; when one's knowledge surpasses the teacher, only then is he qualified for the transmission.' Many say 'when one's view is equal to the teacher' and 'when the view surpasses the teacher'—this doesn't miss the principle. Wangshan Fazu said, 'There are three kinds of lions: the first transcends sect, with a different eye; the second is shoulder to shoulder, in the same track; the third is shadow and echo, not real.' One who transcends sect with a different eye has a view which goes beyond his teacher, and is capable of being a seedling; one who is shoulder to shoulder in the same track has less than half his teacher's virtue, and is stuck in the present; one who is shadow and echo, not real, is a mixture of fox and jackal, a sheep in a tiger's skin.

"Tiantong brings up how Deshan usually never let even buddhas or patriarchs stand under his cane, but at this this is sustenance for an adopted son, how can he avoid getting criticism from people of later times?' When Linji left Huangbo, the latter asked him 'Where are you going to go?' Linji said, 'If not south of the river, then north of the river.' Huangbo then hit him; Linji grabbed and held him, and gave him a slap. Huangbo laughed loudly and called to his attendant, 'Bring me my late master Baizhang's meditation brace and desk.' When the attendant brought them, Linji repeatedly shouted, 'Attendant, bring me fire!' Huangbo said, 'Just take them and go—later on you will cut off the tongues of everyone on earth.' Tiantong just knows how to examine the man who transmits the Dharma, but doesn't know that the man who receives the Dharma deserves it even more. At that time if I were Linji, when I heard him say, 'Just take them and go—later on you'll cut off the tongues of everyone on earth,' I'd just say to him, 'If you want to cut off the tongues of everyone on earth, then indeed you should bring fire and burn up today's public case, and just merge with the ordinary.' If I had seen Deshan say, 'So it is, so it is—guard it well on your own,' I would have shouted thunderously and left, and our posterity would not be cut off.

## PUBLIC CASES FROM THE EMPTY VALLEY COLLECTION,

### *Baling's Chickens and Ducks*

#### LINQUAN'S INTRODUCTION

A wooden horse neighs in the wind, a clay ox bellows at the moon. In the midst of speechlessness, yet it is possible to be talkative; how should one speak of where it is beyond right and wrong, apart from sameness and difference?

#### QUOTATION

A monk asked Master Haojian of Baling, "Are the meaning of the patriarchs and the meaning of the teachings the same or different?" He replied, "When chickens are cold they roost in the trees; when ducks are cold they go into the water."

#### LINQUAN'S COMMENTARY

When chan master Haojian of Xinkai monastery in Baling, Yue province, first came to Yunmen, Yunmen said, "Master Xuefeng said, 'Bodhidharma's come!' I ask you, what about it?" The master said, "Right under your nose." Yunmen said, "The earth spirit rages up, hits Mount Sumeru, leaps up to the brahma heaven, and smashes Indra's nose; why do you hide in Japan?" He said, "Master, don't fool people." Yunmen said, "Right under my nose—what about that?" The master had nothing to say; Yunmen said, "I knew you were a student of words."

After the Master was dwelling in a monastery as a teacher, he didn't write a document of succession; he just presented three pivotal words to Yunmen: a monk asked what the way is, and the master said, "A clear-eyed man falls into a well;" a monk asked what the 'hair-blown sword' is, and the master said, "Each branch of coral supports the moon;" a monk asked what the sect of Kanadeva is, and the master said, "Piling snow in a silver bowl." Yunmen said, "Later on, the anniversary of my death, you only need to quote these three piv-

otal words to sufficiently requite my kindness." Subsequently, at memorial services, he actually did thus, as he had been instructed. I say, you should know that the giving of Dharma is inexhaustible; requital of virtue and benevolence extends over past and present.

A monk asked, "Are the meaning of the patriarchs and the meaning of the teachings the same or different?" This monk was very much like picking the moon out of the sky or gold out of sand; in the realm of real purity he created something where there was nothing. After all it was truly said, "Old Xinkai—he's clearly special"—He not only says, "Piling snow in a silver bowl," he also is able to know that chickens and ducks each have their own resting place. What a pity that he causes people to grope without finding where cold and exhausted, dry and deserted. Clearly the patriarchs' meaning and the teachings' meaning are imparted to Touzi, and he sticks them together before the crowd. His verse says,

#### TOUZI'S VERSE

Same or different from the meaning of the patriarchs—he asks  
 about the origin,  
 So he uses the fundamental value to give him an answer.  
 An imperial command; the night quiet, a man lets down a  
 hook—  
 At dawn he takes in the sun together with the moon.

#### LINQUAN'S COMMENTARY

Producing understanding from hearing, coloring in the mind; the auspicious grass is rootless, the wise don't esteem it.

As Luopu was standing by Linji, a lecturing monk came to call on Linji; Linji asked, "There is one man who attains understanding from the teachings of the three vehicles, and there is one man who doesn't attain understanding from the teachings of the three vehicles; tell me, are these two men the same or different?" The lecturer said, "If they understand, they're the same; if they don't understand, they're different." Linji looked at Luopu and said, "What about you?" Luopu immediately shouted.

When Yunmen came to Chekiang, prime minister Chen invited him to a meal; as soon as he saw Yunmen, he immediately asked him, "I do not ask about what is in the confucian writings, and the

canonical teachings of the three vehicles have their own professors; what is the business of a patchrobed monk's pilgrimage?" Yunmen said, "How many people have you asked?" He said, "I am asking you right now." Yunmen said, "Leaving aside 'right now,' what is the meaning of the teachings?" Chen said, "Yellow scrolls, red rollers." Yunmen said, "These are written words—what is the meaning of the teachings?" Chen said, "When the mouth wants to talk about it, words disappear; when the mind wants to grasp it, thought vanishes." Yunmen said, "'When the mouth wants to talk about it, words disappear' deals with maintaining verbalization; 'when the mind seeks to grasp it, thought vanishes' deals with false conceptualization—what is the meaning of the teaching?" The prime minister was speechless. Yunmen said, "I've heard that you've read the Lotus scripture—is this true or not?" He said, "It is." Yunmen said, "In the scripture it says, 'All productive labor is not contrary to the character of reality'—tell me, in the heaven beyond perception and nonperception, how many people regress from that state?" The minister was speechless. Yunmen said, "Don't be so careless; even the three greatest scriptures and five classic treatises are given up by monks to specially enter Chan monasteries. Even after ten or twenty years, they still can't do anything—how could you understand, prime minister?" The minister bowed and said, "I am at fault." I say, shame and fear in a bronze face, tolerance on a tin spear.

Now tell me, are the answers of Luopu and Yunmen and the answer of Baling one kind of reimbursement or two kinds? Can you pin it down? Now entering a new market, let the cashier discuss short and long. The old fellow of Baling rowed out into the still waters of the clear source and let down a hook; he didn't mind if the water was cold in the quiet of night—how could he fear the empty boat carrying the moon? If you know that for the chickens and ducks there is no seeking, you naturally won't be in a rush looking up and down for them.

### *My Province Is Peaceful*

The four eyes are undimmed; the six thieves surrender. Having seen the year of Great Peace in a forest of spears and shields, you find the land of purity in a pile of rubbish. Would you believe it is fundamentally inherent? How could you know it is not sought from another?



Stealing leisure in the midst of hurry, how can you understand verbally?

### QUOTATION

Yaoshan asked novice Gao, "I hear that Changan is very noisy." The novice said, "My province is peaceful." Yaoshan joyfully said, "Did you realize this from reading scriptures, or from making inquiries?" The novice said, "I didn't get it from reading scriptures or from making inquiries." Yaoshan said, "Many people do not read scriptures or make inquiries—why don't they get it?" The novice said, "I don't say they don't get it—it's just that they don't agree to take it up."

### LINQUAN'S COMMENTARY

When novice Gao first called on Yaoshan, Yaoshan asked him, "Where do you come from?" He said, "From Nanyue." Yaoshan asked, "Where are you going?" He said, "To Jiangling to receive the precepts." Yaoshan said, "What is the aim of receiving precepts?" He said, "To escape birth and death." Yaoshan said, "There is someone who doesn't receive the precepts and has no birth and death to escape—do you know?" He said, "Then what is the use of the buddha's precepts?" Yaoshan said, "This novice still has lips and teeth." The novice bowed and withdrew. Daowu came and stood by Yaoshan; Yaoshan said to him, "That limping novice who just came, after all has some life in him." Daowu said, "He's not to be entirely believed yet—you should test him again first." When evening came, Yaoshan went up into the hall; he called, "Where is the novice who came earlier?" Novice Gao came forth from the assembly and stood there; Yaoshan said, "I hear Changan is very noisy; do you know, or not?" The novice said, "My province is peaceful." Fayan said, as an alternative reply, "Who told you?" Yaoshan, seeing that the novice's reply had some basis, again asked, "Did you realize this from reading scriptures, or from making inquiries?" The novice didn't fall into his cage at all; he said, "I didn't get it from reading scriptures or from making inquiries." Yaoshan saw that he couldn't entrap him; using another living road of action, again he said accusingly, "Many people don't read scriptures or make inquiries—why don't they get it?" The novice's whole body was hands and eyes—he wouldn't be tied up or overthrown; he said, "I don't say they don't get it—it's just that they don't

agree to take it up." At this point, the cart couldn't be pushed sideways, principle could not be decided crookedly; Yaoshan looked back at Daowu and Yunyan and said, "Didn't you believe what I said?" We might say that to surpass the crowd one must be an outstanding spirit, conquering enemies is a matter for a lion. If you can see through here, only then can you truly say that you are desireless in the midst of desires, unstained while dwelling in the dusts, going through a thicket of a hundred kinds of flowers without a single petal getting on you. If you can forget both clamor and silence, you will surely understand the simultaneous realization of absolute and relative. At this point, how should one judge?

### TOUZI'S VERSE

Flourishing, perishing; clouds go, clouds come.  
 He has no country, is utterly free from dust.  
 On the peak of Mount Sumeru, rootless plants;  
 Without feeling the spring breeze, the flowers bloom of  
 themselves.

### LINQUAN'S COMMENTARY

(Raising a yellow flower,) Worldly affairs—clouds going through a thousand changes; evanescent life—a scene in a dream. Although this is momentarily conveying elation, expressing feelings, there is a deep reason to it. If you are able to act in accordance with what you say, so that mind and mouth are not two, if you can see through here, you will not be fooled by myriad objects—what gain and loss, right and wrong, prosperity and decline, success and defeat can fetter you?

Fengxue said, "If you set up a single atom, the country flourishes and the peasants frown. If you do not set up a single atom, the country perishes and the peasants rest easy." All at once cutting off the setting up and not setting up, what flourishing or perishing can remain? This is all leftovers of inherent emptiness, floating flowers in the eye of the Way. Although coming and going leaves no traces, what about ignorance becoming an obstacle to vision? Just realizing pure spotless clarity, free of even a fine hair, in the echoless mountains you meet a legless stone man, and on top of Mount Sumeru pick rootless auspicious plants. I hope without depending on the spring breeze the fragrance will fill the world; I ask chan followers who have the eye to

try to come appreciate it. Do you see? Spiritual sprouts grow where there is land; great enlightenment does not keep a teacher.

## PUBLIC CASES FROM THE VACANT HALL COLLECTION

### *Jiufeng, the Attendant*

#### LINQUAN'S INTRODUCTION

People are tested with words, water is tested with a stick; deep and shallow, high and low—how can they be mixed up? How pitiful—one spot of feelings' dust makes you half light and half dark. If you can lose yourself and follow the others, I dare say then there'd be no regret. Is there not someone who can let go and be free?

#### QUOTATION

Jiufeng was with Shishuang, serving as his attendant. After Shishuang passed on, the community wanted to ask the senior monk in the hall to succeed him as abbot, but Jiufeng did not agree; he said, "Wait 'till I question him; if he understands the late master's meaning, I will serve him as I did the late master."

So he asked the senior monk, "The late master said, 'Cease, desist, for ten thousand years in an instant, like cold ashes, a dead tree, a censer in an ancient shrine, a strip of white silk'—tell me, what does this illustrate?" The senior monk said, "It illustrates the matter of uniformity." Jiufeng said, "Then you don't understand the late master's meaning yet." The senior monk said, "You don't agree with me? Come set up some incense." Then he lit the incense and said, "If I don't understand the late master's meaning, I couldn't die while this incense smoke is rising." So saying, he sat down and passed away.

Jiufeng then patted him on the back and said, "I don't deny you can die sitting or standing, but when it comes to the late master's meaning, you're not there yet."

## LINQUAN'S COMMENTARY

Calling on a teacher, asking about the way, he assisted at the monastery, having personally served as Shishuang's attendant. When Shishuang had died and the community asked the senior monk to succeed as abbot, Jiufeng's examination certainly was reasonable. Thus a scripture says, "Sentient beings are hindered by their understanding; enlightening beings are not yet free from awareness." How much the more so was this senior monk, who relied on the accomplishment of stillness; if it hadn't been for the attendant not approving him and honestly testing him with adverse and favorable situations, after all revealing seeking, it would be hard to say that the eight winds couldn't move him and that he was always constant and stable for all time.

One day Caoshan saw The Paper-Robed Wayfarer come, and asked him, "Are you not The Paper-Robed Wayfarer?" He said, "I do not presume." Caoshan said, "What is the thing in the paper robe?" He said, "As soon as the skin coat is hung on the body, myriad things are all Thus." Caoshan said, "What is the function in the paper robe?" The wayfarer walked up, said "OK" and died standing. Caoshan said, "You know how to go this way; why don't you come this way?" The wayfarer suddenly opened his eyes and asked, "What about when the real nature of the one life-force does not avail itself of the womb?" Caoshan said, "This is not yet wonderful." He said, "What is wonderful?" Caoshan said, "Using without depending." The Paper-Robed Wayfarer then bade farewell and sat down and passed away. Caoshan then made a verse saying,

The formless body of complete illumination of the nature of  
awareness;  
Don't use knowledge and views, misconstruing far and near.  
If thoughts vary, you're blind to the profound essence;  
If the mind differs, you're not close to the path.  
When feelings discriminate myriad things, they submerge the  
present situation;  
When consciousness perceives many aspects, you lose the  
original reality.  
If you can clearly understand from such sayings,  
Clearly you're the man of before, without any concern.

This is not different from the attendant Jiufeng not agreeing with the senior monk, particularly since Shishuang's senior monk, though he knew how to go this way, he didn't know how to come this way; The Paper-Robed Wayfarer also knew how to go thus, and also knew how to come thus—still, Caoshan himself did not let him off without making an appearance. On the whole, those whose feelings retain inclination and opposition, and whose viewpoint is onesided and biased, just greedily linger in their tracks, sunk in the void, not caring to 'continue the fragrance, continue the flame.' But tell me, where is the benefit or harm? Here is Danxia, who harmonizes with him; his verse says,

### DANXIA'S VERSE

Wearing horns, covered with fur—a different species body.  
 Cold ashes, dead tree—dust in the eyes.  
 Even if he didn't yet understand the late master's meaning,  
 Nonetheless his one saying on the verge of going was new.

### LINQUAN'S COMMENTARY

First enlightened, enlightening afterward, self-help and helping others, guiding people to benefit the living—wondrous functions are manifold. In the function which is identical to essence, holding still and letting go rest completely in oneself; in the essence which is identical to function, bringing forth and throwing away depend on no one else. Therefore we wear horns and fur, freely embodying different species, plowing in the clouds under the hazy moon, entering the market place with open hands. Even cold ashes and dead trees, cool, clear and pure, when seen with the true eye, all are defilements. What uniformity can be pinned down?

Although at the time he didn't understand the late master's meaning, Danxia volubly approves of him, saying, "Nonetheless his one saying on the verge of going was new." Although this saying is new, how could it compare to having replied to Jiufeng in the first place when he said, "Then you don't understand the late master's meaning yet." What he said here was no more new or fresh. If so, then what was the necessity of lighting incense and dying while sitting, having someone pat him on the back and say, "You still don't understand the late master's meaning?" Do you know where the freedom to praise or



censure, independence in conceding or taking away is? "A patchwork coverlet over my head, myriad concerns cease; at this time this mountain monk understands nothing at all."

### *Liangshan's Empty Aeon*

#### LINQUAN'S INTRODUCTION

A frozen river bursts into flame, an iron tree blooms with flowers—it does not come from the loom of creation; how could it be within the range of yin and yang? Where primordial chaos is not yet differentiated, try to see for sure.

#### QUOTATION

A monk asked Liangshan, "What is that which is before the empty aeon?" Liangshan said, "The drum which rattles the universe, people of the time don't hear."

#### LINQUAN'S COMMENTARY

The unbridled wooden horse leaps high before the primordial buddha, the legless stone man walks alone after the emptiness of the aeon; only then will you believe when it's said that inconceivable existence basically is not existent, that real emptiness fundamentally is not empty. Independent, lively standing out, for all time the function is inexhaustible. Thus we know that this thing is not empty, not existent, not one, not two, not the same, not different, not identical, not disparate; try to compare it and you miss, try to discuss it and you're wrong. It is always presented to your face—what a pity that it's cast off behind your head. I deeply pity these folks who try to grasp the moon in the water, not realizing that the moon is in the sky, who try to grasp flowers in the air, not realizing the flowers have no stems. Pursuing an air of fragrance, they mistake the reflection for the head. Searching with all their might, they don't get so much as a bit of hair. That is why Liangshan said, "The drum which rattles the universe, people of the time don't hear." I say, although living beings have ears, how many know the sound? Also see how Danxia settles the harmony; his verse says,

## DANXIA'S VERSE

Empty space is the drum, Mt. Sumeru is the drum stick;  
 Although those who beat are many, those who hear are few.  
 In the middle of night, a skull awakens from a dream;  
 Though bright moonlight covers his head, he doesn't think of  
 returning.

## LINQUAN'S COMMENTARY

Chan master Ji-an of Yanguan in Hangzhou said to his group, "Space is a drum, Mount Sumeru is the drum stick; who knows how to beat it?" No one replied. Nanquan said, "I don't beat this broken drum." I say it's just that you're too lazy. Fayuan said as an alternative, "Nanquan doesn't beat it." I say, "I'm just afraid the bystander doesn't know how many beats." Xuedou brought this up and said, "Those who beat are many, those who hear extremely few. I ask, who is the one who knows how to beat it? Don't slander Yanguan. Nanquan said he doesn't beat this broken drum, Fayuan said that Nanquan doesn't beat it; both can do nothing, one is even ashamed." He also said, "Nanquan doesn't beat it—does he agree with everyone else or not?" He answered himself, "A thousand year field, eight hundred landlords." I say, curling the fingers counting from the top, none is real. When you look at it this way, how can we avoid Danxia's saying, "Although those who beat it are many, those who hear it are few." In the middle of the night, the skull first awakens from a dream; in the third watch, the pillar happens to emit light—those with eyes, discern it clearly. Just waiting till you've a head full of moonlight and sideburns of frosty flowers, you collapse in the present and don't think of beyond time. That is why Dongshan said, "On the road, don't go; coming back, turn away from your father." But how can you get it right? Do you know? Without leaving the flower-strewn road you travel throughout the clear sky.

*Longshan and the Great Matter*

## LINQUAN'S INTRODUCTION

Looking afar, stop looking nearby; with every thought you should investigate death and life. Discuss the true, not the false; earnestly talk

only about the ultimate truth. A clear indication—buy afterwards, try first. Is there anyone who can profitably open shop? Please do.

### QUOTATION

Dongshan asked a monk, "In all the world, what thing is most painful?" The monk said, "Hell is most painful." Dongshan said, "Not so; to wear this robe and not understand the great matter is what is really painful."

### LINQUAN'S COMMENTARY

The Realized One used the four immeasurable minds of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity to liberate sentient beings; the patriarchs used the three undefiled sciences of morality, concentration, and wisdom to awaken the patchrobed ones. Dongshan points his hand on the summit of the highest mountain; this monk shakes his head at the bottom of the deepest sea. Already this is thanking him for not saying that sugar is most sweet, yellow plum is most bitter. It seems he can hardly forget what is familiar; even seeing the doormen of hell in a dream, he is frightened—he doesn't know that when Devadatta fell into hell for slandering the buddha and Buddha sent Ananda to ask after him and see if he was suffering or not, Devadatta said, "I am in uninterrupted hell, but feel like I'm enjoying the pleasure of the third meditation heaven." Still this monk says hell is most painful. According to the capacity, what a difference, as between sky and earth. That is why Dongshan said, "Not so; to wear this robe and not understand the great matter is what is really painful." This is truly what is called using the heart of a whole lifetime out of pity for a three-year-old child. Although this is holding the ox's head to have it eat grass, still it doesn't exclude adding stripes to a tiger's back. Fortunately we meet Danxia, who in turn exhorts and admonishes:

### DANXIA'S VERSE

Boiling cauldrons, furnaces of coals—how many kinds?  
 Hell and the three mires are not so painfully bitter.  
 You should believe the kind words of Xinfeng;  
 Clothed in monk's vestments, don't be bigheaded.

## LINQUAN'S COMMENTARY

The ocean of all obstructions from actions all comes from false conceptions. Are boiling cauldrons, furnaces of coals, sword-trees and knife-mountains, hells and the three mires, the only painful things? Because of this Danxia reiterates this meaning in behalf of Dongshan, repeating it in the words of his verse—in ancient and recent times, doting kindness.

In sum, transmigration through the six dispositions, appearing and disappearing in the four forms of birth, all is due to not realizing the treasury of the eye of truth, the ineffable mind of nirvana. When The World-Honored One first attained true enlightenment, he observed that all sentient beings everywhere fully possess the knowledge, wisdom, and virtuous characteristics of The Realized One; just because of their false conceptions and attachments they do not realize it. Is this not what Dongshan is calling the great matter? Therefore Danxia repeats the instruction: "You should believe the kind words of Xinfeng; clothed in monks' vestments, don't be bigheaded." From the end of the Dazhong era of the Tang dynasty, Dongshan received and guided people on Xinfeng Mountain; later he spread the teaching at Dong Mountain (Dongshan) in Gaoan in Yuzhang province. Provisionally opening up the five ranks, he skillfully guided those of higher, middling, and lower faculties, greatly spreading the mystic sound, illuminating the way of the patriarchs. The name Xinfeng comes from the mountain where he stayed.

Now about the words he entrusted; are they kind or not? Should one be bigheaded or not? It is like someone drinking water—what need to ask whether it is cool or warm? Only a clear mind knows of itself.

## SAYINGS OF MASTER RUJING OF Tiantong

*Rujing lived from 1163 to 1228 and served as abbot and teaching master at several large public monasteries; it was at Tiantong in eastern China that Dogen met Rujing, who was to become the final*

*human teacher and greatest spiritual benefactor of young Dogen. Rujing was descended from the great Cao Dong masters Furong and Danxia; it was he who taught Dogen the 'technique' of 'just-sitting', which he used to practice together with the community in the great meditation halls. The following talk about sitting meditation is taken from the Hokyoki, Dogen's record of private talks with Rujing; the general talk and the eulogies are from records of Rujing's sayings compiled by other disciples.*

Although saints and self-enlightened sages do not become attached to their experience in sitting meditation, they lack great compassion; therefore they are not the same as the buddhas and patriarchs, who considered great compassion foremost and sat in meditation with the vow to save all sentient beings. The outsiders in India also sat in meditation, but they always had three problems; attachment to the experience, false views, and conceit—therefore it is always different from the sitting meditation of the buddhas and patriarchs.

Buddhist disciples also had sitting meditation, but their compassion was weak; they did not penetrate the real character of all things with incisive knowledge—only improving themselves, they cut off the lineage of buddhas; therefore theirs is always different from the sitting meditation of buddhas and patriarchs.

What I mean to say is that buddhas and patriarchs, from their very first inspiration, sit in meditation with the vow to gather together all the qualities of buddhahood; therefore in their sitting meditation they do not forget sentient beings, do not forsake sentient beings—they always have loving thoughts even for insects, and vow to rescue them. Whatever virtues they have, they dedicate to all; therefore the buddhas and patriarchs are always in the world of desire practicing meditation and working on the way. In the world of desire only this world provides the best situation; cultivating all virtues life after life, one attains to gentility and ease of mind.

### *General Talk*

Kaaa! People, this shout, though before the ancient buddhas, has already missed the point; how much the more so to come here today and shout wildly—what kind of farting this would be. If there is someone who can come forth boldly to smash this shitty mouth,



knock out my teeth and stuff them in a shit hole, you can avoid seeing me fooling people with a lot of confusion.

But even this is still raising your fist behind someone's back, raising your voice to stop an echo; yet we set up many gates, to open up a single road—isn't there any one who will come forth?

(A long silence) If there is no one, then I will use a shout for the moment to pile up confusion and fool you people. Kaaa! Here there is host and guest, illumination and function; do you know where it ultimately ends up? If you realize where it ends up, you know where it arises; if you know where it arises, you know where it passes away. If you know where it passes away, you then realize that birth and death both pass away, and ultimate peace appears, in everyday life, appearing in six places. In the eye it is called seeing; you must strip off your eyes till you see nothing at all—then afterwards there is nothing you don't see; only then can it be called seeing.

In the ear it is called hearing; you must block your ears shut till you hear nothing at all—then afterwards there is nothing you don't hear; only then can it be called hearing.

In the nose it is called smelling; you must smash off your nostrils till fragrance and stench are not distinguished—afterwards there is nothing you can't distinguish; only then can it be called smelling.

In the tongue it talks; you must pluck out your tongue, so heaven and earth are wrapped up in silence—afterwards it is effulgent and unbroken; only then can it be called talking.

In the body it is called person; you must slough off the gross elements and not depend on anything—afterwards you manifest form in accordance with kind (of being); only then can it be called person.

In the mind it is called consciousness; you must cut off forever all clinging to objects, so that the three incalculable aeons are empty—afterwards origin and de cease do not stop—only this can be called consciousness.

Appearing as above in these six places, without any gap, this is what is meant by there being host and guest, illumination and function, as I said before—host and guest interchange, illumination and function merge. From the buddhas of the past, present, and future and the six generations of ancestral teachers above to the animals of various species, plants, trees, and insects below, all are this one shout—none is left out. Then you see that 'before the appearance of the ancient buddhas' is right now, and right now is 'before the appearance

of the ancient buddhas.' They are not two, do not have two separate conditions, because they are not distinct; they are continuous.

According to what I am saying, what is there to shout about or talk about? Basically there is not so much—everyone should get a beating. What mistake is there? What is not mistaken? There are even Linji's four shouts; no harm to move the shoulders while walking—I'll pierce nostrils one by one for you. Bah! 'One shout is like the jewel sword of the diamond king'—a toilet sweeper. 'One shout is like a lion crouching on the ground'—a rat in its nest. 'One shout is like a probing pole, shadowing grass'—a fellow fishing for clams. 'One shout does not function as a shout'—a ghost in front of a skull. Tonight is clear and cool; I call this medicine for a dead horse—even if you can bring this shout to life, how can you avoid the sound of farting?

Even so, tell me, where does it come from, 'before the ancient buddhas appeared?' Can you be sure? If you can get it for sure, then nothing's wrong with wild shouting—you'll avoid seeking it folding your hands at the corner of a rope seat. If you are not yet thus, though, beware of misusing your fists and feet. Bah!

#### VERSE ON LINJI

Making an empty fist,  
Threatening the world to death;  
Such an ancestral teacher—  
An animal, an ass.

#### VERSE ON AN ANCIENT SAYING

Yunmen said, "The world is so wide—why put on a seven-strip robe at the sound of a bell?"

Rujing said,

At the sound of the bell I put on a dense web;\*  
The inconceivable function's miraculous powers  
Produce a variety of effects.  
The thief is a member of the family;

\*'Dense web' also alludes to the multitude of appearances of the phenomenal world. This reading is hardly concealed in the phonetic transcription for the Sanskrit word for 'upper robe'-i.e. the 7-strip.

It is necessary to sweep away the tracks—  
 Only the great peace with no signs  
 Is really safe and harmonious.

## FUNERAL SPEECHES

### SETTING FIRE TO ELDER YI'S BIER

'All things return to one'—living is like wearing your shirt; 'where does the one return?'—dying is like taking off your pants. When life and death are sloughed off and do not concern you at all, the spiritual light of the one path always stands out unique. Ah, the swift flames in the wind flare up—all atoms in all worlds do not interchange.

### SETTING FIRE TO A DOCTOR'S BIER

The mortal diseases of humans you can heal, but when you die, who can bring you back to life? I have a simple method, a handful of fire; I will burn for you the medicine gourd. Someone answers, "I'm alive, revived"—tell me, how do you prove it? (describing a circle with the firebrand) Ah, the original face has no birth or death; spring is in the plum flowers, entering a painted picture.

## LIFE OF ZEN MASTER DOGEN OF EIHEI

*From Biographical Extracts of the Original Stream, compiled by zen master Geppa*

The zen master's name was Dogen. He was from Kyoto. His lay surname was Minamoto, and he was a descendant of emperor Murakami (r. 946-967). He left society as a youth and was ordained by Koen of Yokogawa. Before many years had passed, he had read the whole buddhist canon two times.

One day he resolved upon that which is outside the teachings (zen); he left and called on Eisai of Kennin monastery and Gyoyu at Jomyo monastery. Eventually he attained the Dharma in the tenth generation of the Huanglong succession.<sup>1</sup>

When he heard someone extolling the zen way in Sung China, he went right to China on a merchant ship. He went to ask about the quick way to enter the path from Liaopa Wuji at Tiantong mountain, Cheying Ruyan at Jin Shan, Yuankao at Wannian monastery, Sitiao at Xiaosuian: he didn't agree with any of them—he thought to himself that there was no teacher in China better than he himself.

When he first lay down his staff at Tiantong, the community decided to place him as a novice<sup>2</sup> because he was from another country. The master was not happy about this, and appealed in writing to the emperor; after three times he finally got his wish. From this his name was heard far and wide.

The next year he met Rujing, who had come to dwell at Tiantong. The master greeted him joyfully, and as soon as Rujing saw him, he esteemed him as a vessel of Dharma. The master submitted to him in all sincerity and entered his room.<sup>3</sup> He meditated diligently day and night, never lying down.

One night as Rujing was passing through the hall, he saw a monk sitting dozing and said, "For this affair it is necessary to shed body and mind—if you just sleep like this, when will you ever have today's affair?" Then he took off his slipper and hit the monk. The master, nearby, got the message and was greatly enlightened. The next day he went to the abbot's quarters; Rujing laughed and said, "The shedding is shed." At that time Kuangping of Fuzhou was standing by as Rujing's attendant; he said, "It is not a small thing, that a foreigner has attained such a great matter." The master bowed. After this he worked most earnestly and attained all the secrets.

When he was taking his leave to return east, Rujing imparted to him the essential teachings of the Dong succession<sup>4</sup> and the patched robe of master Furong, saying, "You should go back east forthwith; just spread the teaching so it will never end." The master accepted with bowed head and finally returned. When he began to teach in Fukakusa, south of Kyoto, everywhere they honored him as the first patriarch of Soto zen in Japan.

The master said, "I did not visit many monasteries, but I happened to meet my late teacher at Tiantong and directly realized that my eyes are horizontal and my nose is vertical; I was not to be fooled by anyone. Then I returned home with empty hands. Thus I have no

Buddhism at all; I just pass the time as it goes: every morning the sun rises in the east, every night the moon sets in the west. When the clouds recede the mountain rises appear; when the rain has passed, the surrounding hills are low. Ultimately, how is it? Every four years is leap year, the cock crows at dawn."

Later in life he built Eihei, Sanctuary of Eternal Peace, in Echizen province, and lived there. Before long people came in droves. His monastery regulations were just like those of Tiantong: it was the first strictly zen monastery in Japan. At that time (1243-47) the emperor (Go-Fukakusa) sent down an edict granting him a purple vestment of honor and the title Zen Master of Buddhism. A chamberlain brought the order; after giving thanks for the favor, he strongly refused it several times, but the emperor would not allow this. So Dogen eventually took it and offered a poem which said,

Though the mountain of Eihei is insignificant  
 The imperial order is repeated in earnest:  
 After all I am laughed at by monkeys and cranes,  
 An old man in a purple robe.

The emperor long admired him.

The master was fond of seclusion and built a separate hut under Crystal Cliff as a retirement retreat. He wrote poems such as

The ancestral way which came from the west, I have brought  
 east—  
 Fishing in the moonlight, pillowing in the clouds, I have tried  
 to emulate the ancient way.  
 The flying red dust of the conventional world cannot reach  
 This reed hut on a snowy night deep in the mountains.

and

The wind is cold in my three room reed house:  
 Observing my nose<sup>5</sup> I first come upon the fragrance of autumn  
 chrysanthemums.  
 Even with an iron or a bronze eye, who could discern?  
 In Eihei nine times I have seen the fall.



The assistant commander of the Taira, Tokiyori, esteemed the master's way and several times called him to stay at famous temples, but he didn't go. After a long time the master went on his own to call on him. The assistant commander greeted him and saw him off; he paid obeisance to Dogen as a disciple, and asked him about the path and received the precepts from him. The master passed the year and then returned.

In the end he summoned his disciple Ejo and imparted his final instructions. He then wrote a verse and died. The verse said,

Fifty four years illuminating the highest heaven,  
 I leap into the universe.  
 Ah, there is no place to look for my whole body:  
 I fall living into hades.

He was fifty four, and had been a monk for thirty-seven years. His monument was built at Eihei, and he was entitled Joyo, Heir to the Sun.

### *Notes to Biography of Dogen*

1. Huanglong was one of the branches of the Linji (Rinzai) school of zen in China, to which Eisai had succeeded. Dogen also studied with Myozen at Kennin monastery; Myozen was considered Eisai's foremost disciple.
2. In a monks' hall or meditation hall, the seating arrangement is determined by seniority or ordination age.
3. Entering a zen master's room for personal encounter and instruction is a special part of zen practice; Rujing is said to have allowed Dogen to enter his room without formality, to discuss anything he wanted; the *Hokyoki* mentioned previously was a record of Dogen's conversations with Rujing in his room.
4. This probably refers to the teaching of the five ranks of Dong Shan, the *Baojing sanmei* and *Can Tong Qui*: secret oral instruction on the application and interpretation of these formulae seems to have been part of the 'transmission of Dharma' from a teacher to an awakened disciple.
5. Fixing the attention on the nose is one method of breath contemplation; it is also called 'stopping.'

## INFORMAL TALKS

*From the Record of Sayings of Zen Master Dogen of Eithei*

### AT THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER RETREAT

Once when Zikong was at Tiantong monastery in Siming, at the beginning of a summer retreat he said, "For people in meditation the most important thing is that the nostrils<sup>1</sup> be right; then the eyes must be thoroughly clear. Then it's important to realize the source and understand the explanation, and after that capability and its actualization are equally realized—only then can you enter among enlightened ones and demons as well, where oneself and others succeed together at once." What does it mean?

When the nostrils are right, everything is right. It is like a man in a house; if the master is upright, his family is naturally influenced. But how can you get your nostrils straight? An ancient sage said, "Certainty does not drift into a second thought; only therein you can enter the gate to our school." Did he not set an example for you that was before the birth of your parents?

Although the man of old said that certainty does not drift into second thoughts, I dare ask you people, what is the first thought? Tonight at Eiheï I do not spare the effort to speak: I tell you, the ninety day period starts tomorrow; don't go beyond the rules—sitting on a cushion, with no other concerns, celebrating the great peace in empty silence all day long.

### AT THE END OF SUMMER RETREAT

Describing a circle in the air, he said,

This is an immeasurably great matter: all the enlightened ones of past, present and future comprehend this, the successive generations of ancestral teachers realized this, people searching out the way investigate this. If you can get it in your daily activities, you will actually go a step beyond the enlightened ancestors. Have you read how Zhao Zhou asked Daci, "What is the substance of wisdom?" Daci said, "What is the substance of wisdom?" Zhao Zhou laughed aloud. The next day as Zhao Zhou was sweeping the ground, Daci said,

"What is the substance of wisdom?" Zhao Zhou threw down the broom and laughed loudly. People, the meeting of two ancient buddhas, Zhao Zhou and Daci, is after all strange and remote; today we are about to dissolve the retreat—how will you assess it? Yesterday a feast, today a bowl of gruel. But say, were those ancients the same, or different? (a long pause) If Daci had asked again, it would renew Zhao Zhou's laughter again. You have been standing for a long time, compassionate ones; please take care.

### ON A WINTER NIGHT

When the great achievement is perfected, born in one day, myriad things return to the source—then you see what is precious. That is why it is said, "All the worlds are one of your eyes—all worlds are yourself, all worlds are your aura; all worlds are a gate of liberation. Where do you not realize enlightenment? Where do you not explain what is what and guide people?" And haven't you heard it said that the Guardian of Enlightenment<sup>2</sup> didn't come down from the heaven of satisfaction—the single sphere is everywhere.<sup>3</sup>

### ON THE WINTER SOLSTICE

The informal talk is a tradition of the buddhas and enlightened ancestors. We have never heard of it being practiced in Japan in former times—we at Eihei have transmitted this for the first time, doing it for twenty years now.

The ancestral teacher Bodhidharma came from the west and the true teaching entered China; and the ancestral teachers of former ages called this the family custom—not to practice what the buddhas and ancestors did not practice, not to wear anything that is not the robe of righteousness of the buddhas and ancestors, to give up fame and profit, abandon the sense of others and self, to live, secluded in mountains and valleys, never leaving meditation communes, to treasure a little bit of time as most valuable, not worrying about things, but concentrate wholly on understanding the way—this is the tradition of the buddhas and ancestors, the eye of humans and gods. But to be a good teacher it is necessary to practice for immeasurable aeons. People, do you want to see an immeasurable aeon? (he snapped his fingers) Just this is it. Can you say it is inherent? Can you say it is cultivated? If you can see here, this is time passing, years changing,

when winter ends spring returns—occupying the ten directions, mystically penetrating past, present and future, the old year actually doesn't go, the new year actually doesn't come. Coming and going don't mix—new and old are unrelated. Thus a monk asked Shimen "How is it when the year is ended?" Shimen said, "In the east village old Wong burns paper money offerings in the night." A monk asked Kaixian how it is when the year is ended; Kaixian said, "As of old, early spring is still cold." Tonight if a monk asked me how it is at the end of the year, I would just say to him that in the village up ahead in the deep snow last night a twig sprouted. It's cold and you've been standing a long time.

### *Notes to Informal Talks*

1. The nostrils, the passage of breath, are very important in the physical aspects of meditation; the tuning of the mind to the breath, with the breath, is a basic 'exercise'—its importance is noted in Keizan's *Zazen Yojinki*, a translation of which appears later in this volume. Metaphorically, the nostrils represent the lifeline, which for buddhists is the *bodhicitta*, the heart, the spirit of enlightenment, the will to undertake acts only for the sake of the enlightenment and liberation of all beings.
2. The Guardian of Enlightenment is a translation of the name given to Shakyamuni when he was still a bodhisattva in Tusita, the heaven of satisfaction, or happiness, where great spiritual heroes live before appearing in this world as buddhas.
3. The word rendered as sphere means also *mandala*: myriad scenes in one scene, ultimately with no coming or going.

## TALKS FROM THE *Shobogenzozuimonki*

*'Record of things heard from the Treasury of the Eye of the True Teaching' made by Ejo based on Dogen's talks*

Student's first task should be to abandon your idea of your self. To abandon your idea of your self means that you should not be attached to this body.<sup>1</sup> Even if you have understood the sayings of the ancients and sit all the time like iron or stone, if you remain attached to this

body, it is impossible to attain the way of the buddhas and enlightened ancestors, even in myriad aeons over a thousand lifetimes. It should be needless to say that even if you have understood the provisional and true doctrines and the right teaching of the esoteric and exoteric meanings, if you have not given up the feeling of attachment to your bodily self, you are uselessly counting others' treasures without a halfpenny of your own.

I only ask that students sit quiet and examine the beginning and end of this body in a rational manner. Body, limbs, hair and flesh come from the cells of father and mother—once the breath stops they are strewn in the mountains and fields, eventually turning into mud; what can you hold onto as your bodily self? We can see this all the more from the point of view of elements; in the clustering and disintegration of eighteen elements,<sup>2</sup> what can you define as your body? Although inside the teachings and outside the teachings<sup>3</sup> differ, they are the same in considering the ungraspability of one's own body, its beginning or end, as a point to be aware of in the practice of the way. If you realize this principle, the true way of enlightenment is something obviously so.

If those who study the way do not attain enlightenment, it is because they keep their old views. Though nobody knows who taught them originally, they think that the mind is thought and discernment; if you tell them that the mind is grass and trees, they won't believe you. They think a buddha must have physical signs of greatness and distinction, with an aura of light; they are startled when it is said that buddha is tiles and pebbles. This attachment to views is not inherited from the father or taught by the mother; these ideas are just things you have come to believe for no reason just because you have been hearing people say so for so long.

Therefore, now, since it is the definitive teaching of the buddhas and ancestors, if they say that mind is grasses and trees, realize that grasses and trees are mind; if they say buddha is tile and pebbles, believe that tiles and pebbles are buddha; go on thus giving up your original convictions and attachments, you can attain the way.

An ancient said, "Though sun and moon are bright, floating clouds cover them; though clusters of flowers bloom, the autumn wind destroys them." This is quoted in the *Dengguan zhiyao*, 'essentials of the Dengguan government', as a metaphor for a wise king and evil



ministers. Now I say that though the clouds may cover, they won't last long; though the autumn wind ravages, they will bloom again. Even though the ministers be evil, if the wisdom and goodness of the king is more powerful, he won't be influenced. Now to concentrate on the way of enlightenment should also be like this; no matter how bad a state of mind you may get into, if you hold out over the long run, the floating clouds will disappear and the autumn wind will cease. That is a fact.

The actions of people of the path have some meaning to them, whether they are good or bad actions; they cannot be judged by ordinary standards. In ancient times the high priest Eshin one day had someone drive away a deer he had seen eating grass in the garden one day. Someone asked, "The master seems to have no compassion; would you hurt this animal by begrudging it some grass?" The high priest said, "It's not like that. If I didn't chase it away, this deer might eventually become used to humans and get killed when he runs into a vicious man."

So you can see that though it seemed cruel to drive away the deer, the fact was that came from his deep compassion.

### *Notes*

1. The word for 'body' also connotes social status and wealth, as well as 'self'.
2. The eighteen elements are the six senses, their fields, and their consciousnesses; these are considered to be relative reality in the consciousness-only schools of buddhism; on this relative reality is posited a fictional one, obscuring the real reality—relativity, or absence of selfness in anything—contained in the relative reality.
3. In the traditional chan-zen custom, schools based on scriptures are called teaching or doctrinal schools, in contrast to zen, the scriptureless school; however, there is a profounder sense of the distinction, in that what is outside the teachings refers to right now—what the ancients called the matter of today, progressive enlightenment, transcending the buddhas.

# *Biographies of Japanese Zen Masters*

## EJO OF EIHEI

The master's initiatory name was Ejo; he was styled Koun (Solitary Cloud). He was from Kyoto; his lay surname was Fujiwara and he was a descendant of the prime minister Tamekichi of the Kujo branch of that clan.

Ever since childhood he did not like to live in society; he first took Enno of Yokogawa as his teacher, shaved his head, put on monks' clothes, and was fully ordained. He studied the essentials of the scholastic schools, and gained a reputation. One day he lamented, "The four schools of Kusha (Abhidharmakosa), Jojitsu (Satyasiddhi), Sanron (Madhyamika), and Hosso (Vijnanavada and Dharmalaksana) are all studies of the compounded; the two doors of cessation and insight (Tendai) and pure land (buddha name remembrance) still do not exhaust the profound mystery."

Then he knew these were not the boat for leaving the world; so he gave them up and called on Kakuen at Tomine and asked about the teaching of seeing reality to realize buddhahood.<sup>1</sup> Kakuen esteemed him deeply as a vessel of Dharma.

Next he called on zen master Dogen at Kennin monastery. Dogen cited the saying "one hair pierces myriad holes" to question him closely. The master silently believed in Dogen and submitted to him. After that he had no desire to go anywhere else, so he changed his robe and stayed there.

Before long Dogen moved to Fukakusa and the master went along with him. He observed and investigated day in and day out, never careless in his actions. One day in the hall, just as he was setting out his bowl, he suddenly attained enlightenment. He immediately went with full ceremony into Dogen's room.<sup>2</sup> Dogen asked him, "What

have you understood?" Ejo said, "I do not ask about the one hair; what are the myriad holes?" Dogen laughed and said, "Pierced." Ejo bowed. Afterwards he asked to serve as Dogen's personal attendant, taking care of his robes and bowl. For twenty years he never left his seat beside Dogen, except for a dozen or so days when he was sick.

One day Dogen said to the master, "I first had you take care of monastery work because I wanted to make the teaching last. Although you are older than me, you will be able to spread my school for many years. Work on this." At this point the master Ejo began to expound the teaching too; as Dogen heard him speak, he explained the subtleties for him.

When Dogen died, the master Ejo succeeded him and led the congregation, with no sign of laziness or weariness day or night, in cold or heat. He took the bearing of the teaching of the school as his own responsibility, and the whole congregation, which never numbered less than fifty, gladly obeyed him. Great ministers and important officials came to him and paid obeisance. Henceforth the To succession<sup>3</sup> would flourish greatly.

Late in life he entrusted the teaching of Tettsu. Having personally transmitted his bequest and final teachings, he wrote a verse and died sitting.

The master Ejo was always strong and sturdy by nature, capable of austere practice. He used to lead followers out to Nakahama in the district to practice austerities and carry on the teaching.

## Notes

1. This refers to the Bodhidharma sect, started in Japan by Kakuen's teacher Dainichi Nonin, a Tendai monk who specialized in meditation according to the zen tradition transmitted by Saicho in the early ninth century.
2. Full ceremony means at least three bows before and after and proper manner of speech and physical deportment.
3. Geppa's collection of biographies refers to what we call Soto zen to the To succession, referring to Tozan (Dong Shan), the ancestor; Dogen's lineage was through Yunju (Ungo), not Cao Shan (Sozan), and Japanese tradition has it that the Cao (So) of Cao Dong (SoTo) comes from Caoqi (Sokei), a place name referring to the illustrious sixth patriarch of Chan, Huineng (Eno).

## GIKAI OF DAIJO

The zen master's initiatory name was Gikai; he was styled Tettsu. He was from Etchu, and his lay surname was Fujiwara. He was a distant descendant of the general Toshihito. When he was young he served Ekan at Hachaku temple as his teacher, and studied the three scriptures of the pure land teaching, the Surangama Scripture,<sup>1</sup> the teaching (of zen) of seeing reality, and others. After he was fully ordained he left and travelled around; first he called on Zen master Dogen at Fukakusa. He was strong and pure by nature—he worked at chores and practiced meditation every day, excelling all others. When he heard Dogen say in a lecture, "This truth abides in the state of objective reality; the features of the world are permanent<sup>2</sup>—in the spring scenery the hundred flowers are red; doves are crying in the willows," he suddenly had an insight.

Before long he moved to Eihei with Dogen; the master asked to be water steward, and personally carried water from Hakkyoku peak. He worked for the community for years. Because he was capable of hard work, Dogen appointed him chief cook and monastery supervisor at the same time. So day and night he took care of a hundred matters, without tiring; in between he worked on meditation even more than others in the community. Dogen called him a true worker on the way.

Later, when Ejo inherited the seat at Eihei, the master Gikai assisted him. One day when he went to the abbot's room, Ejo asked, "How do you understand the shedding of body and mind?" Gikai said, "I knew barbarians had red beards; here is another red bearded barbarian."<sup>3</sup> Ejo agreed with him. Subsequently Ejo used differentiating stories<sup>4</sup> of past and present to refine him thoroughly. After a long time at this he obtained the teaching.<sup>5</sup>

He aspired to cause the school to flourish, and eventually crossed the great waves to far off China. He travelled around there, observing the style of zen both east and west of the Che river,<sup>6</sup> seeing their halls and rooms and what was in them; he drew pictures of everything and came back. Ejo greeted him joyfully and abdicated his seat as abbot of the monastery to him. The master Gikai opened the hall and expounded the teaching, causing the school of Eihei to prosper greatly.

Later in life he changed Daijo teaching temple in Kaga into a zen monastery and dwelt there. The master was respectful and solemn in dealing with the community; his teaching style was most lofty, and everywhere they looked up to him, calling him the reviver of the To succession.

At the end he beat the drum and announced to the community that he had entrusted the teaching to Jokin. He also explained the process of conceiving the determination for enlightenment and travel for study. Finally he wrote a verse:

Seven upsets, eight downfalls, ninety-one years—  
 Reed flowers covered with snow,  
 Day and night the moon is full.

### Notes

1. This scripture has long been popular in Chinese chan circles, but Dogen did not approve of it.
2. This is a saying taken from the *Saddharmapundarikasutra*, the Lotus scripture, the section on methods of guidance.
3. This is from the sayings of Baizhang; it also appears in *Wumenguan (Mumonkan)* 2.
4. These are stories involving a shift, a point of transformation, activation, discriminating knowledge; these are given to students after they have passed through sayings such as "No," or just sitting with no thought or understanding.
5. This can mean he fully realized the import and application of the teaching, but it also seems to have come to mean the personal encounter in which not only are the perspective of teacher and disciple merged, but an explicit design or illustration is articulated, even using sometimes cryptic ancient zen writings as a basis, as a seal of the transmission of the oral tradition of the lineage.
6. This is the central coastal area of eastern China, containing large urban centers of the Sung dynasty, and large public monasteries.

## JOKIN OF EIKO

The zen master's initiatory name was Jokin; he was styled Keizan. He was entitled Zen Master with Enlightened Compassion; this was a



posthumous title granted by the emperor of the southern court. He was from Etchu, and his lay surname was Kubara.

When he was a child he took master Ejo as his teacher and shaved his head and put on monk's clothing. When zen master Gikai succeeded to the seat to lead the community at Eihei, the master Jokin served as Gikai's personal attendant, taking care of his robes and bowl. One time when he entered Gikai's room, Gikai asked him, "Can you bring forth the ordinary mind?" As Jokin tried to say something, Gikai hit him right on the mouth; Jokin was at a loss, and at this point his feeling of doubt blazed. One night as he was in the hall sitting in concentration, he suddenly heard the wind at the window and had a powerful insight. Gikai deeply approved of him. After a long time Gikai entrusted the teaching to Jokin, who finally succeeded to the seat at Daijo, having had for years the complete ability, transcending the teacher.

When he reopened the Eiko monastery of eternal light and lived there, lords and officials came to him when they heard of him; his influence was greatest in his time. One day he said to his student Meiho, "On the spiritual mountain there was a leader of the assembly (Mahakasyapa) who shared the teaching seat (with Shakyamuni Buddha); at Caoqi there were leaders of the assembly who shared the teaching. Here at Eiko today I too am making an assembly leader to take part in teaching." Then with a verse he bestowed the robe—"The flaming man under the lamp of eternal light—shining through the aeon's sky, the atmosphere is new. The jutting Peak of Brilliance\* is hard to conceal; his whole capability turns over, revealing the whole body."

Thereafter the master Jokin never drummed his lips (spoke much) to the assembly; late in life he changed the disciplinary monastery Soji into a zen place and stayed there. After a long time at it, he had had enough of temple business, so he gave the abbacy to Gazan, extending a collateral branch of the teaching. The master Jokin always liked to travel, so when he had retired from his duties he wandered around with a broken rainhat and a skinny cane, meeting people wherever he went, and crowds of people submitted to him.

\*This refers to Meiho.

*Keizan Jokin's Zazen Yojinki**What to be aware of in zazen, sitting meditation*

Zazen just lets people illumine the mind and rest easy in their fundamental endowment. This is called showing the original face and revealing the scenery of the basic ground. Mind and body drop off, detached whether sitting or lying down. Therefore we do not think of good or bad, and can transcend the ordinary and the holy, pass beyond all conception of illusion and enlightenment, leave the bounds of sentient beings and buddhas entirely.

So, putting a stop to all concerns, casting off all attachments, not doing anything at all, the six senses inactive—who is this, whose name has never been known, cannot be considered body, cannot be considered mind? When you try to think of it, thought vanishes; when you try to speak of it, words come to an end. Like an idiot, like an ignoramus, high as a mountain, deep as an ocean, not showing the peak or the invisible depths—shining without thinking, the source is clear in silent explanation.

Occupying sky and earth, one's whole body alone is manifest; a person of immeasurable greatness—like one who has died utterly, whose eyes are not clouded by anything, whose feet are not supported by anything—where is there any dust? What is a barrier? The clear water never had front or back, space will never have inside or out. Crystal clear and naturally radiant before form and void are separated, how can object and knowledge exist?

This has always been with us, but it has never had a name. The third patriarch, a great teacher, temporarily called it mind; the venerable Nagarjuna provisionally called it body<sup>1</sup>—seeing the essence and form of the enlightened, manifesting the bodies of all buddhas, this, symbolized by the full moon, has neither lack nor excess. It is this mind which is enlightened itself; the light of one's own mind flashes through the past and shines through the present. Mastering Nagarjuna's magic symbol, achieving the concentration of all buddhas, the mind has no sign of duality, while bodies yet differ in appearance. Only mind, only body—their difference and sameness are not the issue; mind changes into body, and when the body appears they are distinguished. As soon as one wave moves, ten thousand waves come following; the moment mental discrimination arises, myriad things

burst forth. That is to say that the four main elements and five clusters eventually combine, the four limbs and five senses suddenly appear, and so on down to the thirty-six parts of the body, the twelve fold causal nexus; fabrication flows along, developing continuity—it only exists because of the combining of many elements.

Therefore the mind is like the ocean water, the body is like the waves. As there are no waves without water and no water without waves, water and waves are not separate, motion and stillness are not different. Therefore it is said, "The real person coming and going living and dying—the imperishable body of the four elements and five clusters."<sup>2</sup>

Now zazen is going right into the ocean of enlightenment, thus manifesting the body of all buddhas. The innate inconceivably clear mind is suddenly revealed and the original light finally shines everywhere. There is no increase or decrease in the ocean, and the waves never turn back. Therefore the enlightened ones have appeared in the world for the one great purpose of having people realize the knowledge and vision of enlightenment. And they had a peaceful, impeccable subtle art, called zazen, which is the state of absorption that is king of all states of concentration. If you once rest in this absorption, then you directly illumine the mind—so we realize it is the main gate to the way of enlightenment.

Those who wish to illumine the mind should give up various mixed-up knowledge and interpretation, cast away both conventional and buddhist principles, cut off all delusive sentiments, and manifest the one truly real mind—the clouds of illusion clear up, the mind moon shines anew. The Buddha said, "Learning and thinking are like being outside the door; sitting in meditation is returning home to sit in peace." How true this is! While learning and thinking, views have not stopped and the mind is still stuck—that is why it is like being outside the door. But in this sitting meditation, zazen, everything is at rest and you penetrate everywhere—thus it is like returning home to sit in peace.

The afflictions of the five obscurations<sup>3</sup> all come from ignorance, and ignorance means not understanding yourself. Zazen is understanding yourself. Even though you have eliminated the five obscurations, if you have not eliminated ignorance, you are not a buddha or an ancestor. If you want to eliminate ignorance, zazen to discern the path is the most essential secret.

An ancient said, "When confusion ceases, tranquility comes; when

tranquility comes, wisdom appears, and when wisdom appears reality is seen." If you want to put an end to your illusion you must stop thinking of good and bad and must give up all involvement in activity; the mind not thinking and the body not doing is the most essential point. When delusive attachments end, illusion dies out. When illusion dies out, the unchanging essence is revealed and you are always clearly aware of it. It is not absolute quiescence, it is not activity.

Hence you should avoid all arts and crafts, medical prescription and augury, as well as songs and dance and music, disputation, meaningless talk, and honor and profit. Though poetry and song can be an aid to clarifying the mind, still you should not be fond of making them; to give up writing and calligraphy is the superior precedent of the people of the way, the best way for harmonizing the mind.

You should not be attached to either fine clothing or dirty rags. Fine clothing instigates greed, and there is also the fear of theft—therefore it is a hindrance to someone on the way. To refuse it when someone gives it for some reason is a praiseworthy act exemplified from ancient times. Even if you happen to have fine clothing, still don't be concerned about taking care of it; if thieves take it, don't chase after it or regret the loss. Old dirty clothes, washed, mended, and completely cleaned, should be worn; if you don't get rid of the dirt you'll get cold and become sick—this too causes obstruction on the way. Although we are not to be anxious for our lives, if clothing, food, and sleep are not sufficient, this is called the three insufficiencies, and are all causes of regression.

Any living things, hard things, and spoiled things—impure food—should not be eaten; with gurgling and churning in the belly, heat and discomfort of body and mind, there will be difficulty in sitting. Do not indulge in attachment to fine food—not only will your body and mind be uncomfortable, but it means you are still greedy. You should take enough food just to support life; don't savor its taste. If you sit after having eaten your fill it can cause illness. After big or small meals, don't sit right away; rather, wait a while before sitting. In general, mendicant monks should be moderate in eating; that means to limit their portions, eat two parts of three and leave one part. All usual medicaments, sesame, wild yams; etc., can be eaten. This is the essential technique of tuning the body.

When sitting in *zazen*, do not lean against any wall, meditation



brace or screen. Also don't sit in a windy place or up on a high exposed place. These are causes of illness. When sitting in meditation, your body may seem hot or cold, uneasy or comfortable, sometimes stiff, sometimes loose, sometimes heavy, sometimes light, sometimes startled awake. This is all because the breath is not in tune and needs to be tuned. The way of tuning the breath is as follows: open your mouth, letting the breath be, long or short, gradually harmonizing it; following it for a while, when a sense of awareness comes, the breath is then in good tune. After that let the breath pass naturally through the nose.

The mind may seem to sink away or float off, sometimes it seems dull, sometimes it seems sharp. Sometime you see through outside the room, sometimes you can see through your body, sometimes you see forms of buddhas or bodhisattvas. Sometimes you comprehend scriptures or treatises. Extraordinary things like this are diseases from lack of harmony between awareness and breath. When they happen, sit with the mind resting in the lap. If the mind sinks into torpor, rest your mind between your eyes on your hairline (three inches above the center of the eyebrows). If your mind is distracted and scattered, rest your mind on the tip of your nose and your lower belly (one and a half inches below the navel). When sitting all the time rest the mind in the left palm. When you sit for a long time, though you do not force the mind to be calm, it will naturally not be scattered.

Now as for the ancient teachings, though they are traditional lessons for illuminating the mind, don't read, write or listen to them too much—too much causes disturbance to the mind. In general, anything that wears out body and mind can cause illness. Don't sit where there are fires, floods, or bandits, or by the sea, near wineshops, brothels, or where widows, virgins, or singing girls are. Don't hang around kings, important officials, powerful people, or people full of lust or eager for name and fame, or tellers of tales. As for mass buddhist services and large construction projects, though they are good things, people who are concentrating only on sitting should not do them.

Don't be fond of preaching and teaching, for distraction and scattered thoughts come from this. Don't take delight in crowds or seek for disciples. Don't study or practice too many things. Don't sit where it is extremely bright or dark, extremely cold or hot, or around roustabouts and playgirls. You can stay in a monastery where there is a real teacher, deep in the mountains and hidden valleys. Green waters



and verdant mountains are the place to walk in meditation; by the streams, under the trees are places to clear the mind. Observe impermanence, never forget it; this urges on the will to seek enlightenment.

A sitting mat should be spread thick for comfortable sitting, and the place of practice should be clean—always burn incense and offer flowers: the good spirits who guard the true teaching, as well as buddhas and bodhisattvas, will cast their shadows there and give protection. If you place an image of a buddha, bodhisattva, or saint there, no evil demon or spirit can get at you.

Always abide in great compassion, and dedicate the boundless power of sitting meditation to all living beings. Don't become proud, conceited or self-righteous—these are qualities of outsiders and ordinary people. Remember the vow to end afflictions, the vow to realize enlightenment. Just sitting, not doing anything at all, is the essential technique for penetrating zen. Always wash your eyes and feet (before zazen). With body and mind at ease, behaviour harmonious, abandon worldly feelings and don't cling to feelings of the way.

Although one should not begrudge the teaching, don't speak about it unless you are asked—then hold your peace for three requests, comply if there is a fourth request in earnest. Of ten things you would say, leave off nine. Mold growing around the mouth, like a fan in winter, like a bell hung in the air, not questioning the wind from all directions—this is characteristic of people in the way. Just go by the principle of the teaching:<sup>4</sup> don't care about the person; go by the path and do not congratulate yourself—this is the most important point to remember.

Zazen is not concerned with teaching, practice, or realization, yet it contains these three aspects. That is to say, the criterion of realization depends on enlightenment—this is not the spirit of zazen. Practice is based on genuine application—this is not the spirit of zazen. Teaching is based on eliminating evil and cultivating goodness—this is not the spirit of zazen. Although teaching is established within zen, it is not ordinary teaching; it is direct pointing, simply communicating the way, speaking with the whole body. The words have no sentences or phrases; where ideas are ended the reason exhausted, one word comprehends the ten directions. And yet not a single hair is raised—is this not the true teaching of the buddhas and enlightened ancestors?

And although we speak of practice, it is practice without any doing. That is to say, the body doesn't do anything, the mouth does not recite anything,<sup>5</sup> the mind does not think anything over, the six senses are naturally pure and clear, not affected by anything. This is not the sixteen-fold practice of the buddhist disciples<sup>6</sup> or the twelve-fold practice of those enlightened through understanding of causality,<sup>7</sup> or the six ways of transcendental practice undertaking myriad actions done by bodhisattvas;<sup>8</sup> not doing anything at all, it is therefore called buddhahood, the state of enlightenment.

Just resting in the absorption self-experienced by all enlightened ones, roaming at play in the four peaceful and blissful practices of bodhisattvas,<sup>9</sup> is this not the profound, inconceivable practice of buddhas and ancestors?

Though we may speak of realization, this is realization without realization, this is the absorption in the king of concentration, the state of awareness in which you discover knowledge of birthlessness, all knowledge, and spontaneous knowledge;<sup>10</sup> it is the gate of illumination through which the wisdom of the realized ones<sup>11</sup> opens up, produced by the method of practice of great east. It transcends the patterns of holy and ordinary, goes beyond the sense of confusion and understanding; is this not the realization of innate great enlightenment?

Also zazen is not concerned with discipline, concentration, or wisdom, but contains these three studies. That is, discipline is to prevent wrong and stop evil; in zazen we see the whole substance as non dual, cast aside myriad concerns and lay to rest all entanglements. Not concerned with the buddhist way or the worldly way, forgetting feelings about the path as well as mundane feelings, no affirmation or denial, no good or bad—what is there to prevent or stop? This is the formless discipline of the mind ground.

Concentration means undivided contemplation; in zazen we slough off body and mind, abandon confusion and understanding, immutable and imperturbable, not acting, not befuddled, like an idiot, like a dunce, like a mountain, like an ocean, no trace of either motion or stillness arises—concentrated without any sign of concentration, because there is no form of concentration, it is called great concentration.

Wisdom is discerning comprehension; in zazen knowledge disappears of itself, mind and discriminating consciousness is forever forgotten. The wisdom eye throughout the body has no discernment, but

clearly sees the essence of buddhahood; fundamentally unconfused, cutting off the conceptual faculty, open and clearly shining all the way through, this is wisdom without any sign of wisdom; because it has no sign of wisdom it is called great wisdom.

The teachings expounded by the buddhas in their lifetimes are all contained in discipline (morality), concentration (meditation), and wisdom (knowledge); in this zazen, there is no discipline that is not maintained, no concentration that is not cultivated, no wisdom that is not realized. Vanquishing demons, attaining the way, turning the wheel of the true teaching and returning to extinction, all depend on this power. Supernormal powers and their inconceivable functions, emanating light and expounding the teaching are all in the act of sitting. Investigation of zen also is sitting in zazen.

If you want to sit in meditation, first find a quiet place and lay a thick cushion; do not let wind or smoke, rain or dew in. Keep a clear place to sit, with enough room for your knees. Although there were people who sat on diamond seats or boulders in ancient times, they all had sitting cushions. Where you sit should not be light in the daytime or dark at night; it should be warm in winter and cool in summer—that's the technique.

Cast off mind, intellect, and consciousnesses, cease recollection, thought, and observation. Don't aim at becoming a buddha, don't be concerned with right or wrong; value time, as though saving your head from burning. The Buddha sat upright, Bodhidharma faced a wall, single-minded, without any other concerns at all. Shishuang was like a dead tree, Rujing admonished against sleeping while sitting; "you can only succeed by just sitting, without need to make use of burning incense, prostrations, remembrance of buddha names, repentance ceremonies, reading scriptures or ritual recitations."<sup>12</sup>

Whenever you sit, you should wear a kashaya (kesa) (except during the first and last parts of the night when the daily schedule is not in effect)—don't neglect this. The cushion (twelve inches across, thirty-six in circumference) should not support the whole thighs—it should reach from midthigh to the base of the spine. This is the way the buddhas and patriarchs sat. You may sit in full or half lotus position; the way to sit in full lotus is to put the right foot on the left thigh, then put the left foot on the right thigh. Loosen your clothes and straighten them; next put your right hand on your left foot and your left hand on your right hand, with your thumbs together near the

body about the level of your navel. Sit up straight, without leaning to the left or right, front or back. The ears and shoulders, nose and navel, should be aligned. The tongue is kept on the roof of the mouth and the breath should pass through the nose. The mouth should be closed, while the eyes should be open, though not too widely or too slightly.<sup>13</sup> Having attuned your body in this way, breathe deeply through the mouth a couple of times. Next, sitting steady, sway your body seven or eight times, going from larger to smaller movements. Then sit upright and intent.

Now think of what doesn't think—<sup>14</sup>how to think of it? Not thinking. This is the essential method of zazen. You should break directly through afflictions and personally realize enlightenment. When you want to rise from stillness, first put your hands on your knees, sway your body seven or eight times, going from small to larger movements. Open your mouth and breathe out, put your hands on the ground and lightly rise from your seat.

Walk slowly, circling to the right or left. If torpor and sleepiness overcomes you while sitting, always move your body or open your eyes wide; also put your mind on your hairline between your eyebrows. If you still are not wakeful, rub your eyes or body. If that still doesn't wake you up, get up and walk around, always circling to the left. Once you have gone a hundred steps or so, your sleepiness should have vanished. The way to walk is to take a half step with each breath.<sup>15</sup> You walk as though not walking anywhere, silent and unmoving. If you still don't wake up after walking around like this, either wash your eyes and cool your forehead, or recite the preface to the precepts for bodhisattvas, or some such thing—just find some way not to fall asleep. You should observe that the matter of life and death is a great one, and impermanence is swift—what are you doing sleeping when your eye of the way is not yet clear? If torpor and drowsiness come over you repeatedly, you should pray, "My habits are deepseated, and that is why I am enshrouded by drowsiness—when will my torpor disperse? I pray that the buddhas and enlightened ancestors will be so compassionate as to remove my darkness and misery."

If your mind is scattered, fix your mind on the tip of your nose and lower belly and count your incoming and outgoing breaths. If that doesn't stop your distraction, then bring a saying to mind and keep it in mind to awaken you—for example, "What thing comes thus?" "A



dog has no enlightened nature." "When no thought arises, is there still any fault?—Mount Everest!" "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?—the cypress tree in the garden." Flavorless sayings like this are suitable. If (scattering distraction) still doesn't stop, sit and focus on the point where the breath ends and the eyes close forever, or else where the embryo is not yet conceived and not a single thought is produced; when the twin void<sup>16</sup> suddenly appears, the scattered mind will surely come to rest.

After coming out of stillness, when you carry on your activities without thinking, the present event is the public affair (koan); when you accomplish practice and realization without interfusion,<sup>17</sup> then the public affair is the present happening. That which is before any signs appear, the situation on the other side of the empty aeon, the spiritual capacity of all buddhas and patriarchs, is just this one thing. You should just rest, cease; be cool, passing myriad years as an instant, be cold ashes, a dead tree, an incense burner in an ancient shrine, a piece of white silk. This I pray.

### *Notes to Zazen Yojinki*

1. In an incident well known in zen circles, the fourteenth patriarch of zen, the Indian master Nagarjuna, once manifested the appearance of a circular figure, like the full moon, where he sat to expound the Dharma; the full moon represents the dharmakaya, or body of reality.
2. The body-mind is represented as being made up of organs and functions corresponding to the four gross elements: earth, water, fire, and air; since early times buddhists in India represented the being to be made up of five clusters: matter, sensation, perception, relational functions (including emotions, judgements, etc.), and consciousness.
3. The five obscurations, or coverings, of the mind in meditation are greed and lust, anger and hatred, folly and delusion, drowsiness, and excitement and regret.
4. This principle is one of the so-called 'four reliances'—to rely on the truth, not the person, which means that anyone can see reality and become enlightened if they go by the truth which is as it is because that is its real nature; it is not a question of human feelings. The other three reliances are to rely on the definitive teaching, not the incomplete teaching, to rely on the meaning and not the words, and to rely on wisdom, not conventional knowledge.



5. The way this is worded it could refer to mystic spells, and/or to silent recitation.
6. This refers to the sixteen stages of mind on the path of insight (*darsana-marga*) as defined in the *Abhidharmakosa*: they consist of the tolerance and knowledge of the corresponding truths of suffering, etc., in the 'higher' worlds of form and formlessness (eight more).
7. This refers to the application of the understanding of the twelve links of causality: ignorance, activity, consciousness, name and form, six senses, contact, sensation, desire, attachment, becoming, birth, old age and death. By removing one link the chain can be broken.
8. The six ways of transcendental practice are generosity without conception of giver, receiver, or gift; morality; tolerance; effort; meditation; and wisdom. These are transcendent in that their accomplishment is supposed to involve no sense of subject or object.
9. This refers to blissful and peaceful activities of body, mouth, and mind, and of carrying out vows. According to the Lotus scripture, for the body this means not associating with powerful aristocrats, with sorcerers, with criminals or prostitutes, with butchers, with followers of the vehicles of disciples or self-enlightened ones, desirous thoughts, with hermaphrodites, dangerous places, censured things, or keeping young children as acolytes; once one avoids these ten kinds of people or actions, one is at ease. As far as the mouth is concerned, it means not to indulge in talking about the errors of other people or the scriptures, not to belittle others, not to praise others, not to slander others, and not to be resentful. As far as mind is concerned, it means to avoid flattery, depredation, to avoid scorning those of small actions with one's own grandiose actions, and to avoid contention. Carrying out vows in peace and bliss means using the power of one's vow to rescue all beings to govern oneself.
10. Knowledge of the birthlessness, or nonorigination of all things, was sometimes understood to mean unborn knowledge, or knowledge that is natural and not fabricated. All knowledge is spoken of as general and particular; knowing universal relativity, and knowing the particular relations. Spontaneous knowledge is the knowledge that has no teacher, that doesn't come from without.
11. *Tathagata*, one who has realized thusness, is an epithet of a buddha.
12. This is a statement of *Rujing*, *Dogen's* teacher.
13. *Rujing* told *Dogen* that it was all right to close the eyes. A number of recommendations about meditation found in this little work seem to have come from *Rujing's* teaching.
14. This could be read think of the unthinkable, or think of what doesn't think; this is a famous saying of *Yaoshan*, a disciple of *Shitou* and one of the early ancestors of *Soto zen* in China.

15. The foot should be moved a distance equal to the length of the foot. This method of walking in meditation (*kinhin*) was taught to Dogen by Rujing.
16. This refers to the voidness of person and things.
17. Interfusion means nondifferentiation, so not interfusing means differentiation, each thing abiding in its characteristic state—so called 'mountain is mountain, river is river.'

### *Jokin's Esoteric Shobogenzo*

*Compiled by Keizan Jokin*

#### CITATION I:

At the assembly on Vulture Peak, before hundreds of thousands of beings, The World-Honored One raised a flower and blinked his eyes. Mahakasyapa broke into a smile. The World-Honored One said, "I have the treasure of the eye of the true teaching, the inconceivable mind of nirvana, the formless adamantine form, and the subtle, ineffable teaching of truth. It is communicated outside of doctrine and does not establish verbal formulations. Today I personally entrust this to Mahakasyapa. Continue to teach in my stead." And he also commended Ananda to transmit it as it is, continuing from successor to successor without letting it be cut off.

#### JOKIN'S REFLECTIONS:

At the meeting on the holy mountain long ago, all without exception were the circumstance of this "raising a flower" and "smiling." Just as the World-Honored One raised the flower, what was the circumstance? And when Kasyapa smiled, what was the circumstance?

If one perceives it directly, past and present are simultaneously penetrated. One may say, "Without relying on today's situation, how can one speak of last night's dream?"

Later the zen teacher Seiryō of Mt. Kei said, "The World-Honored One had a secret saying—spring lingers on the ancient ford; Kasyapa did not keep it hidden—falling flowers float on the stream."

Also zen master Chikan of Setcho said, "The World-Honored One had a saying, but Kasyapa did not keep it hidden; a night of flowers falling in the rain, water is fragrant throughout the city."

These are models of men of old citing the ancient to illumine the

present. I ask you people; at that time, what flower did he raise? What flower did he smile at? Say it straight out now! (Striking a blow) You've stumbled past. Do you understand? There is only one indestructible esoteric body, wholly manifest in the dusts. Look!

#### CITATION II:

Ananda asked the venerable Kasyapa, "Elder brother, you received the golden robe of The World-Honored One; what else was transmitted besides this?"

Venerable Kasyapa said, "Ananda!"

Ananda responded.

Venerable Kasyapa said, "Take down the monastery banner."

Ananda greatly awakened.

#### JOKIN'S REFLECTIONS:

Kasyapa calls "Ananda!" Immediately it is perfectly clear; do not harbor any doubt or hesitation. Ananda responds; what sound is this in actuality? If one awakens on the spot, what would there be of any of this?

A man of old said, "Elder brother calls and younger brother replies, revealing the shame of the house; not the province of night and day, this is a separate spring."

As soon as Kasyapa calls Ananda, he is off the track; the immediate reply is off the track. At this very moment, how do you understand?

(Striking) What season is this? Do you understand? It's right at hand; immediately concentrate your eye and see. Investigate!

#### CITATION III:

Emperor Bu of Ryo asked the great master Bodhidharma, "What is the highest meaning of the holy truths?"

The great teacher said, "Empty; nothing is holy."

The Emperor said, "Who is replying to me?"

The great teacher said, "I don't know."

The Emperor did not understand.

#### JOKIN'S REFLECTIONS:

"Empty; nothing is holy" does not establish real or provisional, does not discuss doctrine or contemplation. Even the buddhas of the three

times cannot see it; even the six generations of patriarchs could not transmit it. This is the time when the land is quiet.

And it was said, "Who is replying to me?" A good scene, but do you see? The great teacher said, "I don't know." Why does he not know? Not knowing is the public affair that is now manifest. As for the "manifestation," mountains are really mountains, rivers are really rivers. Wrong! Mountains cannot know mountains, rivers cannot know rivers. Like so the Wholy Body manifests; there is no further entry point.

And ultimately? "I only allow The Old Barbarian's knowledge: I do not allow his understanding." Investigate!

#### CITATION IV:

A monk asked zen master Gyoshi of Seigen, "What work does not fall into stages?"

The master said, "Even the holy truths are not practiced."

The monk bowed.

#### JOKIN'S REFLECTIONS:

The place clear, the time obvious, there are no stages or tracks. Leave it to fate, leave it to fate, always like this.

Sekito made a verse in praise of Yakusan:

Though we've been dwelling together, I don't know his name;  
Abandoned to fate, we go along as ever.

Even the great sages since the remote past do not know him;  
How could the later rabble understand him?

If you would understand the words, "Even the noble truths are not carried out," you should seek out the intent of this verse.

Ultimately, how is it? "A patchrobed monk sits with shrouded head, not knowing aught of cool or warmth." Investigate!

#### CITATION V:

Our ancestor, the great teacher Gohon of Tozan, asked Ungan, "Who can hear inanimate objects preaching the Dharma?"

Ungan said, "The inanimate can hear."

Tozan said, "Why do I not hear?"

Ungan raised his whisk and said, "Do you hear?"

Tozan said, "I do not hear."

Ungan said, "You do not even hear my preaching; how could you hear the preaching of the inanimate?"

Tozan thereupon had an insight; he then chanted a verse:

Wonderful! Wonderful!

The sermon of the inanimate is inconceivable:

If one uses the ears to hear, it will be after all impossible to understand;

Only by hearing with the eyes can one know.

#### JOKIN'S REFLECTIONS:

This is the time of great awakening and thorough penetration. If you hear Mount An discussing wisdom, how could you doubt Mount Ju's talk of true suchness? The pillar and the lamp are also thus.

At the time that the inanimate preach the Dharma, what are the circumstances? If you understand, then communities are preaching, beings are preaching, all in the three times are simultaneously preaching. They are always preaching, clearly preaching, without pause.

Layman Toba studied with Shogaku and gained entry into the way, whereupon he expressed his inner experience:

The sound of the valley is an immense tongue;  
Is not the color of the mountains the pure body?  
Since evening, eighty-four thousand verses—  
How could I recite them to others?

Already he has cited them all. Also he said,

The valley sound; an immense tongue:  
The mountain colors; a pure body.  
Eighty-four thousand verses;  
Later I recite them to others.

Before he said, "How to express them to others?" Here he says, "I express them to others." Are these the same or different? If one can hear the content of the sermon of the inanimate, it rests with him; where does he not express to others?

Tell me, how is it when one hears it expressed to people? Ungan and Tozan, Shogaku and Toba, have their nostrils pierced all at once.



But do you understand? (Silence) Speechless speech is true speech. Investigate!

#### CITATION VI:

Zen master Hakuun Doju asked a monk, "Speaking, silent, not speaking, not silent; wholly so, wholly not so'—how do you reply?" The monk had no answer. The master then hit him.

#### JOKIN'S REFLECTIONS:

Speech, silence, motion, stillness; wholly so, wholly not so. Outside this group, in what manner could one respond? The monk did not reply—"who knows the law fears it." After all, he has realized a little bit. As the first blow of the staff, the effort was not made in vain.

I ask you people, when the six senses are inoperative and the seven consciousnesses are not present, what will you use to answer? Why do you not bow and leave?

Kyogen's story of 'up in a tree' may also be seen in the same way as the phrase beyond the six propositions. If you can express the matter of the tree, then you understand the single phrase beyond the six propositions.

But say; without setting up either 'the tree top' or 'that which is beyond the six propositions,' coming directly to this point here, how will you turn around and show some life? (striking) Look!

(Note on Kyogen's story: he said, "Suppose a man climbs a tree and is holding on to a branch with his mouth, his hands not holding any limb, his feet not standing on the trunk: under the tree there is someone who asks about the reason why Bodhidharma came from the West; if (the man in the tree) doesn't answer, he is ignoring the question, but if he does answer, he still loses his body and life. At this moment, how would you answer?" The 'six propositions' are speech, silence, etc., as mentioned in the citation.)

#### CITATION VII:

Zen master Goso asked a monk, "The girl Sei split her spirit; which one is real?" The monk had no reply.

#### JOKIN'S REFLECTIONS:

This is the situation which is beyond the reach of 'lord and vassal,' 'biased and true.' It is not the wonderful principle of the zen way or of the buddhist teaching.

If one is already two, how could they be one? If you say the two are one, why are there two? Try to say which is real.

Shakyamuni Buddha manifests a hundred-thousand million emanation bodies; the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara is endowed with so many hands and eyes: are they the same or different?

Thus it is said, "Above to the summit of the heavens, below to the deepest hells, all is as yellow gold." Thus there are no signs of self and others, of society and individual. Such is this situation; which is Shakyamuni, which is Avalokitesvara?

Also, Manjusri spent summer retreat in the wineshops, brothels, and butcher shops: Kasyapa, wanting to drive him away, reached for him with a staff when suddenly he saw hundreds of millions of billions of Manjusris. Shakyamuni said, "Kasyapa, which Manjusri would you drive out?" Kasyapa had no reply. This is the same situation: which is Manjusri? Which is Kasyapa? Which is the real one? Try to say.

There's an echo in Shakyamuni's words when he says, "Which Manjusri would you drive out?" If you can understand this saying, then you should be able to see the saying "Sei split her spirit." Goso's "Debt of gratitude to the elixir of eternal life" is based on this saying.

Therefore it is said, "Before me, no you; here, no me." Why is it like this? Because mind and body are one suchness. A living man's tongue is a dead man's mouth; a dead man walks on a living man's road. At this moment it is indescribably perfect; it is not concealing or revealing. Illuminating the whole body, alive and unconstrained; the great function is not in the image of man—behold its visage, clearly manifest; there is no buddha way, no patriarchal path. Knowledge of all knowledge, pure and clear, absolutely unique, it is without duality and without separation, because it has no gap.

Ultimately how is it? The girl Sei split her spirit; which is the real one? Investigate!

(Note: This koan refers to the story of a young woman named Sei who took to a sickbed when her betrothed went away without her. As her betrothed was going, however, he saw Sei coming after him; thus reunited, they spent five years together before the man decided to return. When they got back, the man found that Sei had been seen lying on her sickbed for these five years: when he brought the 'Sei' he had been living with to the sickbed where the pining 'Sei' lay, the two 'Sei's merged into one. Goso asks, "Which is the real one?")

## CITATION VIII:

The zen master Tokusan Senkan one day left the hall carrying his bowl. Seppo saw him and said, "Old man, the bell has not yet rung, the drum not yet sounded; where are you going with your bowl?"

Tokusan lowered his head and returned to his abbot's quarters.

Seppo brought this up to Ganto, who said, "That Tokusan has after all not yet understood the last word."

Tokusan had his attendant summon Ganto, whom he asked, "You do not agree with this old monk?"

Ganto silently expressed his meaning; Tokusan said nothing.

## JOKIN'S REFLECTIONS:

Tokusan just accepts the flow, being as is. Ganto and Seppo scatter rubbish in the eye; playing at being adept, they turn out inept.

Tokusan lowered his head and returned to his abbot's room; what contrivance is there in this? If you try to approach it in terms of inside and outside, dependent and true, subject and object, or guest and host, you have not even seen it in dreams. Carrying the bowl, lowering the head, returning to the room—what ease or difficulty is there?

Seppo once said to his congregation, "We meet at the inn in Bo province, we meet at the Raven Peak, we meet in front of the monks' hall." Hofuku asked Gacho, "I do not ask about the monks' hall; as for the inn in Bo province or the Raven Peak, where do we meet?" Gacho ran hurriedly back to his abbot's quarters; Hofuku thereupon went into the monks' hall. This is the time. What doctrine is this?

Where there is not the slightest breath, if you can understand this story, then you will see the story about Tokusan carrying his bowl.

Ultimately how is it? Be uniformly equanimous; of itself it disappears without a trace.

Also I say "Wrong!" There is still the final word. How do you see it? Investigate!

## CITATION IX:

Zen master Gyozan Ejaku was asked by a monk, "Can the Dharma-body also expound the Dharma?"

Gyozan said, "I cannot expound it, but there is another who can."

The monk said, "Where is the one who expounds the Dharma?"

Gyozan pushed forward a pillow.

Isan (Gyozan's teacher) heard of this and remarked, "Mr. Ejaku is bringing out the action of a sword."

#### JOKIN'S REFLECTIONS:

This monk was not anxious for his life under the sword; he brought up a question. and Gyozan didn't slip with his sword—he cut off the man's head before he knew it.

Just when he pushes the pillow forward, there is a unique subtlety; can it be considered the one who replies? Or can it be considered a pillow? Can it be considered the act of pushing forward? Here, how will you understand? I push forth a cushion; do you people really see? (Making a whistling sound) Like this! Investigate!

#### CITATION X:

Zen master Kassan Zenne was asked by a monk, "What is the way?"

Kassan said, "The sun floods the eye; not a fleck of cloud for ten thousands miles."

The monk said, "I do not understand."

Kassan said, "In the clear water, the wandering fish deludes itself."

#### JOKIN'S REFLECTIONS:

The One Great Matter has always been manifest; do not seek enlightenment, for fundamentally there is no illusion. Lucid, without obscurity, everywhere perfectly obvious; why do you not understand? People of today are as if riding an ox in search of an ox.

A monk asked Haryo, "What is the way?" Haryo said, "A clear-eyed man falls into a well." If the eye is clear, one should see the road and go directly on; why fall into a well? If you understand this story, then you will see the koan saying "In the clear water, the meandering fish deludes itself."

Do you understand? The sky is clear, there is no rain; why do you not see the sun and moon? Investigate!

I have cited ten examples of the acts of the ancient worthies; pass through them one by one.

The first, the story of raising the flower and smiling, is the setting of the one great concern of all buddhas of the three times.

The second, the story of the banner before the monastery, is the model of the enlightenment of all the patriarchs.

The third, the story of emptiness and not knowing, is the subtlety which the patriarchs and buddhas neither transmit nor receive.

The fourth, the story of not even practicing the holy truths, is the point to which the historical patriarchs actually attained.

The fifth, the story of the sermon of the inanimate, is the beginning of our ancestor's understanding mind and awakening to the way.

The sixth, the story of one expression outside of the six propositions, is that which all monks in the world can neither swallow nor spit out.

The seventh, the girl Sei separating her spirit, is the power of intrepid zeal of all buddhas and all patriarchs.

The eighth, leaving the hall with bowl in hand, is the ancient's way of letting go and accepting the flow.

The ninth, the story of the pillow, is the ancient worthies' method of not grabbing the sword and cutting the hand.

The tenth, the story of not understanding the way, is the aspect of the ancients extending their hands to save those enshrouded by ignorance.

## SOSEKI OF SOJI

The zen master's initiatory name was Soseki; he was styled Gazan. He was from Noto prefecture, and his lay surname was Minamoto; he was a descendant of the great councillor Reizei. His mind was exceptionally keen, and his clear countenance was extraordinary.

As a youth he gave up lay life and climbed right up to Mount Hiei, where he set up an altar and received the precepts. He often went to lectures and studied thoroughly the essentials of the school of Tendai. When he happened to meet zen master Keizan at Daijo monastery, Keizan saw at once that he was a vessel of truth, so he said to him, "A fine vessel of dharma; why don't you change your vestments and investigate zen?" The master Gazan said, "I have a mother and I fear she would lack support (if I did so)." Keizan said, "In ancient times Sanavasa gave up a whole continent to enter our school; how can you



neglect the way of the greatest teaching for a petty mundane duty?" Then he took off his outer robe and gave it to Gazan, who joyfully accepted it with a bow.

Then he went along with Keizan when he moved to Soji monastery. He was wholehearted and sincere at all times, never once straying. One day when Keizan got up in the hall to speak, the master Gazan came forward from the assembly and asked, "Why is it hard to speak of the place where not a breath enters?" Keizan said, "Even speaking of it does not say it." The master had a flash of insight; as he was about to open his mouth, Keizan said, "Wrong." Scolded, Gazan withdrew; after this his spirit of determination soared far beyond that of ordinary people. One night as Keizan was enjoying the moon along with Gazan, he said, "Do you know that there are two moons?" Gazan said, "No." Keizan said, "If you don't know there are two moons,\* you are not a seedling of the To succession."

At this the master increased his determination and sat crosslegged like an iron pole for years. One day as Keizan passed through the hall he said, " 'Sometimes it is right to have Him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes; sometimes it is right not to have Him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes.' " " " " At these words the master Gazan was greatly enlightened. Then with full ceremony he expressed his understanding. Keizan agreed with him and said, "After the ancients had gotten the message, they went north and south, polishing and chipping day and night, never complacent or self-conceited. From today you should go call on (the teachers) in other places."

Gazan bowed and took his leave that very day. At all the monasteries he visited he distinguished the dragons from the snakes.† After a long time of this he eventually returned to look in on Keizan. Keizan welcomed him joyfully and said, "Today you finally can be a seedling of the To succession." The master Gazan covered his ears.

Keizan said, "I am getting feeble and am depending on a hand from you to hold up a broken sand bowl;" then he transmitted the teaching

\*The moon is the symbol of reality. Traditionally 'middle path' buddhism provisionally distinguishes two levels of reality, conventional (social) and ultimate ('emptiness').

\*\*This is a saying of Shitou.

†Dragons are great meditation adepts; snakes are those that resemble 'dragons' but aren't really; that is, Gazan saw who were the genuine knowers and who were the imitations.

to him. After the master had received it, he led the community at Soji. The monastery regulations were fully developed, modeled on the strict rules of Tiantong. Before long people from all walks of life came like clouds. Always surrounded by thousands of people, Gazan greatly expounded Soto zen.

Gazan Soseki had twenty-five enlightened disciples to whom he transmitted the Dharma; each spread the teaching in one region, and the influence of the school spread all over the country. At the end of his life he had Taigen inherit his seat, and also entrusted Tsugen with the sceptre of authority of the school. After he had imparted his last instruction to his various disciples Mutan, Daitetsu, Hobo, and the rest, he rang the bell, chanted a verse, and died.

His verse said,

Skin and flesh together  
Ninety-one years.  
Since night, as of old,  
I lie in the yellow springs of death.

## JAKUREI OF YOTAKU

The zen master's initiatory name was Jakurei; he was styled Tsugen. He was from Kyoto. He was orphaned as a child and was raised by his grandmother. He saw that he was physically unfit for worldly occupations, and climbed Mount Hiei to have his head shaved. His mind and appearance were outstanding and brilliant; he could understand scriptures at a glance. He deeply cultivated and refined the teachings (of Tendai buddhism) of cessation and insight. He had some doubt and set his mind on that which is beyond the teachings; so he left (Hiei) and called on zen master Gazan at Soji.

Gazan asked, "Where have you come from?" He said, "Mount Hiei." Gazan said, "What do you seek?" He said, "I have doubted the teaching of cessation and insight for a long time." Gazan said, "Don't indulge in imagination!" Tsugen's feeling of doubt flared up all the more, to the point where he forgot about eating and sleeping. Gazan knew he was a vessel of Dharma, and questioned him closely about the saying about shedding body and mind.

One morning the master Tsugen was suddenly enlightened and

said, "Old teacher, don't fool people!" Gazan said, "What truth have you seen?" He said, "Riding backwards on the buddha shrine, going out the main gate." Gazan agreed with this. After that Tsugen studied with Gazan for a very long time and understood all the stories of the past and present.

When the master Tsugen received the robe symbolizing the faith, he expounded the teaching at Yotaku and Ryusen monasteries; his fame in the way was honored beyond the seas, and crowds of people came and went ceaselessly. At that time the emperor Goenju of the Oan era sent down an edict granting Tsugen authority over the whole school throughout the land; because of this, the standards of Soto zen were strict everywhere.

The master was most high minded and didn't speak with people. He always stayed in one room and forgot all about society. One day he had a slight illness; he rang the bell and told the assembly, then admonished them, "People, you should end all entanglements and concentrate on understanding your own affair. On the other side, throw away useless words and letters; on this side, slough off evanescent honor and profit—wherever you are, be clean and free and you may be true seedlings of the To succession. Otherwise, you are not my disciples."

He asked for a brush and wrote a verse saying,

Coming and going in this world,  
A full seventy years;  
Here where I turn around,  
My feet tread upon the heavens.

Having written this, he died sitting peacefully.

## EMYO OF SAIJO

The zen master's initiatory name was Emyo; he was styled Ryoan. He was from Sagami prefecture. When he was young he left the world and went to Kencho monastery. He was great by nature and people who saw him cowered. It came to pass that he thought to himself, "In the investigation of zen, if one does not meet an enlightened teacher, one may get sidetracked and waste effort and trouble. I hear zen master Tsugen, the sixth generation of Eihei, has the power to help people

pull out the nails and stakes. Days and months fly by; why stick by a stump\* and remain in a little byway?" So he set out to Yotaku.

Tsugen's manner of teaching was extremely remote and inaccessible; a lot of people who came were not allowed to enter his room, and often had to "stay with their hats on" for years. When the master Ryoan first got there, Tsugen asked, "Where have you come from?" He said, "Sagami." Tsugen said, "How far was the journey?" He said, "Over three hundred miles." Tsugen said, "How many sandals did you wear out?" He said, "I lost count." Tsugen hit him on the head and said, "I don't keep any rice bags like this around here." The master was greatly enlightened at these words and immediately expressed his understanding in verse. Tsugen gave him the seal of recognition and allowed him to enter the room. The whole community was amazed.

The next day Tsugen said in the teaching hall, "There is an iron-nose ox here who entered the room last night and had it out with this old monk." Then he got down from the teaching seat and put master Ryoan in the senior monk's seat. After a long time in that position, Ryoan received the robe of faith and eventually returned to Sagami. He began to teach at Saijo, and produced two people of like mind, Taiko and Mukyoku, and the influence of the Soto school flourished in eastern Japan.

Ryoan used to say to the community, "Zen folk, if you want to illumine your selves, you must succeed in doing so in the midst of all kinds of confusion and upsets; don't make the mistake of sitting dead in the cold ashes of a withered tree. When I was in the community of my late teacher, I lost my nostrils at the blow of a staff and have not found them to this day."

## MYOSHU OF DAIJI

The zen master's initiatory name was Myoshu, he was styled Taiko; there is no record of his family name. He first called on Ryoan Emyo

\*This refers to a well-known story of a man who saw a rabbit run into a stump and die, so he waited by the stump to catch another rabbit; this exemplifies someone who clings to a method or teaching, especially to verbal formulations, in hopes of attaining enlightenment.

at Saijo and asked, "What is an entry for the student?" Emyo said, "Come here." The moment Taiko approached, Emyo grabbed him and pushed him away, saying, "There is no way of entry for you here." As Taiko got up, the feeling of doubt suddenly arose; day or night he couldn't put it off.

Emyo knew secretly that Taiko was a vessel of dharma, and subsequently drove him out of the temple on the pretext that he had broken the rules. Taiko felt no resentment, but secretly borrowed a room near the monastery and hid there. For six years he was never forgiven, and just sat facing a wall day and night. His meditation work became increasingly refined, till he got to the point of forgetting to sleep or eat. One day as he stood beside a cowpen he suddenly had an insight; he immediately went to the abbot's quarters with full ceremony. Emyo hollered at him, "Who gave you permission to come inside the temple?" He said, "Here an entry is wide open." Emyo laughed and said, "A thief has broken down my door." The master bowed.

Thereafter the master Taiko served as Emyo's personal attendant, going deeper into the mystery every day. Late in life he began to teach at Daiji monastery, and before long his fame spread far and wide. The master was austere with the community, and never carelessly wasted even a cup of water. He cooked rice and sorted vegetables himself—people saw he had the will to lead a community, and they stayed there; there were never less than a thousand people surrounding his teaching seat.

Eventually Taiko "distributed the wellspring" of zen to fill twelve streams. On one occasion when he had a slight illness he beat the drum to call the community. When everyone had assembled, the master said, "My teaching is come to an end; I am making a bequest to you;" then he raised his staff, shouted once and died standing.

## SOSAN OF SAISHO

The zen master's initiatory name was Sosan; he was styled Goho. It is not known where he was born. As a man he was naturally good and wise and whenever he spoke it was something unusual. When he was fifteen he was sincerely bent on investigating zen; at that time he



used to visit zen master Taiko at Daiji monastery; every time he asked about the great matter, but Taiko did not reply at all—he only said, “Understand on your own.” For six or seven years he did not teach him anything in particular.

One morning as the master was at home sweeping up, his broom hit a rock and broke; he suddenly had insight. He went directly to tell Taiko about it, and Taiko acknowledged it. Subsequently Goho gave up lay life and was ordained, and served as the rice cooker. He was always pure and true, and never lay down.

One morning as Taiko passed by the kitchen and saw the master washing rice and putting it in the pot he asked, “The pot is made of iron, the rice is made of grain; what does this show?”\* The master said, “Let the pot be made of iron, let the rice be made of grain,” then he splashed water on the ground. Taiko deeply approved of him, and gave him the seal of recognition, predicting, “Our school will prosper with you; do not speak easily.” Then he gave him the robe of faith, which the master accepted with bowed head and left.

Later Goho began to teach at Saisho and greatly expounded the Soto school. He said, “The bamboo of the southern grooves, the wood of the northern lands; the vegetables of the east garden, the wheat of the west field; these are the real livelihood of patchrobed monks; how do you people understand yourselves?” After a long pause he said, “Just stretch out your legs on the long beach and sleep in peace; just have no concerns at all. If you are fellows who talk in your sleep with your eyes open, I’ll give you thirty blows of the staff.” Then Unshu came forward from the assembly and said, “You have already tasted a score of blows, teacher!” The master laughed aloud and got down from his seat.

## SORYU OF KOGON

The zen master’s initiatory name was Soryu; he was styled Unshu. He was from Izumo, and his family had been Shinto priests for generations and were wealthy. Once when he was a boy he happened to see

\*‘what’ here is literally ‘what side,’ meaning ‘this side,’ the mundane, or ‘that side,’ the transcendental.

a frog die as he crossed by a field with his father; he asked, "Why can't the frog jump?" His father said, "It's dead." He said, "Do people also die?" His father said, "Yes." He said, "How can it be avoided?" His father said, "I have heard that one who understands buddhism can escape it." He said, "I want to understand buddhism; how can I do so?" His father considered him unusual and thought that the boy was not ordinary and his determination could not be changed, so he put him in Gakuen temple and had him leave home and society (and become a monk).

Before he had reached the age of fifteen he determined to study zen; he travelled all over seeking certainty. Finally he called on master Sosan at Saisho; his expression of his state and his actions were fitting, and Sosan granted him the position of second-ranked monk and secretary. He studied with Sosan for years and intimately attained the mind seal. Later in life he began to teach at Kogan monastery; the true line of the To school continued unerring.

One evening he called his disciple Bun'ei to come to his room and instructed him, "Our path is transmitted by way of four kinds of guest and host: sometimes absolute, sometimes relative; sometimes both absolute and relative are illumined together, and sometimes absolute and relative both disappear." Then he poked the air with his finger and said, "This point is neither relative nor absolute; the buddhas and patriarchs since time immemorial cannot grasp it. Later on you will have broken thatch to cover your head; don't accept people too easily. I won't be around long." Then he bequeathed to him the robe and the teaching, wrote a verse, announced his illness and died after three days.

## BUN'EI OF TENNEI

The zen master's initiatory name was Bun'ei; he was styled Ikke. He first called on zen master Unshu at Kogan; as soon as Unshu saw him, he knew in himself that he was a vessel of Dharma. Unshu sent Bun'ei to work as cook. The master Bun'ei was completely earnest

in his daily activities. One day as Unshu passed by the kitchen he encountered the master sorting vegetables by himself. Unshu said, "How long have you been here?" He said, "Over a year." Unshu said, "Outside of sorting vegetables and washing rice, what work do you do?" He said, "I work at meditation." Unshu said, "What is the aim of your meditation?" He said, "I want to become a buddha." Unshu said, "What is the use of being a buddha?" Bun'ei was stirred up by this; he increased in determination and didn't sleep day or night.

Once it happened that when Unshu was in the teaching hall a monk asked, "What is the place where a patchrobed monk comes forth?" Unshu said, "Blow on willow fuzz and hairballs fly; when the rain hits the flowers, yellow butterflies fly." The master Bun'ei, standing by, was set free. That evening he went to the abbot's quarters in full ceremony; Unshu said, "The vegetable picker has finished with the great matter." The master bowed. After this he attended Unshu personally, continuing to inquire with utmost concentration.

When Unshu finally died, the master began to teach at Tennei. A monk came to call and asked, "What is the master's family style?" The master said, "On the meditating shadow the shoulders are as thin as bamboo; the spirit of the way is grand and solitary as a pine." The monk asked, "Suppose a guest comes; then what?" He said, "The tea is warm in the broken pot—you should drink it; the fragrance is gone from the cold oven—I am tired of cooking."

The master Bun'ei was a simple and direct man and didn't like ostentation; it was impossible to be familiar with him.

## KOKEN OF BANSHO

The zen master's initiatory name was Koken; he was styled Muteki. It is not known where he was from. He happened to visit zen master Bun'ei at Tennei; Bun'ei liked the master's simplicity and genuine sincerity. Their words and actions met together like a needle and a seed.\* The master then stayed and went back to the hall; he wrapped up his staff and bowl himself, hung them high on the wall and sat.

\*The image of needle and seed meeting is often used for the rare occasion of meeting of true master and true disciple.

Except for meals of gruel and rice at dawn and midday, and for answering the calls of nature, he never left his seat. Winter and summer alike he only wore a single robe; even in severe cold and muggy heat he never put on anything more or took anything off. He stayed for twenty years as though it were but a single day.

One evening Bun'ei called the master to come to him; he raised the robe of the teaching and said, "This was old Unshu's; I received it there by sorting vegetables and washing rice for the community. Now I am pressed for time and want to impart it to you; can I?" He said, "I am not such a man." Bun'ei said, "I esteem your not being such a man. Go away this very day, to where there are no tracks, pick out a man of the way and transmit it to the succeeding generation—do not let our teaching be cut off." Then he handed it over; the master assented.

After that Koken built a hut at the foot of Mount Fuji and lived there; he called it Bansho, "Myriad Pines." He shut off the road to the world and didn't cross the threshold of the gate for another twenty years. He wrote a poem,

Since coming to this reed hut  
 I have never looked for human hearths.  
 At noon I gather forest fruits,  
 In the evening I boil spring water.  
 Sewing clouds together, my cold patchwork robe is thick;  
 Gathering leaves, my old seat is tranquil.  
 The green and yellow colors beyond the eaves  
 Remind me of the passing year.

Late in life, after he entrusted the teaching to Eiko, he burned his hut and went away to no one knows where.

## EIKO OF CHOAN

The zen master's initiatory name was Eiko; he called himself Juten-min. He was from Bungo prefecture. He left society as a youth and always concentrated on the matter pertaining to his own self. When he was fifteen he went traveling; at every monastery he went to he

was praised and considered extraordinary. He called on over thirty teachers and understood the manner and character of all of them.

One day as he was passing through Suruga on his travels he happened to hear that zen master Koken was living in a hut below Mount Fuji. The master thought, "A monk travels in order to meet an enlightened teacher; why hesitate to go seek him out?" So he went looking for Koken, traveling ten difficult miles over the banks of rushing streams and past withered tree crags, finally reaching him.

When Koken saw Eiko arrive, he sat facing the wall in meditation. The master Eiko went up behind him, bowed and pleaded, "A disciple has come ten miles especially to pay obeisance to you, teacher; please be so compassionate as to face me." Koken didn't pay attention to him. The master said, "If you don't face me, I'll beat you to death." Koken still didn't turn around; the master Eiko knew he was a real man of knowledge. Then he thought up a ploy; he put his bundle under his arm and left—but once he was outside the gate he secretly returned and silently watched from behind the fence for Koken to come out of stillness. Koken, not realizing he had fallen for Eiko's scheme, eventually got up and went out; Eiko suddenly came out from behind the fence, whereat Koken, startled, rushed back inside. Eiko followed him and asked, "What is buddhism in the mountains?" Koken said, "From the beginning of the valley stream to the end, water is still water; north of the hut, south of the hut, mountains are mountains." Eiko believed and submitted to him without reservation; he bowed with full ceremony and pledged to wait on Koken, drawing water and gathering fruit. Day and night he served him closely for twelve years.

One day Koken said to Eiko, "I have a patchwork robe, coming apart at the seams, which weighs a thousand pounds; if you want to bear it, you must use all your strength in your arm. I am going; take it away." Then he gave the robe to Eiko. The master Eiko tearfully accepted it with a bow. Late in life, because of the insistent request of donors, he began to teach at Choan; crowds of people came to him from all over.

Eiko always taught the community, "In investigating zen it is necessary to meet an enlightened teacher; once you meet an enlightened teacher, you must focus your mind undividedly for months and years.



If you casually wear out sandals traveling over river and lake, when will you ever be done?"

## GENSAKU OF TOCHO

The zen master's initiatory name was Gensaku; he was styled Ryo-shu. Neither the circumstances of his birth nor his early studies are recorded. When he was traveling he heard of zen master Eiko's fame in the way and went specially to call on him. Eiko assigned him to attend to (Eiko's) cloth and bowl; he always worked earnestly and investigated thoroughly and carefully. One day Eiko tested him with the saying about the ox going through the window lattice;\* the master was at a loss—Eiko said, "If you study zen in this way, you're just wasting food money." At this the master aroused his determination; he was stirred up all the time and his mind was uneasy—so he went before the buddha image and vowed, "As long as I have not clarified the great matter, I will not eat or drink at all." Nothing had touched his lips for over ten days when he happened to hear a fellow work monk reading the record of Dogen's sayings at Eihei; when he got to the point where it says, "the red heart bared entirely, who can know? What a laugh, the lad on the way to Huangmei,"\*\* he was suddenly greatly enlightened.

After that he never left Eiko's side and eventually succeeded to the seat at Choan, where the whole community gladly submitted to him. He was respected all over in his time for his practice of the way.

The master said, "In one there are many, in two there is no duality—how do you reckon the phrase in between? Last year was austere, with neither rice nor wheat; this year is rich with vegetables and fruit."

\*Wuzu Fayan said, "It is like an ox going through a window lattice; his head, horns, and feet have all passed through—why can't the tail also pass?" This famous koan is in the *Mumonkan*.

\*\* The lad going to Huangmei is Huineng, the future sixth patriarch of zen in China on his way north to Huangmei to see the fifth patriarch Hongren.

Later he opened Tocho monastery and moved there; the patrons and the community submitted to him just as when he was at Choan.

## ZENBAN OF ANKOKU

The zen master's initiatory name was Zenban; he was styled Ten'o. He was born in the Unno clan in Shimano. When he was young he was gentle and kind, always smiling. He was never heard to cry, but he never spoke, either; people in his village thought he was mute. He first spoke when he happened to see an image of a buddha. His parents jumped for joy; they asked him, "You can speak! Why have you been silent all these years?" He said, "As I heard ordinary conversations, it was mostly common vulgarities; that's why I didn't speak." His parents were startled and thought he was strange; eventually they allowed him to leave home.

While he was traveling to study zen, everyone esteemed him as having innate virtue. When he called on zen master Gensaku at Choan, as soon as Gensaku saw him he knew he had innate knowledge and didn't need a word of examination—he assigned him to the senior seat.

One evening Gensaku summoned the master and said, "I am sick, unable to rise; I transmit this misfortune to you," then he gave him the robe and died. The master could not but succeed to the seat and dwell there, but he never assumed his proper position ('the absolute state') as abbot; he placed a portrait of his late teacher Gensaku in the abbot's quarters and paid respects to it morning and evening along with the community for a full year. Because of this the community of followers really submitted to him.

Visitors came all the time. The master always thought of giving up the temple affairs and eventually entrusted the seat to Enshu and left. Late in life he opened up Ankoku as a place to finish out his old age; here he wrote,

I have longed to hide for ten years;  
 Finally weaving a reed hut, I can meditate in peace.  
 Opening the stove, I put a little damp wood in the fire;  
 Don't mistakenly lift the blind and let my smoke out.

## SHUTAN OF KOSHO

The zen master's initiatory name was Shutan; he was styled Eshu. As a youth he had his head shaved by zen master Gensaku at Choan and served him as a teacher. After Gensaku died, he next served as personal attendant to Ten'ō, taking care of his robes and bowl. He attended these two teachers for over thirty years in all, and delved deeply into the matter of his own self; Ten'ō always called him a real leaver of home.

Once as Ten'ō was talking over tea he said to the group, "Buddhism is like a born enemy; there's no way for you to approach. If there is a fellow here who can come forth and tie up the enemy's staff, I will give him a stinking loincloth and let him be abbot." The master Eshu came forward and said, "Everyone has the mettle to challenge the heavens, but it's better to go the way of the enlightened ones." Then he brushed out his sleeves and left. Ten'ō pointed around and said, "Without a determination such as this, how could anyone get my stinking loincloth?"

After a long time Eshu received the teaching and appeared in the world at Choan. The master was a most solemn and upright man; he was so stern it was impossible to be familiar with him. If anyone broke the rules of the temple, he would forcibly eject them. He once said, "My former teacher had me be the master of this temple; how could I dare take it easy?" Those who heard him were scared.

Later in life he entrusted the teaching to Zokuo and retired to the western hall.\*\* Finally he opened Kosho temple, where the monastic standards were modeled on those of Choan.

## SODEN OF RYUKO

The zen master's initiatory name was Soden; he was styled Zokuo. He was from Mutsu prefecture, but his name, ordination and early studies are not known. He was a strong and direct man, extremely

\*The western hall is the traditional abode of the retired abbot.

vulgar in speech and action; at all the monasteries he went to he was called Rustic Den. He was extremely brilliant and very good at poetry, but no one knew this.

One day as he was traveling through Kamakura he happened to go to Kencho monastery. The followers there, seeing the master's rustic crudeness, laughed and made fun of him, but he sung aloud happily, as if no one were there. Someone casually composed a verse and showed it to the master; as soon as he read it the master knew the phrasing was adequate but the pure essence was not yet ripe. Then he replied with three verses of his own, and everyone was so startled they couldn't even clap in appreciation; he got up and left them.

Later he called on zen master Shutan at Choan. Shutan tested him with the story, "A monk asked Yunmen, 'When one doesn't produce a single thought, is there any fault or not?' Yunmen said, 'Mount Everest!'" and had the master say something about it. The master tried seven or eight comments, but Shutan didn't agree. Shutan admonished him, "The way of enlightenment is beyond the reach of discrimination and emotion; how can it admit of your intellectual calculations or your fancy replies? If you really want to understand this great matter, you can only do so if you put down what you have learned by your brilliance."

The master now increased his determination, burned all his notebooks of writings he had studied before, and engaged in investigation with utmost concentration. After two months he reached the point where he was not aware of his hands moving or feet walking. One night while he was walking in the hall, he bumped his head on a pillar and was suddenly enlightened. He rushed right to the abbot's quarters; Shutan said, "Rustic Den, your great task is done." The master bowed.

After he had become an abbot, he said to his community, "Since I bumped my head on a pillar in my late teacher's community, the pain has not stopped, even now." Later he opened Ryuko and Saifuku temples, and produced two collateral branches of the teaching.

## YOHAN OF CHOAN

The zen master's initiatory name was Yohan; he was styled Goten. He came from a Kazusa family of the Taira clan. He was naturally

pure and unattached, uninvolved in the ordinary world. He always sat peacefully by the window, relaxed and at ease. His parents took him to a local buddhist temple and let him leave home.

He studied and mastered the essentials of the exoteric and esoteric schools; his thought and conversation was extremely profound and he was esteemed everywhere for his lectures on the scriptures. One day he met a zen man who questioned him closely about meaning, whereupon he repented and shifted his mind to zen meditation. Eventually he went traveling around and entered Rinzai and Soto zen monasteries.

He called on over one hundred zen teachers in all, before he finally called on Zokuo at Choan. As Zokuo saw the master entering the door, he drove him out with loud shouts. The master stumbled and fell; as soon as he stood up, he was suddenly vastly and greatly enlightened. Thereupon he spoke a verse;

One shout of the void  
 And suddenly a corpse revives;  
 A patchrobed monk's gate of entry  
 Penetrates everywhere.

Zokuo gave him the seal of recognition; thenceforth he changed his robe and followed Zokuo like a shadow or an echo for seventeen years, day by day going into the mysterious profundity.

Later, when Zokuo moved to Ryuko, the old worthies at the temple, along with the patrons, asked the master to succeed Zokuo at Choan; the master declined, saying he was not yet refined enough. When they insisted again and again, he finally assented; those who have the will to lead a group always have the ability to transcend the teacher. The master said in the hall, "A golden hen lays an iron egg; a stone cow embraces a jade calf—here there is some happening, but how many people can discover their real potential?"

## SHINRYU OF CHOAN

The zen master's initiatory name was Shinryu; he called himself Big Cloud. No one knew where he came from. He was a high minded



man, given to grandiose talk; everywhere he went he was disliked and ousted by the groups there. He sought admission to over twenty zen monasteries, but none of them allowed him to stay. Finally when he was about forty he called on zen master Yohan at Choan; as soon as Yohan saw him he understood Shinryu's spirit and admitted him. He tested him with the story of Zhaozhou checking on the old woman.\*

Sinryu saw that Yohan had the will to lead the community and deeply believed in him and submitted to him, with no desire to go anywhere else. He immersed himself in study with utmost seriousness; he didn't lie down for years. One day, hauling firewood during general labor, as he strained to lift a bundle he had a powerful insight; he hurried to the abbot's room to tell Yohan. Yohan gave him the seal of recognition and entrusted the teaching and temple affairs to him.

Before long, the patrons and community submitted to Shinryu, even more than the former teacher; they added fields and gardens and rebuilt the halls, thereby greatly renovating Choan monastery. Shinryu used to say to the community, "The important thing in buddhism is to meet the hammer and tongs of a true teacher; once I heard my late teacher's instruction, I lost my mouth and ears and have been cool ever since. Don't pass the years in the mountains taking it easy."

Late in life, after entrusting the teaching to his successors, he took leave of the community and left—no one knew where he ended up. The present shrine at Tomikawa was set up out of respect for his virtue by people of later times.

## DONJU OF CHOAN

The zen master's initiatory name was Donju; he was styled Reizan. He was from Awa prefecture. As a youth he left the dusts of the world

\*There was a woman in north China who lived on the way to Mt. Wu Tai, a famous holy mountain and place of pilgrimage; whenever a monk would ask her the way to Mt. Wu Tai, she would say "Right straight ahead." As the monk set off, she would say, "A fine priest! He too goes on this way." Someone reported this to Zhaozhou, the greatest zen master in northern China in that time; he said, "Wait till I check out that old woman." He went and asked her the same thing, and she gave him the same answer. Zhaozhou said, "I have checked out that old woman for you." This koan appears in the *Wumenguan* (*Mumonkan*) and *Congronglu* (*Shoyoroku*).

and went to Choan monastery to follow zen master Yohan, where he had his head shaved and received the precepts. He was extremely brilliant by nature and fondly occupied himself reading; he studied widely in the inner (buddhist) and outer (confucian) classics.

One day he sighed to himself, "One who abandons society and home regards the fulfillment of buddhahood as fundamental; who am I, to indulge in reading? The classics are inexhaustible." At this point he concentrated solely on meditation. He left to seek certainty everywhere. Again he lamented, "I have traveled through much of the country looking for a teacher, wasting my mental energy. What is the use of traveling around?" Then he returned.

Yohan asked him, "How many years have you been away?" He said, "Ten years." Yohan said, "Where did you go?" He said, "Through half the country." Yohan said, "What did you understand?" Reizan had no reply. Yohan said, "Give me back the price of your sandals." Reizan suddenly had insight; afterwards he functioned responsively without trouble, unhindered at all times.

When Yohan had Shinryu succeed him, Reizan served as Shinryu's secretary and kept the same job for ten years. One day Shinryu said to him, "Since I was cursed by my late teacher, I will surely grow old in this monastery; now you too are cursed by me; you should end your life here." Then he entrusted the teaching to him and left. Then the patrons and the old worthies combined efforts to keep him there.

The master was always of solitary mien and could not be presumed upon. Travelers passing through could not become familiar with him for years. At the end he gathered the community, gave them his last admonitions, wrote a verse and died sitting. The verse said,

Sleeping at night, rushing by day,  
 For fifty-six years.  
 When the eyes go blind  
 I attain this great meditation.

## DEN'ETSU OF CHOAN

The zen master's initiatory name was Den'etsu; he was styled Chogan. It is not known where he was from. As a youth he left lay life and

entered Choan monastery with zen master Yohan as his teacher. He was naturally austere and ascetic; he hauled firewood, drew water, begged for rice, and made charcoal, for twenty years, working harder than anyone else. Yohan always called him 'the reincarnated ascetic (Mahakasyapa).\*

Later when Yohan had Shinryu succeed him, Den'etsu served as chief cook for Shinryu, working hard as before. One day Shinryu, passing the kitchen, found him washing rice himself; he asked, "What dirt is there in the rice?" Den'etsu said, "The chaff is endless." Shinryu said, "If it is endless, how can you wash it away?" Hearing this, Den'etsu stood transfixed; at that moment secretary Donju, standing beside Shinryu, said, "Now cook Den'etsu can really wash the rice." At these words the master was suddenly enlightened; he intoned a verse saying,

So many years I've washed dirt,  
 Today I've reached where there is no dust.  
 The rice filling the bushel  
 I see is the original mind.

Shinryu joyfully said, "Your teacher is brother Donju; later you should assist him in the teaching, causing our school to flourish."

Later when Shinryu had secretary Donju assume the abbacy, the master Den'etsu was placed in the senior seat. After a long time he appeared in the world at Choan; when he opened the hall and offered incense, he rightly gave thanks to zen master Donju for the milk of the teaching.

## DENJO OF CHOAN

The zen master's initiatory name was Denjo; in the community he was called the Inheritor of the School as an epithet of praise. There is no record of where he was born.

\*Mahakasyapa, one of the Buddha Gautama's ten foremost disciples, was most excellent in the practice of asceticism; he is considered the first patriarch of zen in India, having received the personal seal of recognition from the Buddha on Vulture Peak (Grdhakuta, also sometimes 'Spiritual Mountain').

He first called on zen master Den'etsu at Choan and asked, "How should a student use his mind?" Den'etsu extended his hands and said, "Bring me your mind." Denjo was totally at a loss; Den'etsu slapped him on the face and said, "What mind do you want to use?" At these words Denjo got the message; thereupon he broke his staff and stayed there for nineteen years, so earnest that he never went outside the gate. Then he wrote a verse saying,

A thousand miles in search of a teacher  
 I came to Tomikawa;  
 With no way to use the mind  
 At last I meditate in peace.  
 I don't know how many cushions  
 I have worn out,  
 Staying here for nineteen years  
 At a single stretch.

Den'etsu used to say to those around him that Denjo had attained the true source, so in the community he was called the Inheritor of the School.\* After Den'etsu died, the patrons asked master Denjo to succeed to his seat; the master declined, saying he had little wisdom, but they insisted again and again, reminding him of the words "he has inherited my true school." The master shed tears and couldn't refuse any more. So he set up a portrait of his late teacher in the abbot's room and bowed to it in the morning and saluted it at night, just as when he was alive. The master remained in the 'relative state' for the rest of his life.\*

## SENTEKI OF KINRYU

The zen master's initiatory name was Senteki; he called himself The Man of the Ancient Mountain. He was from Musashi. He left home

\*The word for 'school' or 'sect' basically means 'source.'

The position of teacher and disciple is likened to 'absolute' and 'relative.' Denjo never occupied the hojo, or abbot's quarters, keeping the position of disciple out of reverence for his teacher Den'etsu.

and society as a boy. A man of outstanding capabilities, he could see right through people.

He thought to himself, "A monk is someone who is untrammelled—why stay by an old tree stump and uselessly stick to a small byway?" So he became determined to study zen and went to the famous monasteries in eastern Japan. Wherever he went he bowled them over with his talk about the teaching; people recognized him as an accomplished student.

Finally he called on zen master Denjo at Choan; with bare feet and heard, he pounded rice and hoed the garden for twenty years at a stretch. One day he heard Denjo say in the teaching hall, "'Bodhi-dharma did not come to China; the second patriarch did not go to India;' herein there is a silver mountain, an iron wall—when spring comes the birds call and the flowers bloom." Suddenly he had insight; he went right to the abbot's room and asked for approval. Denjo asked, "Later if someone asks about the vehicle of the school of the To succession, how will you answer?" He replied, "The white reed flowers have no different color; white birds alight on a sandbar." Denjo deeply approved of this; thereupon he warned him, "Our school will flourish greatly with you, but I fear it will be hard to find a successor." The master Senteki bowed and withdrew.

When Denjo died he inherited his seat and appeared in the world at Choan; before long his fame stirred the monasteries. At that time, the prime minister Hidetada, hearing of the master's fame in the way, made offerings to him in Edo (Tokyo), the capital city; the master talked about the teaching for the minister; delighted, the minister presented him with rare silks and saw him back to the mountain. Later the chancellor Toshitsune had a big zen monastery built at Kanazawa, which he named Tentoku, 'Heavenly Virtue.' As he was looking for a sage to be abbot there, he asked prime minister Hidetada, who recommended that he invite the master Senteki to dwell there. The chancellor sent some knights to urgently invite him, but the master did not reply. At this point the prime minister himself told the master that the chancellor's request was sincere; the master could not refuse, and after all went to begin teaching there. He greatly revived the Soto school, and people came from all over the country; the names in the monastery register numbered over five thousand.

A monk asked, "What is the master's family style?" He said,



"Eating meat, cursing Shakyamuni, drunk on wine, beating up Maitreya."

The master was basically simple and did not like finery and ostentation. He kept an old horse which he used instead of a carriage; people laughed at him, but he went his own way. Once he had a slight illness and realized in himself that he would never recover, so he sent his bamboo sceptre to his disciple Kosatsu at Choan with a note saying, "After I die there will be a man beyond measure who will cause my way to flourish greatly. Hand this noseless black snake to him in my stead as a token of surety." After writing this he died sitting upright.

## GUON OF KINRYU

The zen master's name was Guon; he was styled Ryusui. He called himself by a different name, 'The Old Man of South Mountain.' He was from Kaga prefecture. As a youth he had his head shaved at Josho temple in his native province. He was naturally open and kind; his face never showed any anger, and all who saw him felt at ease with him.

During his traveling days he called on seven or eight teachers and understood their manners and character; there was no difference in their teachings. Sure of himself, he appeared in the world at Sosen and Ryumon monasteries, giving instructions on request to the groups there for five to seven years, gaining the status of an abbot.

One night the master thought, "If one considers a little bit to be enough in the investigation of zen, perhaps there may be something one still has not learned. I hear that zen master (Ingen) Ryuki of Obaku has come from China to Japan and is staying in Nagasaki; a perfect man is not far—I should go knock at his mysterious gate." Then he set out to go there; but though he entered Ingen's room to seek and inquire, because of the difference in language there was a lack of communication and he didn't get through the difficult, confusing points. He just worked by himself on scrupulous refinement of meditation, but even after three years had passed he still had found no way of entry. He lamented, "My affinity with buddhism in this

life is not yet ripe—what is the benefit of exerting mental power in the wrong way?" so he took his leave and departed.

At that time the abbacy of Tentoku monastery was vacant, and the patrons and community there invited the master, who stayed there, going along with circumstances. One morning when he went into the shrine to bow before the buddha image, to the east he saw the sunlight shining on the tree branches; as he suddenly moved his eyes his insight opened. Thereupon he spoke a verse;

For thirty years I have expended my spirit in vain;  
Sweeping away useless dust instead became dust itself.  
Raising my head, it meets my eyes, without any obscurity—  
Myriad forms are especially new.

The master also thought, "Realization without making sure of right and wrong is of dubious benefit." Then he led his followers to call on zen master Kosatsu at Choan. As soon as Kosatsu saw him, he received him with an individual chair, and entrusted the teaching to him according to his late teacher's will. The master bowed and accepted it, then returned to his temple.

Before long lay people as well as monks and nuns gathered there like clouds, just as Senteki had foretold. One day as the master was going to teach in Kyoto, he passed by Mt. Obaku on the way and went to see zen master Ingen Ryuki again; Ryuki greeted him joyfully and burned incense in a special censer. The next day they had a meeting of minds and Ryuki presented him with a verse:

Wrapped up, carefully stored,  
When it is let out in response to the situation  
It is totally new.

Zen master Shoto of Zozan, who was there at Ryuki's side, had a verse which said,

An iron forehead, a copper crown—  
I am glad of this chance meeting;  
With tracks like the wind of lightning feet,  
He expresses our affinity in action.

In 1670 the master saw me, Geppa Doin, at Kanzan; I met him with proper respect and questioned him closely about this matter. Our actions and words were in mutual accord. As I was about to go,

the master took my hand and said, "The time is come; don't keep your hands in your sleeves (inactive)." Then I knew for the first time I had a teacher.

*End of Biographical Extracts of the Original Stream*

## MANZAN'S NOTES ON PRACTICE

*Manzan and his disciple Menzan were distinguished Soto zen masters whose lineage survives today; the following notes to individuals are taken from a set of such notes in the Zenshu seiten, or zen bible, compiled by Arima Takudo in this century.*

### TO ZEN MAN FUKAN ('NOT LACKING')

The great teacher who was the third patriarch of zen said, "Complete like empty space, lacking nothing, no excess." But what is he calling 'complete?' It is the 'mind of faith' in the title to the poem from which this saying is taken, the 'ultimate way' mentioned in the first line of the poem.

The ultimate way is the one real great way, the mind of faith is the non-dualistic inconceivable mind. Mind and the way do not decrease when in illusion nor increase when in enlightenment; everything is perfect reality, each particular is complete—you can't grasp or reject anything.

However, even so, "if you do not practice it, it will not become manifest; if you do not realize it, you cannot attain it." It is like having a jewel hidden in your pocket and suffering for want of food and clothing.

Practice and realization are not nonexistent; you should start right away. Just sitting is called real practice, the freedom and ease of body and mind is called true realization.

Once practice and realization are actually fulfilled, after that you must attain to the meaning of the completeness, without lack or excess, of this way, this mind.

The zen man Fukan presented paper asking for words about dharma, so I wrote this as a help to practical investigation; take heed.

## TO ZEN MAN BOKUSHIN ('SIMPLE MIND')

Silver mountain, iron wall, just sitting only; simplicity is the mind, nonadornment is basic. One flavor, pure and real, aloof of all appearances, not flowing into second thoughts, nostrils right, present in the community like a mountain—this is what is called a real patchrobed monk, or one exalted beyond things.

Bokushin is also called Mumon ('no ornament')—he wanted me to write some words of instruction based on his name, so I wrote this and gave it to him. If you want to be such a man, you must cultivate such a thing. Work on this.

## TO ZEN MAN ENKAI ('PERFECT OCEAN')

Great perfect awareness is the ocean of ultimate peace; still and silent, myriad forms and images reflect therein. Yet suddenly when the wind of objects arises it turns into an ocean of birth and death, with waves of consciousnesses and feelings billowing day and night, where all sentient beings appear and disappear, with no end in sight. Although the two oceans seem different, really they come from the same source, mind. Originally there is no sign of distinction in the mind source; life and death and nirvana all revert to the essential nature of the source.

Therefore, when you realize the mind-source, the whole universe is a great round perfect ocean. But how to realize the mind source? You must liberate body and mind on the sitting cushion before you can do so.

ZEN ANTICS

*A Hundred Stories of Enlightenment*





## INTRODUCTION

Zen Buddhism is a science of awakening the mind, an art of spiritual enlightenment. Once practiced throughout East Asia in a wide variety of forms by people from many cultures and walks of life, Zen is not a body of dogma but a way of clarifying and enhancing consciousness.

Zen is called "a special transmission outside of doctrine, not defined by literal formulations, but directly pointing to the human mind for the perception of its essence and fulfillment of enlightenment." Anciently known as the school of the enlightened heart, the gateway to the source, and the unalloyed communication of mind by mind, Zen absorbed and pervaded the vast spectrum of Buddhist practices and teachings, while concentrating on the keys to their practical realization.

All Buddhist teachings are concerned with either or both of the two fundamental facets of Buddhism, self-help and helping others, wisdom and compassion. These two phases of Buddhism are carried out by means of practices implementing what are known as the six and ten perfections or transcendent ways.

The significance of these formats may be kept in mind by means of a play on the original Sanskrit word for the perfections, *pāramitā*, which literally means "having reached the goal," or "having gone beyond." In essence, the *pāramitās* may be called the *parameters* of Buddhism, the characteristic values underlying all Buddhist systems.

The phase of self-help in Buddhism is characterized by the six *pāramitās* of giving, discipline, patience, energy, meditation, and insight.

Three main kinds of giving are traditionally defined in Buddhism: giving material support; giving security; and giving education. Giving also means relinquishment, nonattachment.

There are also three main kinds of discipline traditionally defined: the discipline of restraining evil; the discipline of constructive virtue;

and the discipline associated with concentration. Zen also teaches formless discipline of mind.

Many kinds of patience are practiced in Buddhism, including the patience involved in tolerating disdain and abuse; the patience involved in tolerating painful truths; and the patience needed to accept ultimate truth.

Energy refers to the perseverance and spiritual heroism needed to break through the boundaries of conditioning, free the mind from needless limitations of habit, and fulfill its potential.

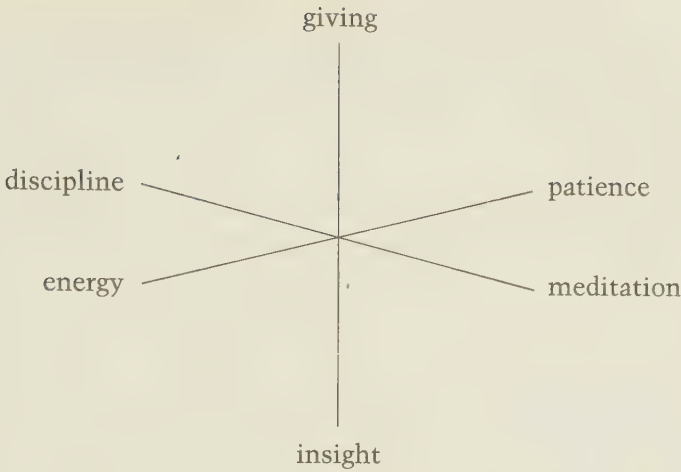
Meditation is needed to gather and focus attention to a depth and degree sufficient to enable the practitioner to alter perception and experience of self and world at will. The science of meditation is elaborated and perfected to a rare degree in Buddhism, with innumerable methods designed to accommodate the needs of people of all sorts of potentials and capacities.

Insight commonly refers to a special kind of knowledge in Buddhism, a precognitive or intuitive sense of the essence of things, functioning spontaneously and instantaneously without the intervention of linear reasoning. This enables the whole mind to operate at a higher level of objectivity and integrity, freeing the individual from delusion.

There are countless variations on the practices of the six *pāramitās*, depending on the needs of the individual concerned. In every case, however, they have to be combined in order to produce the desired effect. Thus while the six *pāramitās* may be viewed as a series in some sense, they are more properly understood as a set, which may be depicted in a circle. In the early stages of practice, the six perfections may be viewed as functioning in complementary pairs.

Eventually the practices and realizations of each and every one of the six *pāramitās* integrate with those of all the others, complementing and perfecting them. In Zen lore, the opening of insight is often referred to as awakening or enlightenment, but this only signals a stage at which higher integration of the six *pāramitās* may commence in real experience, not the supreme perfect enlightenment of which Buddhist scriptures speak.

That supreme perfect enlightenment is realized through a more advanced program of ten *pāramitās*, which goes on to develop the capacity to attain not only sufficient enlightenment for oneself but the greater enlightenment to liberate others.



The ten *pāramitās* include the foregoing six, adding to them four higher perfections of increasing sophistication, known as skill in means, vowing, power, and knowledge.

Skill in means refers to the ability to devise and employ appropriate techniques to liberate and enlighten other people. Buddhism evolved countless such expedient means over the centuries in order to accommodate the needs and potentials of all sorts of individual and collective psychological types in every phase of human civilization.

Vowing, or commitment, is the use of directed will for the purpose of linking the individual consciousness with the totality of Buddhism, joining self-development and the welfare of others in an inseparable continuity. Many typical vows of welfare, liberation, and enlightenment are described in Buddhist literature, but all of them are based on the same fundamental principles.

Power refers to the awakening of higher capacities and spiritual gifts for the purpose of empowering the operation of the total dynamic of the ten *pāramitās*. While these capacities are believed to be inherent in all people and these gifts are believed to derive from a universal endowment, nevertheless they are also believed to be veiled in the world by delusions and attachments, and therefore only really useful in concert with the actual practice of the other nine *pāramitās*.

Knowledge, as the tenth *pāramitā* of Buddhism, is of a scope whose vastness is such that it can scarcely be defined in all of its particulars and ramifications. Included therein is knowledge of all the arts and sciences of wakefulness, self-understanding, and freedom; of perceiv-

ing and distinguishing absolute, relative, and conventional truths; of harmonizing intuition, imagination, and reason; and of purposeful living and meaningful action, with the ability to adapt to any and all circumstances.

Because of their cooperative functions within a totally integrated dynamic, it is also convenient to represent the ten *pāramitās* as a circle or sphere. Here again, the practical application of the ten *pāramitās* may be visualized as beginning with the complementary pairs on opposite ends of five diameters or planes and reaching perfection with the full interpenetration of all ten *pāramitās*.

Because of the infinite richness and complexity of the experience of the ten *pāramitās*, innumerable methods of teaching and integrating them were developed. Among its many techniques, Zen is particularly known for its use of highly concentrated stories to stamp the mind with impressions of the ten *pāramitās*, inductively leading the seeker to a rounded and integrated vision and experience of their total dynamic.

These stories are not necessarily history as conventionally conceived. Like all history, most of the history of Zen is really unrecorded in books, and there is no way of getting around this fact by conventional historiography. The real purpose of Zen stories is not in documenting events of the past, but in their effect on their reader, and so this is their real history.

These stories are also most definitely not representations of role models, as this term is currently understood. The figures in the stories come from worlds that no longer exist, so they have no value as role models in a contemporary sense.

The principles and practices they represent, however—the ten *pāramitās* of Buddhism—do exist and can be put into effect. They have to be realized and applied today as always, here as anywhere, in a manner suited to the particular conditions and needs of the time, place, and people concerned.



*Zen Antics*



## THE TEMPLE GATE

Once there was a wealthy man, Hei-zayemon by name, who strove to realize in his life the virtues commended by ancient sages.

An earnest and studious man, Hei-zayemon used to spend liberally of his wealth in acts of benevolence, charity, and welfare.

Many infants of impoverished families were rescued by his intervention, and he personally financed the construction of numerous bridges and roads in his province for the convenience of the people.

When he died, Hei-zayemon stipulated in his will that his bequest should be used to continue relief work through the generations, and this was honored by his children and grandchildren.

One day, they say, there appeared at the door of Hei-zayemon a certain Buddhist friar. It seems that this clergyman had heard of the wealthy man's selfless benevolence, unusual among the rich of his time, and had come to ask him for money to build a temple gate.

The philanthropist laughed in the friar's face and said, "I help people because I cannot bear to see them suffer. What's so bad about a temple without a gate?"

## THE TEACHER OF THE HIGH PRIEST

Once upon a time there was a certain high priest of a Zen sect whose patron was none other than the baron of a province. When he went to the capital city to visit the baron at his official residence, therefore, the high priest would travel in style, with a large retinue and much fanfare.

It happened on one such journey that the horsemen wanted to purchase some new footwear at a certain way station where the entourage had stopped to rest. An old man was called in at the recommendation of the local porters, who said that he made very good straw sandals.

Now when this old man came over with some new sandals for the horsemen, the high priest saw him through the window of his palanquin and nearly fainted.

The old sandal maker was none other than Tōsui, the illuminated Zen master who had been his own teacher many years earlier, before a mysterious disappearance from his temple.

Tumbling out of his carriage in shock and embarrassment, the high

priest prostrated himself before the old man and paid his respects with utmost courtesy.

Tōsui was kind to him and spoke of old times; but when they parted, the master said to the priest, "Don't let yourself become intoxicated by association with nobles."

### CLEANLINESS OF HEART

Once a group of beggars afflicted with leprosy came to the assembly of Zen master Bankei, a great-hearted teacher of the masses. Bankei admitted them to his company, and when he initiated them, he even washed and shaved their heads with his own hands.

Now as it happened, there was a certain gentleman present, the representative of a baron who had faith in Bankei and had already built a temple in his province where the teacher could train disciples and lecture to the people.

Revolted by the sight of the Zen master shaving the heads of un-touchables, the gentleman hurriedly brought a basin of water for Bankei to wash his hands.

But the master refused, remarking, "Your disgust is filthier than their sores."

### THE OLD TEA SELLER

Once there was an old man who used to run a floating outdoor tea room in the scenic environs of Kyoto, the ancient imperial capital of Japan.

In spring he would search out the places where the flowers were most beautiful, and in autumn he would find the areas where the foliage was best; there he would bring out his tea utensils and set up seats to wait on hikers enjoying the sights.

The aesthetes of Kyoto were delighted and used to gather around wherever he set up shop. Before long the Old Tea Seller became widely known in the capital.

Few people knew that the old man was a hidden Zen master. A student of Zen since boyhood, he had visited Buddhist teachers all over the country. Traveling constantly, he had no material possessions, being entirely devoted to the study of Buddhism.

After realizing Zen awakening, he had undertaken a commitment to perpetual study and self-refinement, in order to avoid straying from

the path to complete enlightenment by premature assumption of authority.

After his extensive travels, the master returned to his native place to help his original Zen teacher. When the teacher died, the master nominated one of the disciples to inherit the abbacy.

He himself disappeared and went to Kyoto, leaving ecclesiastic office behind forever. At that time, he said, "Whether one's livelihood is correct is a matter of mind, not appearances. I do not wish to take advantage of monk's robes to live on alms at others' expense."

Thus he began to sell tea to support himself. He used to jokingly tell people, "I'm poor and can't afford to eat meat, I'm old and can't please a wife. The livelihood of a tea seller is suitable for me."

Eventually the master burned all his tea paraphernalia and retired.

Finally he died in a hermitage in the year 1763, at the age of eighty-nine.

When he set up shop, the old man used to hang out this sign:

"The price of tea is however much you give me, from a hundred pounds of gold to half a penny. You can even drink for free, if you like; but I can't give you a better bargain than that."

When he ultimately burned his utensils and retired, these were his words to his carrying basket:

"I have always been alone and poor, with neither a patch of ground nor a hoe. You have helped me for many a year, accompanying me to the spring mountains and autumn rivers, selling tea under the pines and in the shade of bamboo groves. Thus I have not lacked money for meals and have lasted for over eighty years.

"But now I am so old that I haven't the strength to use you any more. Hiding my body in the North Star, I am about to end my days. Lest you be disgraced in the future by mundane hands, I reward you with the Trance of Fire: now be transformed in the midst of the flames.

"How can we express this transformation? The conflagration ending the aeon clear, everything is consumed; yet the green mountains are there as ever in the white clouds. Now I consign you to the spirit of fire."

## ECONOMY

Sōkai was so poor that he owned no clothing but a single robe, which he wore all year round, in all weather.



One summer day, Sōkai washed his robe and hung it in a tree to dry. In the meantime, while waiting for his robe to dry out, he went to sit in the graveyard behind the temple, stark naked.

As it happened, the lord of the province paid a visit to the grave of his father, in that very graveyard, on that very day. Needless to say, he was quite taken aback to see a naked monk sitting there among the tombs.

When the lord asked him what he was doing, Sōkai explained the situation truthfully. Moved by his candor, the lord had a set of clothing made for him. Later on, when Sōkai had become a Zen teacher, the lord became his disciple.

### ZEN IN GOVERNMENT

One day the governor of a certain province asked Zen master Shōsan about the essentials of Buddhism.

The master told him, "It is essential for you to encompass the whole province, in its complete totality. You cannot do this if you are wishy-washy. Be keenly attentive in every way, and make your official decisions with kindness and compassion.

"Then, forging right ahead, you should clearly distinguish people's natures and get to know them. Generally speaking, if a leader is narrow-minded and cannot distinguish people's natures, he will find a lot of things offensive. Then his mood goes out and fights with the moods of others. Is that not stupid?"

### STUDYING MIND

Mind Studies was a lay self-improvement movement influenced by Zen. One day a follower of Mind Studies came to Zen master Shōsan to ask about the essentials of Buddhism.

The Zen master said, "Buddhism is not a matter of using your discursive intellect to govern your body. It is a matter of using the moment of the immediate present purely, not wasting it, without thinking about past or future.

"This is why the ancients exhorted people first of all to be careful of time: this means guarding the mind strictly, sweeping away all things, whether good or bad, and detaching from the ego.

✓ "Furthermore," the Zen master continued, "for the reformation of mind it is good to observe the principle of cause and effect. For exam-

ple, even if others hate us, we should not resent them; we should criticize ourselves, thinking why people should hate us for no reason, assuming that there must be a causal factor in us, and even that there must be other as yet unknown causal factors in us.

"Maintaining that all things are effects of causes, we should not make judgments based on subjective ideas. On the whole, things do not happen in accord with subjective ideas; they happen in accord with the laws of Nature. If you maintain awareness of this, your mind will become very clear."

### INDIFFERENCE

National Teacher Daitō Kokushi, whose honorific name means "Great Lamp, Teacher of the Nation," was one of the founders of the renowned Ō-Tō-Kan school of Rinzai Zen. He died in the fourteenth century.

According to the custom of ancient Zen schools, Daitō disappeared from the monastery after his enlightenment, to mature his realization hidden in the midst of the world.

It was not until years later that he was discovered living under a bridge in Kyoto, in the society of homeless beggars. From there he became a teacher of the emperor.

Daitō once wrote a poem about his life as an outcast:

When one sits in meditation,  
 one sees the people  
 coming and going  
 over the avenue bridge  
 as trees growing deep in the mountains.

### OBJECTIVITY

The Zen master Tenkei was considered one of the eight greatest Buddhist adepts of his time. Master of all schools, Tenkei helped revive Zen in the early 1700s through his many enlightened disciples and his many written works in classical and contemporary modes.

Once Tenkei quoted the famous poem of National Teacher Daitō and offered one of his own:

When one sits in meditation,  
 one sees the people

coming and going  
over the avenue bridge  
just as they are.

## ZEN AND THE ART OF GOVERNMENT

A certain lord used to call on Zen master Tenkei to ask about the essence of Buddhism. When the master was in his last illness, the lord sent a messenger to ask after him. Tenkei sent the messenger back to the lord with this note:

"To manage a household and to govern a state are also religious practices. Be careful to implement humane policies, so that there is trust and harmony between the ruler and the ruled. This is my last advice."

## WIPING A BUDDHA'S ASS

In Zen master Hakuin's group there was a crazy monk who thought he had realized the identity of self and Buddha. He tore up Buddhist scriptures and used the pages for toilet paper.

Other monks took him to task for this, but he paid no attention, haughtily retorting, "What's wrong with using Buddhist scriptures to wipe a Buddha's ass?"

Now someone repeated this to the master Hakuin, who asked the crazy monk, "They say you are using Buddhist scriptures for toilet paper. Is that so?"

The crazy monk said, "Yes. I myself am a Buddha. What is wrong with using Buddhist scriptures to wipe a Buddha's ass?"

Hakuin said, "You're wrong. Since it's a Buddha's ass, why use old paper with writing on it? You should wipe it with clean white paper."

The crazy monk was shamed, and he apologized.

## CONDUCT

A monk asked Zen master Bankei, "Is it not harmless to joke around in spontaneous moments of levity?"

Bankei said, "It's all right if you want to lose trust."

## MIND ART

A certain lord came to ask master Bankei about the Zen "mind art." Instead of welcoming his inquiry, Bankei upbraided the lord, saying,

"I understand you dismissed a secular scholar because you did not recognize his worthiness. How can you even ask about the Zen mind art?"

## AN AWAKENING

Zen master Setsugen told his student Jijō, "If you meditate single-mindedly without interruption for seven days and nights and yet still do not attain realization, you can cut off my head and make my skull into a nightsoil scoop."

Not long after that, Jijō came down with a case of dysentery. Taking a bucket to a secluded place, he sat on it and held his attention in right mindfulness.

When he had sat on the bucket for seven straight days, one night he suddenly sensed the whole world like a snowy landscape under bright moonlight and felt as if the entire universe were too small to contain him.

He had been absorbed in this state for a long time when he was startled into self-awareness on hearing a sound. He found his whole body running with sweat, and his sickness had disappeared. In celebration he wrote a verse:

Radiant, spiritual—what is this?  
The minute you blink your eyes you've missed it.  
The spatula by the toilet shines with light;  
After all it was just me all along.

## THE ULTIMATE POINT

The Zen priest Taigu was requested to become the abbot of a temple. A local woman who had lost a child came to ask the new abbot to perform the funerary rites.

The woman said to the Zen priest, "I would consider myself fortunate to be favored with your compassion. Please tell me where my child has gone."

Taigu couldn't answer. The woman left, weeping bitterly.

The Zen priest said to himself, "I thought I had attained realization. This woman's question has shown me I don't know the ultimate point. What is the purpose of being an abbot in a temple?"

So Taigu gave up his position and departed, seeking to deepen his understanding of Zen.

## GUT

A certain lord who studied Zen from Bankei was young and fond of martial arts. One day he decided to test the master's "gut" by suddenly attacking him with a lance as his sat quietly.

The Zen master calmly deflected the thrust with his rosary. Then he said to the lord, "Your technique is still immature; your mind moved first."

## "DON'T BE DISTURBED"

Mugaku was one of the founders of Zen in Japan. Born in China, he experienced his first awakening at the age of twelve, when he heard a Zen verse while visiting a country temple with his father:

Bamboo shadows sweep the stairs,  
yet not a mote of dust is stirred;  
Moonlight pierces the depths of the pond,  
leaving no trace in the water.

When the Mongol horde of Kublai Khan broke into southern China in 1275, Mugaku fled the fires of battle; but when the province where he had taken refuge was overrun the next year, he stopped running away.

As the Mongol warriors stormed the monastic compound where Mugaku sat, all the other Chinese monks and monastic workers concealed themselves like mice in their burrows.

The warriors drew near to the Zen master sitting alone in the hall and put their swords to his neck. Thoroughly composed, Mugaku calmly chanted a verse:

In all the universe, I haven't even  
ground enough to stand a single cane;  
Lucky it is that I've found  
personality void and phenomena empty.  
Farewell, swords of the Mongol empire.

Moved by the fearless composure of the Zen master, the Mongol soldiers put up their swords and left.

In the year 1280, Mugaku was invited to Japan by Hōjō Tokimune, regent for the shogun. When Tokimune visited the Zen master in the



spring of the following year, Mugaku wrote the regent a three-word message: "Don't be disturbed."

When Tokimune asked for an explanation, the Zen master said, "At the junction of spring and summer, southern Japan will be in an uproar; but it will settle down before long, so you should not worry."

As it turned out, a Mongol invasion force attacked southern Japan that very autumn, just as the Zen master had said. And as the master predicted, the invaders were repelled and peace was soon restored.

## WINNING WITHOUT TRYING

The Way of Winning without Trying was a school of martial arts founded by a warrior named Tsukahara Bokuden. A famous story about him illustrates the name and methodology of his school.

Once in the course of a journey to eastern Japan, Bokuden took passage across a bay on a small boat carrying five or six other passengers.

During the trip over the water, all of the passengers sat quietly except for a big, burly man who kept talking in a loud voice, bragging about his peerless powers in martial arts.

At first, Bokuden tried to snooze, paying no attention to the ruffian. At length, however, weary of the man's boasting, Bokuden turned to him and said, "Well, now we've heard all sorts of stories from you, haven't we? What I don't understand in them are the tall tales about martial arts. I myself have practiced martial arts since youth, exercising according to the established forms, but up until now I have never thought of trying to beat anyone. All I have worked on is how to avoid losing to anyone."

Hearing this, the brash man asked, "What school of martial arts do you follow?"

Bokuden replied, "Winning without Trying, or the Way of Not Losing." → See *Star Trek TNG* "Kolrami"

The man retorted, "If it is a matter of winning without trying, why are you armed with swords?"

Bokuden answered, "The two swords of 'communicating mind by mind' break the point of conceit and cut off the sprouts of wrong thoughts."

Hearing this, the ruffian challenged Bokuden to a contest, saying, "Then if we have a duel, will you win without trying?"

Bokuden said, "In this case, although the sword of my heart is a life-giving sword, insofar as the opponent is a bad man, it becomes a death-dealing sword."

Now the arrogant man could no longer contain his mounting anger. He ordered the boatman to make for shore at once so that he and Bokuden could have it out.

Bokuden surreptitiously signaled to the boatman with his eyes, then said to the braggart, "The shoreline is a busy port, too crowded for a duel. I'll show you the Way of Winning without Trying By Not Losing, over yonder, on that islet off the promontory up ahead. Although I'm sure the other people on this boat are in a hurry to be on their way, if you insist so much, we might as well have a duel."

So the boatman rowed up to an islet, whereupon the ruffian leaped out onto the shore, drawing his long sword. He shouted at Bokuden, "Come on, come on! I'll split your face in two!"

Still aboard the boat, Bokuden replied, "Wait a minute. The Way of Winning without Trying requires one to calm the mind." So saying, Bokuden removed his swords from his belt and handed them to the boatman, taking up in exchange the boatman's pole.

For a moment it looked like Bokuden was going to beach the boat on the shore; then all at once he thrust the pole in the opposite direction and pushed the boat out into the water.

Seeing this, the ruffian shouted, "Why don't you come up here onto the shore?"

Bokuden said with a laugh, "Why should I? If you have a complaint, then swim out here, and I'll give you a lesson for the road. This is the Way of Winning without Trying!"

## A ZEN RETREAT

Zen master Taigu lived for a time deep in the mountains in the provincial countryside north of Kyoto. He wrote a pair of verses commemorating this abode:

No more city troubles,  
 No contests of judgment:  
 In autumn I sweep  
 the leaves by the stream,  
 In spring I hear  
 the birds in the trees.

Spring comes to the human world  
 with vast and great kindness;  
 Every flower blossom  
 holds forth a Buddha.  
 Unawares, remaining snow  
 has melted all away—  
 Myriad forms unfurl their brows  
 in concert, all as one.

### THE FOUNDING OF A TEMPLE

When Zen master Taigu went to the capital city of Edo in the midseventeenth century, the shogun himself, Tokugawa Iemitsu, expressed his wish for an audience with the Zen master.

Taigu disappeared the very night he was summoned to see the shogun. He was not heard of again for ten years.

One autumn, Taigu went on a journey to bathe in the hot springs of a certain province, in order to treat his arthritis. Taking the road through Snow Country, the Zen master spent the winter as a guest in the house of a pious lay Buddhist.

As it happened, the distinguished Zen master Gudō, who was an old friend of Taigu, also came to visit the very same house.

Now when the governor of the province heard of the presence of these two great Zen elders in his domain, he invited them to his mansion to talk about the Teaching.

Being arthritic and stiff in both legs, Taigu used to sit on a thick cushion. When he and Gudō were ushered into the reception room at the governor's mansion, to their surprise the governor himself placed a thick cushion on the seat for Taigu, perceiving his infirmity and treating him with great consideration.

Gudō remarked, "Governor, you are very perceptive, but I'm afraid you won't live long."

Taigu became red in the face and said, "This old fellow Gudō doesn't know good from bad—he approves people at random. What does an immature youth know?"

The governor praised Taigu, saying, "He is genuinely fit to be a teacher."

As a result of this meeting, the governor had a temple built and made Taigu the first master there.

## TEACHING ZEN

One day the governor of the province asked Zen master Taigu, "They say *The Blue Cliff Record* is the foremost of Zen books: Is this true?"

Taigu said, "It is."

The governor requested, "Please expound one or two stories from that book."

Taigu said, "I'm afraid you wouldn't understand."

But the governor kept begging, so finally Taigu said loudly, quoting the first story of that Zen book. "'Being empty, there is no holiness.'"

The governor said, "I don't understand."

Taigu said, "After all you couldn't hold steady."

## THE PASSING OF A MASTER

The illustrious Zen master Bankei died in a country temple in the last decade of the seventeenth century. At the end, his disciples asked him for a parting verse, according to the ancient Zen custom.

The master said, "I have been in this world for seventy-three years, of which I have spent forty-four teaching Zen to liberate others. All that I have pointed out to you in over half a lifetime is my parting verse. There is no other parting verse to compose. Why should I imitate everyone else and make a confession on my deathbed?"

Having said this, the great Zen master Bankei passed away, sitting perfectly straight.

## A LONE LAMP

Sonome was a well-known poetess and a profound student of Buddhism. She once wrote to Zen master Unkō: "To seek neither reality nor falsehood is the root source of the Great Way. Everyone knows this, so even though I may seem immodest for saying so, I do not think this is anything special. As goings-on in the source of one mind, the willows are green, the flowers are red. Just being as is, I pass the time reciting verse and composing poetry. If this is useless chatter, then the scriptures are also useless chatter. I dislike anything that stinks of religion, and my daily practice is invocation, poetry, and song. If I go to paradise, that's fine; if I fall into hell, that's auspicious."

By myself I remember  
 not to seek mind;  
 the green lamp has already illumined  
 my lone lamp heart.  
 Whether in clamor or silence,  
 I have a clear mirror:  
 it thoroughly discerns  
 pure hearts among humans.

It is not something existing,  
 that anyone can see and know,  
 nor does it not exist:  
 such is the lamp of truth.

When Sonome was about to pass on, she bade farewell to the world with this poem:

The sky of the autumn moon  
 and the warmth of spring:  
 Is it a dream? Is it real?  
 Hail to the Buddha of Infinite Light!

## BETTER THAN FLOWERS

One spring the haiku poet Bashō decided to take a trip to see the flowers in a certain place famed for its scenery. Along the way he heard of a poor peasant girl noted for devotion to her parents. Intrigued, Bashō went looking for the girl. When he found her, he gave her all the money he had brought for his travel expenses. Then he returned home, without having seen the flowers.

He said, "This year I have seen something better than flowers."

## COMMUNICATION

Once when Zen master Bankei was about to leave a temple in the capital where he taught from time to time, a certain gentleman came requesting that the master postpone his departure. A certain baron had a question and wanted to see the Zen master in person on the morrow to resolve it. Bankei assented and put off leaving.

The next day, however, the gentleman came again, this time with the message that the baron had some urgent business to take care of and could not come to see the master. The baron had asked the gen-



tleman to relay his question to Bankei, then report the Zen master's answer back to him.

When he had heard the gentleman out, Bankei said, "This matter of Zen is difficult to convey even by direct question and direct answer; it is all the more difficult to convey by messenger."

The Zen master said nothing more. Speechless, the gentleman withdrew and departed.

## REALITY

Zen master Tenkei used to admonish his followers, "You should be genuine in all things. Nothing that is genuine in the world is not genuine in Buddhism, and nothing that is not genuine in Buddhism is genuine in the world."

He would also say, "See with your eyes, hear with your ears. Nothing in the world is hidden; what would you have me say?"

## A HEALING BUDDHA

Tomomura Yūshōshi, "Friend of the Pines," was from Nagasaki, which was in those days the only port in Japan open to foreign trade. Yūshōshi is said to have been born of a liaison between a Chinese merchant and a local prostitute. When he went into business as a physician and was questioned about his background, Yūshōshi simply wrote that he was the son of a Nagasaki prostitute. People praised him for his honesty and strength of character.

According to records written by his students, Yūshōshi had no concern for reputation or profit, but he liked the good and despised the bad. Taking an interest in Buddhism and having a natural inclination for its teachings, his predilection was to heal people and save lives. For this purpose he studied both Taoist medical arts and Buddhist psychological arts from Chinese practitioners, and then meditated day and night for three years until he reached understanding.

Yūshōshi provided medical treatment on demand, with remarkable results. He made his debut in Kyoto before he was even thirty years old and was the honored guest of barons from all over the country. It is also said that he was lauded by the founder and elders of the Ōbaku sect, a Chinese Zen school newly transplanted to Japan.

Yūshōshi was also versed in divination, geomancy, and astrology. They say he taught these subjects to his students, in accordance with their capacities.

One of Yūshōshi's peculiarities was that he would say just what he thought in discussions with other physicians, whether they were friends or strangers. If he saw that they were wrong, he would explain why he thought so, addressing them directly without any hesitation. If he heard someone say something mistaken, he would openly argue. He himself said that he did this to help others. In any case, as a result some doctors considered him mad, others considered him straightforward. Some praised him, others slandered him.

## SHAME AND CONSCIENCE

There was a certain merchant who was deeply impressed by the lofty virtue of the Zen monk Hakuin. He used to present the monk with gifts of money and goods from time to time.

As it happened, the daughter of the merchant had a love affair with a family servant, resulting in the birth of a child. When the irate merchant demanded an explanation, his daughter said she had been impregnated by the monk Hakuin.

The merchant was furious: "To think that I gave alms to an evil shavepate like that for ten years!" Picking the baby up in his arms, the merchant took it right over to Hakuin. Laying it in the Zen master's lap, the merchant gave him a tongue-lashing and left in a huff.

Hakuin didn't argue. He began to take care of the baby as if it were his own. People who saw him also believed he had fathered the child.

One winter day, when Hakuin was out begging for alms from house to house in the falling snow, carrying the infant with him as he went, the merchant's daughter saw them and was filled with remorse. In tears, she went to her father and confessed the truth.

Mortified, the merchant was totally at a loss. He rushed over to throw himself to the ground at the feet of Zen master Hakuin, begging his forgiveness.

Hakuin simply smiled and said, "The child has another father?"

## ZEN IN ACTION

Zen master Man-an wrote to a lay student of Zen, "If you want to quickly attain mastery of all truths and be independent in all events, there is nothing better than concentration in activity. That is why it is said that students of mysticism working on the Way should sit in the midst of the material world.

"The Third Patriarch of Zen said, 'If you want to head for the Way of Unity, do not be averse to the objects of the six senses.' This does not mean that you should indulge in the objects of the six senses; it means that you should keep right mindfulness continuous, neither grasping nor rejecting the objects of the six senses in the course of everyday life, like a duck going into the water without its feathers getting wet.

"If, in contrast, you despise the objects of the six senses and try to avoid them, you fall into escapist tendencies and never fulfill the Way of Buddhahood. If you clearly see the essence, then the objects of the six senses are themselves meditation, sensual desires are themselves the Way of Unity, and all things are manifestations of Reality. Entering into the great Zen stability undivided by movement and stillness, body and mind are both freed and eased."

### HIDDEN VIRTUE, MANIFEST REWARD

Zen master Hakuin used to tell a story of when he was a young student, traveling around to see Zen teachers and meditating on emptiness, by which Zen followers seek to clear their minds of subjective imaginings in preparation for perception of objective truth.

On one occasion Hakuin was traveling in the company of two other Buddhist monks. One of them asked Hakuin to carry his baggage for him, pleading weakness and fatigue from illness.

The young Hakuin readily assented, taking his mind off the extra load by plunging even more deeply into his contemplation of emptiness.

Observing Hakuin's youth and zeal, the other monk decided to take a load off his own shoulders as well. Claiming illness like the first, he asked Hakuin to carry his baggage too.

In the spirit of Buddhist service, Hakuin took up the third load and continued on his way, immersing himself in emptiness more intently than ever.

Eventually the three monks reached a point where they could go on only by boat, so they boarded a ferry at the nearest landing. Completely exhausted by now, Hakuin collapsed into a heap and fell sound asleep.

When he awoke, the young seeker was momentarily disoriented. It appeared that they had just docked, but he had no memory of the trip.

Noticing a foul odor, he looked around and saw that everyone was green in the face and covered with vomit. And they were looking at him very strangely.

It turned out that the ferry boat had run into a squall in the course of its passage and had been tossed about so violently that everyone, including the boatman himself, had become uncontrollably seasick.

Only the young Zen student Hakuin, so exhausted from carrying the baggage of his two companions that he slept right through the storm, had not been affected at all.

This, related Zen master Hakuin, was how he had first realized through his own experience that the principle that hidden virtue is manifestly rewarded is actually true.

### EMPTYING HELL <sup>1?</sup>

A samurai in the employ of the provincial barony came to call on Zen master Hakuin.

The master asked the samurai, "What have you done?"

The samurai said, "I have always liked to listen to Buddhist teaching. I have become infected with an illness because of this."

Hakuin asked, "What is your illness like?"

The samurai said, "I first met a Zen teacher and searched into the principle of the essence of mind. Then I met a Shingon Discipline teacher and studied the esoteric canon. Developing doubt and confusion about these two schools, while in the midst of visualization of the letter A, there suddenly arose in my mind images of hells. When I tried to stop them by means of the principle of the essence of mind, the two visions clashed, so my mind has become disturbed. In sleep I have nightmares, and when awake, I only toil at conceptual thinking."

Hakuin clucked his tongue and said, "Do you know what it is that fears hell?"

The samurai said, "The view of emptiness! I have caught this illness."

Hakuin shouted at the samurai again and again, shouting him away, saying, "You little knave! A samurai is someone who is so loyal to his lord that he does not flee floods or fires, and he exposes his body to spears and swords without quivering or blinking an eye. How can you fear the view of emptiness? Right now, fall into each of those hells, and let's check them out!"

The samurai complained, "How can a teacher have people fall into an evil state?"

Hakuin laughed and said, "The hells I fall into are eighty-four thousand in number! Look—there's nowhere I don't fall!"

Finally seeing the master's point, the samurai was overjoyed.

## EVERYDAY RELIGION

One of the great barons of western Japan went to visit the Zen master Hakuin and ask for some instruction. As it happened, a villager had brought some millet cakes for the Zen master just at the same time. Hakuin immediately took the cakes and offered them to the baron.

Accustomed to rich food, the baron had never eaten millet. He could not bring himself to eat of the peasant woman's simple cakes.

Observing this, Hakuin scolded the baron, saying, "Force yourself to eat it; you will get to know the misery of the common folk. My teaching is nothing but this."

## SOCIAL RELATIONS

In late feudal Japan, consumption of goods was regulated by detailed laws, which differed according to one's social class. Now in Zen master Hakuin's area there was a wealthy merchant, very conservative, whose household rules forbade the servants to carry umbrellas. The consequence of this rule, however, was simply that his servants used to keep umbrellas at the houses of friends, then use them as necessary when going out.

One day it happened that a certain maid of that merchant's house took a new umbrella she had purchased and brought it to the Zen master Hakuin, hoping to have him write her name on it for her. When she got to the temple, an assistant agreed to take the umbrella and relay her request to the master. He also explained to Hakuin the situation in the merchant's household.

Having listened to all this, Hakuin picked up a brush and wrote on the paper umbrella, "Whether it rains or pours, I won't disobey my employer."

The maid was delighted. Being illiterate, she couldn't read what the master had written. She assumed it was her name, as she had requested.

Then one rainy day, the maid asked for some time off to run an



errand. As she went on her way, holding her umbrella over her against the rain, she began to notice that people were snickering at her. Wondering what the matter was, at length she asked someone about it, only to learn what was really written on her umbrella.

Furious, the woman went to Hakuin demanding compensation for her umbrella. Instead, the Zen master invited her in and talked to her about how to work for an employer.

Then Hakuin went to see the merchant himself. "A servant is someone's child too, you know," he said to the rich man, who was so moved by the great master's compassion that he changed the rules of his house.

## NIGHT RAIN

Before he went to live in the mountains, Zen master Ranryo traveled throughout the four quarters, making no distinction between court and countryside, city and village, not avoiding even wineshops and brothels.

When someone asked him why he acted in this way, the Zen master said, "My Way is right there, wherever I happen to be. There is no gap at all."

Later Ranryo went into the mountains, where he built a simple hut and lived a life of frugal austerity as he continued to work on Zen.

Especially fond of night rain, Ranryo would burn incense and sit up on rainy nights, even until dawn. The people of the mountain villages, not knowing his name, used to call him "the Night Rain Monk." This amused him, so he began to use Night Rain as a literary name.

17 | Once a visitor asked Ranryo about the relative merits of Zen medi-  
11 | tation and the Pure Land Buddhist practice of Buddha-remembrance,  
| reciting the name of the Buddha of Infinite Light. Ranryo gave his  
| answer in verse:

Zen meditation and Buddha Remembrance  
are like two mountains;  
Higher and lower potentials  
divide a single world.  
When they arrive, all alike  
see the moon atop the peak;  
Only pity those who have no faith  
and suffer over the climb.

## THE DOOR OF COMPASSION

Jimon was the daughter of a samurai. Her mother died when she was eleven years old, and her father passed away a few years later, when she was fifteen. When she turned eighteen, she shaved her head and became a nun.

Jimon was rich in kindness and compassion, doing whatever she could to help those in need. One winter night, during a severe snow-storm, two little beggar boys showed up at her door. They looked so cold to her that she immediately took off her outer robe and gave it to them.

On that occasion, she composed a poem, saying,

The plight of the desolate—  
 how wretched these sleeves  
 too narrow for shelter  
 to keep them  
 from spending the night outside.

On another freezing night, a burglar entered her cottage looking for money or other valuables. Jimon got up calmly and said, "You poor thing! Imagine crossing the fields and mountains to come here on a cold night like this! Wait a minute, and I'll make you something warm!"

So saying, Jimon boiled some gruel for the burglar, seating him by the fireside. Then as he ate, she began to talk to him. "I've renounced the world," she said, "so I have nothing of value. But you can take whatever you want.

"There is something, however, that I want from you in exchange. I've been watching you, and it seems to me that you could make a decent living doing any sort of work or business you wished. And yet here you are in this wretched state, not only disgracing yourself but also disgracing your family. Isn't that a shame?

"I want you to change your attitude and give up burglary. Take everything in my cottage and pawn it for money to start a suitable business. You'll be much so much easier in mind that way!"

Profoundly moved, the young burglar voiced his thanks and left without taking anything at all.

## FORMATION OF A SCHOOL

For ten years after his enlightenment, Gessen served as the abbot of a well-known monastery. Finally he left the monastery and went to live in a hermitage where no one knew who he was.

Mixing in with villagers, Gessen used to teach the local children reading, writing, and arithmetic, gradually introducing them to Buddhist ideas in an indirect manner.

Eventually Zen seekers from all over the country came looking for him. Finally there was not a barn or a cowshed within miles of his hermitage but had been rented as lodgings by students and followers of the great Zen master Gessen.

## MIND AND ESSENCE

!/? Ishida Baigan was a founder of *Shingaku* Mind Studies, a lay movement inspired by Zen Buddhism. Up until the time he was fifty years old, it is said, displeasure used to show on Baigan's face whenever something offended him. After the age of fifty, however, he never evinced any sign of pleasure or displeasure. When he reached the age of sixty, he said, "Now I have attained ease."

simplex Once someone asked him, "Are mind and essence different?"

Baigan replied, "Mind includes both essence and sense; it has movement and stillness, substance and function. Essence is the substance, which is tranquil; mind, which moves, is the function. Speaking of mind in terms of essence, it resembles essence in a way; the substance of mind is unminding until it is disturbed; essence is also unminding. Mind is the realm of energy, essence is the realm of noumenon. Just as the moon is reflected even in a tiny drop of dew, noumenon is inwardly present in all things, even though it is invisible."

## TEMPER

Once a man came to Zen master Bankei and confessed that he had been born with a short temper, which he found unmanageable in spite of his attempts to control it.

The Zen master said, "What an interesting thing you were born with! Do you have a short temper right now? If so, show me, and I'll cure it for you."

The man said, "I don't have it right at this moment. It comes out unexpectedly, when something happens."

The Zen master said, "In that case, your short temper is not something innate in you."

## SITTING MEDITATION *Study later!*

Someone asked the great master Bankei about sitting Zen. He replied, "Harmonization with the ineffable wisdom inherent in everyone before getting involved in thinking and conceptualization is called meditation; detachment from all external objects is called sitting. Just closing your eyes and sitting there is not what I call sitting meditation; only sitting meditation attuned to subtle knowledge is to be considered of value.

"All confusion is a matter of revolving in vicious circles of delusion because of using thoughts. When angry thoughts come out, you become a titan; craving makes you an animal; clinging to things makes you a hungry ghost. If you die without giving these up, you revolve in routines forever, taking on all sorts of forms, whirling in the flow of birth and death.

"If you detach from thoughts, there is no confusion, so there is no cause or effect. There being no cause or effect, there is no revolving in routines. As long as you entertain thoughts, when you cultivate good thoughts there are good causes and effects, and when you do wrong there are bad causes and effects. When you have detached from thought and tuned into subtle knowledge, there are no causes or effects of birth or death.

"When I speak this way, it seems like a vision of nothingness, but it is not so. The reason I say that this is not nothingness is that when I say so, each of you hears it. Even though you do not think of hearing, because the original knowledge innate in everyone is effectively aware, you can hear distinctly. When you touch fire or water, you know it is hot or cold; yet no one *learns* to feel heat or cool.

"This is working beyond thought, so even if there is no thought, it cannot be called nothingness. This inherent subtle knowledge comprehends everything without involvement in the dualistic ideas of being and nothingness, just as a clear mirror reflects the images of things distinctly. So what discursive thought is necessary for this?

"Discursive thought is there because there is confusion. When you

arrive at nondiscursive knowledge, you perceive and distinguish things before discursive thought, so in the end there is no confusion. That is why nondiscursive knowledge is valued.

"For this reason, sitting meditation with unfabricated subtle knowledge is the highest practice."

## THE WAY TO THE WAY

Sōkai had been in the congregation of Zen master Daiyū for a year when he suddenly had an insight one night as he was getting up from his meditation. Going to the teacher, Sōkai presented his understanding.

Daiyū said, "You have gotten into the hall, but you have not yet entered the room."

Sōkai asked, "Why do you say that?"

Daiyū quoted a scriptural saying: " 'Don't dwell on anything, yet enliven the mind,' " and he asked Sōkai, "What does it mean to 'yet enliven the mind'?"

Sōkai replied, "When you look for the mind, it cannot be found."

Daiyū said, "After all you haven't attained penetration."

Sōkai retorted, "I do not agree to doubt."

Raising his voice, Daiyū said, "No, no! If you really want to attain the Way, you must die completely once; only then can you realize it!"

## LIBERATION

Ōhashi the courtesan was the daughter of a vassal of the shogun. She was sold into prostitution by her father after he had lost his position and been reduced to extreme poverty.

Ōhashi was charming, intelligent, and well educated in literature and the arts. As a result of her accomplishments, she became a famous courtesan in the red-light district of Kyoto.

Unable to reconcile herself to the misfortune that had befallen her, Ōhashi lapsed into an incurable depression and began to waste away.

One day a visitor noticed her condition and asked her if she was depressed about something. Ōhashi explained to him how everything had come about. The visitor said, "No wonder you're sick! It would cost a thousand pieces of pure gold to cure your ailment! There is, nevertheless, a way to get free from it, but I'm afraid you won't believe."



Ōhashi insisted, "If you tell me the truth, how could I doubt? Please teach me!"

So the visitor explained to Ōhashi, "In your whole body, there is nothing that acts apart from perception and cognition. Perception and cognition have a host. Whatever you are doing, even when in a rush, look for this host within. What is it that sees? What is it that hears? If you practice this introspection earnestly and do not give up, your inherent Buddha-nature will suddenly appear. When you reach this state, you find it to be a shortcut to escape from the realm of misery."

Taking these words to heart, Ōhashi began to practice this introspective exercise in secret. Eventually she reached the point where there was no interruption in her inward attention.

Then one night a terrific thunderstorm arose, so violent that lightning struck in more than twenty places. Having always been terrified of thunder and lightning, Ōhashi huddled under her bedding with her servant girl.

Suddenly Ōhashi remembered the Zen exercise. Casting aside her fears, she sat bolt upright.

All at once a thunderbolt struck the courtyard. The impact threw Ōhashi flat on her back, knocking the wind out of her.

When she recovered her breath, Ōhashi noticed her perceptions were somehow different than usual, and she felt an indescribable joy.

Subsequently Ōhashi was released from bondage in the brothel when a man paid her debt and married her. She then sought out the Zen master Hakuin and spent the balance of her life deepening her understanding.

## AN AWAKENING

Zeshin spent many years living in seclusion on Mount Yoshino, outside the ancient capital city of Kyoto. There he practiced simply sitting, until one day his mind opened up and he forgot all his intellectual knowledge.

In a nearby temple there lived an old adept of the Sōtō school of Zen. Zeshin went to him and told him of his realization, seeking witness to his enlightenment. The adept said, "Master Bankei is the enlightened guide of the age. Go to him to study."

So Zeshin proceeded directly to Jizō temple east of Kyoto, where he was told Bankei was staying. At that time, however, the great mas-

ter was in seclusion and was not receiving any visitors. Nevertheless, Zeshin came to the temple every day and sat outside the gate all day, returning to the city at night. He did this for thirteen days in a row.

Finally the keeper of the inn where Zeshin was staying asked him what was going on. Zeshin told him the facts as they were. Trying to help out, the innkeeper directed him to master Dokushō of nearby Saga.

Now Zeshin went to call on Dokushō and told him of his understanding. Dokushō simply said, "Keep it well." Zeshin left the same day and went back to Mount Yoshino.

Several months later, Zeshin set out again to try to see Bankei, the master of the age. On the way to Jizō temple, he heard that Bankei was then in Edo, the capital of the shoguns, where Bankei taught at Kōrin temple.

When Zeshin finally arrived, Bankei met with him right away.

When Zeshin had presented his understanding, Bankei said, "And the ultimate end?"

Zeshin hesitated, trying to think of something to say; then he hung his head.

This happened three times.

Finally Zeshin asked, "Is there an ultimate end?"

Zen master Bankei said, "You don't know how to use it."

Zeshin again hung his head, unable to say anything.

Something like this happened three times before Zeshin finally asked, "How is it used?"

At that moment, an oriole called out in the yard. Bankei said, "You hear the oriole when it cries."

Zeshin went into ecstasy. He prostrated himself before the Zen master three times.

Bankei said, "After this, don't speak vainly."

At the end of the summer meditation retreat at Kōrin temple, Bankei returned to his principal teaching center in western Japan. Zeshin followed him there.

For several days after his return, the Zen master met with newcomers. Each day Zeshin came before the Zen master with other new arrivals, but Bankei paid him no attention. This happened on three successive days, with Zeshin showing up to be seen by the master and Bankei saying nothing to him.

When the crowd had finally dispersed, at last Bankei addressed

Zeshin, saying, "You're lucky. If you hadn't met me, you'd have become a braggart."

### STILL ALIVE

Kōsen studied Zen with master Ryōten, trying to meditate on emptiness. Ryōten admonished him, "Intensive Zen meditation must be like a mute having a dream. You are too intellectual to study Zen."

Far from being discouraged by this, Kōsen stirred himself to make even greater efforts. One night as he sat watching the rain, a boy monk called to him in a loud voice. Kōsen responded, then all of a sudden experienced an awakening of insight.

Later Kōsen went to study with Zen master Hakuju. One day the master quoted a famous line of scripture that says, "Don't dwell on anything, yet enliven the mind." Then he asked Kōsen, "What is 'the mind'?"

Kōsen said, "Not dwelling on anything!!!"

Hakuju punched him six or seven times and said, "You ignoramus! You still don't know the meaning of the words 'yet enliven,' do you?"

At that moment, Kōsen attained liberation.

### USELESS SUFFERING AND DISBELIEF

Once Zen master Bankei said to a group of people, "When I was first inspired to seek enlightenment, because I did not find an enlightened teacher I practiced all sorts of austerities, wasting my body away.

"Sometimes I would cut off all human contact and live in isolation. Sometimes I would fashion a paper enclosure and sit inside it, or I would set up screens and sit in a dark room, sitting in the lotus position without lying down, until my thighs became ulcerated and festered, leaving permanent scars.

"Then when I'd hear of the existence of a teacher at such-and-such a place in such-and-such a province, I'd go there directly to meet him. After several years of this, there were few places in all of Japan that my footsteps had not reached.

"All this was due to the fact that I hadn't met an enlightened teacher. After my mind opened up one day, for the first time I realized how useless my years of toil and pain had been, and I attained peace.

"Now I tell you all how to attain fulfillment in your present lives

without straining yourselves, but you don't completely believe in it. This is because you are not really serious."

### CONFESSIONS OF A ZEN MASTER

Yui-e, an elder of the Sōtō school of Zen, came to Zen master Bankei and said, "I was inspired when I was seventeen or eighteen years old. For over thirty years I sat for long periods without lying down, concentrating single-mindedly, but found errant thoughts and false consciousness hard to erase. In recent years my mind and intellect have both become clear, and I have attained peace. How did you concentrate in the past?"

Bankei replied, "I too toiled over the occurrence of thoughts when I was young, but suddenly I realized that our school is the school of the enlightened eye, and no one can help another without clear perception. From the beginning I transcended all other concerns and concentrated on working solely on attainment of clear vision. For this reason, I have mastered the ability to see whether other people have true perception."

### MIND AND MOUNT

Once Zen master Bankei spent several nights sitting under a crucifix in an execution ground, testing his Zen mind. After that he lay down on an embankment surrounding a corral.

Now it so happened that there was a warrior in the corral beating a horse. Seeing this, Bankei hollered, "Hey! What do you think you're doing?"

The warrior heard the Zen master shouting but paid no attention. Whipping his horse, he galloped past Bankei. Again the master shouted, "Hey! What do you think you're doing?"

This happened three times before the warrior stopped and got off his horse. Approaching the Zen master, he now saw that Bankei was not an ordinary man. The warrior said, "You were yelling at me. Do you have something to tell me?"

Bankei said, "Rather than beat your horse for being unruly, why not chastise yourself and train your own mind right?"

### A MARTINET

Enzui was a rare master. He never showed any sign of anger on his face and rarely even spoke. He never lay down to sleep and hardly

ever ate. Neither material nor sexual desires ever occurred to him in his life.

One day Enzui's Zen teacher Manzan called him and gave him a scolding, saying, "Fasting and never lying down are inhibiting your potential for the Way. Diligence and meditation are decreasing your life of wisdom. Why not let go entirely, naturally going along with the flow, becoming a clean and free individual without contrivance or compulsion?"

Bowing in gratitude, Enzui left, covering his tears. After that he exerted himself even more, increasing his ascetic practices. One day his mind opened up, and he attained a state where there is no doubt.

Later on in life, Enzui returned to his native province and built a cloister there, vowing thenceforth never to go out into human society. Even if old acquaintances wrote to him, he didn't reply, and when Zen seekers knocked at his door, he didn't open up.

Enzui died in 1736, at the age of seventy. One of his followers related, "The teacher fasted and never lay down all his life, continuing these austerities even until the moment of his death, when he put on a formal robe and passed away sitting in a chair. Even after he died, his body remained upright, his posture of meditation still composed."

## THE SEED OF ZEN PRACTICE

One day Zen master Shōsan said of a certain individual, "So-and-so is a great practitioner, is he not? He says that no matter what kind of plague he may die from, he wants to die as calmly as if he were taking a walk in the neighborhood."

One of the students in the group said, "He just thinks that way—he's not the kind of man to do Zen practice."

The master said, "Even if that is so, still he is a man with the seed of great Zen practice."

## LAST WORDS

When Tenkei was on his deathbed, he was surrounded by his congregation of disciples, who were weeping and wailing. The Zen master looked around at them and said, "When the Buddha was about to enter extinction, he was surrounded by monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen, all crying in distress. The Buddha scolded them, saying,



'If you really understood the four holy truths, why would you weep?' I do not censure your weeping and wailing today, because you are not rid of attachment to the Teaching.

"Do you wonder why I say this? All my life I have been upholding Zen Buddhism and working wholeheartedly for people, but human feelings are arrogant, the influence of education is weak, and very few people have faith. Imagining how there will be no guides to bring out the true teaching in the future, unawares I weep.

"Everything is conditional and ultimately empty of inherent selfhood. This is easy to state but hard to understand clearly. I'm afraid you may misunderstand it; but when you do really understand it, you are heirs of Buddha's teaching, repaying the boon of the Buddha and Zen founders. Upholding this principle, work for the benefit of others, on and on.

"If people who are not present here should come seeking me in the future, then tell them I said this on my deathbed, weeping as I spoke."

## THE DECLINE AND REVIVAL OF ZEN

Hakuin, the great Zen master who revived the Rinzai sect in the eighteenth century, studied with many teachers. It was Shōjū Rōjin, however, who opened his eyes to the depth and breadth of real Zen.

Shōjū used to say, "This Zen school of ours declined in the Sung dynasty [960–1278] and died out in the Ming dynasty [1368–1644]. Although some of the residual efficacy was transmitted to Japan, it is as faint as stars in daytime. This state of affairs is truly lamentable."

Shōjū also said, "Everywhere nowadays there are only lifeless imitators studying signposts, 'Zen teachers' without liberated vision. Such people haven't even dreamed of what is transmitted by the enlightened."

Later on, after his own enlightenment, Hakuin would tell people, "When I heard old Shōjū's criticisms, I wondered why he was so indignant about the Zen centers of the time, what with the proliferation of monasteries and the emergence of famous teachers. Later, when I traveled around the Zen world and saw a number of 'masters,' I did not run into a single true master with great insight. Only then did I realize how the Way of old Shōjū was far superior to those of other Zen centers."

## INDEPENDENCE

Once Zen master Tenkei was formally invited to become the teaching abbot of a certain monastery. He refused, saying, "Decadence has been increasing for a long time; since the basis of the teaching has been lost, how can anyone appear in the world as a teacher? Say no more about it."

The emissary bringing the invitation responded, "The congregation at the monastery only wants to borrow you for the sake of the Great Teaching. Who would say that is heterodox?" And he kept begging the Zen master so insistently that Tenkei finally assented.

The following year, however, Tenkei withdrew from the monastery on account of a certain incident. He said in a verse,

Coming was fine, going's fine too;  
 flowing water, a floating cloud—an individual mendicant.  
 Why be led by the nose by other people?  
 Going along with circumstances, today I am leaping again.

## LAST WORDS

"Old Lady O-San" attained enlightenment while studying with Zen master Tetsumon. Later, when the great master Hakuin came to her province, O-San went to see him.

To test the woman, Hakuin asked her about "the sound of one hand clapping."

O-San promptly uttered a verse:

Rather than listen  
 to Hakuin's sound  
 of one hand clapping,  
 clap both hands  
 and do business!

When O-San was in her final illness, she was surrounded by her children, who sought some last words from her. She smiled and intoned a verse:

In this world  
 where words do not remain at all,  
 any more than the dew

on the leaves,  
whatever should I say  
for posterity?

## BIRTH AND DEATH

Goshū came to Zen master Yui-e and said, "I have been studying Zen for many years, but have not yet succeeded. Please give me some guidance."

Yui-e said, "There is no secret trick to Zen study. It's just a matter of freedom from birth and death."

Goshū asked, "How does one pass through birth and death to freedom?"

Raising his voice, Yui-e said, "Your every passing thought is birth and death!"

At these words Goshū went into ecstasy, feeling as if he had put down a heavy burden.

## A REFORMED HERETIC

Ummon began to study Confucian books and religious texts when he was fourteen or fifteen years old. At the age of twenty-two, however, he had a change of heart. "Even if I read every exoteric and esoteric book in existence," he reflected, "what good will that do on the border of life and death?"

After that he gave away all of his books and abandoned academic studies.

Subsequently Ummon went to see a Zen master, who taught him to work on koans.

Ummon protested, "I don't want to work on koans. Just knowing for myself a state of total death and complete cessation, having become a pile of ashes, I do not entertain any doubts. In the course of daily activities, what is going on? Is it there? Is it not? As long as I ask myself this, that is enough."

The Zen master said, "If you act like that, you will become a heretic."

Ummon retorted, "Even if I become a heretic, it is enough to have attained peace of mind."

Ummon continued to meditate single-mindedly for another two years.

One day as he was gathering firewood in the forest, Ummon felt the whole world collapse, including himself. In that instant he attained cosmic joy.

After that Ummon reflected, "Although I have attained my own peace and happiness, this is no more than the principle of the standard canonical teachings. What about the Zen message that is specially transmitted outside of doctrine?"

So he redoubled his efforts for another two years, until he finally discovered the living experience of Zen. Now his mind was completely released.

When Ummon was about to die, he admonished his students in these terms: "I have four statements. First is to cut through all mental entanglements, to rely on universal truth. Second is to let go of body and mind, to shed birth and death. Third is to transcend the absolute, to establish an individual life. Fourth is to haul rocks and carry earth, to perpetuate the life of wisdom."

Ummon's parting verse said,

The last word  
lights up the heavens  
and lights up the earth.

## AN ECCENTRIC SAGE

Entsū was an eccentric sage of the little known Ōbaku school of Zen. An unconventional man, he went where he wanted and did what he wished. He lived alone, not staying in any fixed place. Hardly anything about his life is known for sure.

Once Entsū was in the city of Kyoto to pay a visit to a certain family. In the hubbub, the simpleminded Zen master forgot where he was going. Not knowing what else to do, he began knocking on doors, one after another, asking whoever answered, "Is this the house Entsū is supposed to visit?"

On another occasion, someone asked Entsū to write a preface for a certain book. Entsū agreed, but he scribbled so badly that the preface was illegible in many places. The man who had requested the writing brought it back to Entsū to ask him what it said.

The Zen master examined his own writing again and again, then finally declared, "I can't read it either! One of my students is good at reading my writing—you'd better show it to him."

## ZEN SCHOLARSHIP

Honkō was an unusually talented Zen master, irrepressibly outstanding, with a wide learning and a powerful memory. His own Zen teacher Shigetsu had been one of the greatest scholarly masters. Honkō himself used to travel around lecturing on Zen at the invitation of centers all over the country.

Among Honkō's voluminous writings is a commentary on parts of the redoubtable *Shōbōgenzō*, which is the magnum opus of the great thirteenth-century Zen master Dōgen. The first and only great Buddhist work written in classical Japanese, *Shōbōgenzō* is one of the most difficult works in the canon.

While Honkō was working on his commentary on *Shōbōgenzō*, a monk involved in the study of logic came to him requesting that he expound the *Śūrangama-sūtra*, a most abstruse and complex work in the Chinese language.

At once the Zen master placed the *Śūrangama-sūtra* on the left side of the desk, set the *Shōbōgenzō* on the right, and put a piece of paper in the middle. Then he proceeded to lecture on the *Śūrangama-sūtra* while simultaneously reading the *Shōbōgenzō* and writing a commentary on it, keeping his attention on all three tasks without confusion.

Those who observed this were astounded, and rumors began to circulate that Honkō was an incarnation of a spirit or a saint.

## LONG JOURNEY HOME

Daikyū's exceptional nature was evident even when he was still just a child. Teachers of all schools of Buddhism sought to enroll him as a disciple, but his parents refused to give their permission.

Nevertheless, Daikyū finally left home to enter Zen discipleship when he was only five years old.

When Daikyū was in his fifteenth year, one day he happened to hear his teacher talking to someone about something he called "the state before birth." This made Daikyū wonder, and he used to sit and meditate whenever he had any free time.

Later on, Daikyū went to see Zen master Zōkai in Kyoto, to ask about the essentials of concentration. On the way there, he kept his attention on the tip of his nose, so he didn't even see the clamor and



fanfare of the ancient capital even as he walked through it. So absorbed was he in concentration that he bumped into numerous horse carriages on the road, their drivers hollering at him as he continued unminding on his way.

Having met the master Zōkai, Daikyū asked permission to remain there to study Zen. Zōkai assented and gave Daikyū the task of attending to the master's medicine. Daikyū was eighteen years old at that time.

One day when Daikyū went to throw away some herbal waste, he forgot himself completely on reaching the river. Even though it was the season when the maples turn scarlet as brocade, he didn't even see them. Such was the pinpoint intensity of his concentration. People used to call him "the Entranced Attendant."

At the age of twenty-three, Daikyū went to meet the famous Zen master Kogetsu and expressed his perception to him. Kogetsu said, "Your perception is after all that of an outsider. It would be completely useless on the shore of life and death. Focus your mental energy intensely, and someday you will naturally attain unification."

Then Kogetsu taught Daikyū a set of twelve poems by an ancient Chinese Zen master and had him use these to guide him in his daily and nightly meditations.

One day the next summer, as Daikyū was carrying a tea bottle to the storehouse, he suddenly felt as if he were walking in space, his mind solid as iron. As he stopped and stood there, a clear wind blew into his chest. Continuing on his way, he bumped into a pillar and suddenly had an insight.

Daikyū went to Zen master Kogetsu and said, "Today I have finally gotten through the obstruction in my heart!"

Kogetsu just smiled.

After several years of further study with Kogetsu, Daikyū thought he had mastered Zen completely. Figuring there was no one anywhere who could teach him anything anymore, Daikyū decided to seek out a place of retreat to mature his realization.

In the course of his journey, however, Daikyū happened to read a verse written by the great Zen master Hakuin. It was so extraordinary that Daikyū determined to go see Hakuin in person.

When Daikyū met Hakuin, he found the great master a truly impressive Zen personality. Daikyū soon asked permission to continue his Zen studies with Hakuin.

Already a longtime seeker, Daikyū had a notebook in which he had recorded every Zen statement he had mastered. Determined to make a fresh start in Hakuin's tutelage, he now took his precious notebook and burned it.

Daikyū was twenty-six years old at this time.

One day, Daikyū accompanied Hakuin on a visit to Unzan, another Zen master. In the course of conversation, the subject of the Zen classic *The Blue Cliff Record* came up. Unzan asked Hakuin which verse in that collection he considered best. Hakuin named a certain verse, and Unzan agreed.

Daikyū, who was sitting there listening to the conversation of the two elder masters, was thoroughly bewildered by what he heard. He himself had been studying Zen for more than twenty years, and yet he was unable to make such fine distinctions as the elder masters.

On their way back, Daikyū wanted to tell Hakuin what he had realized, but he found it hard to convey. Following the great master along the road, Daikyū stepped forward several times, trying to get Hakuin to stop and talk to him.

Aware that Daikyū was ripe for a breakthrough, Hakuin deliberately brushed him off and kept on going.

Thoroughly upset, Daikyū went to sit on the veranda of a house by the roadside.

After meditating for a good while, Daikyū suddenly had an insight. Opening his eyes, he found that Hakuin was long gone.

Running back to the temple, Daikyū presented his understanding to Hakuin. The elder master attested to the truth of his realization.

Not long after that, Daikyū left Hakuin. As he was parting, he asked the great master, "What is the primary formula?"

Hakuin said, "A, B, C."

Daikyū asked, "What is the secondary formula?"

Hakuin said, "M, N, O."

Daikyū bowed and departed.

Hakuin's assistant, Zen master Tōrei, overheard this exchange. Later on he said to his followers, "That Daikyū is really crude; he didn't even ask about the tertiary formula. I hope he comes here sometime, so I can poke into the matter for him."

When Daikyū was twenty-nine years old, he went back to look after his first teacher, who was now a very old man.

One night Daikyū sat until very late, when he happened to hear a

dog howl. At that moment his mind suddenly opened up, and he attained great enlightenment, shedding his previous knowledge and views all at once.

The next day he went to see Seizan, a Zen master he had worked with in the past. Before Daikyū had said a word, Seizan said to him, "I knew you had potential for enlightenment from the very start. I have been waiting here for a long time for you to catalyze it on your own. It seems to be a matter of timing. I conceal nothing from you; now I have bequeathed to you the treasury of the eye of truth."

Daikyū simply bowed.

Eventually Daikyū became a Zen teacher. He was very strict. "Once universal life is manifest," he would demand of his students, "why can't you pass through to freedom?" To his profound regret, no one in his congregation realized what he meant.

In the spring of his fifty-ninth year, Daikyū fell ill. Realizing his end was near, he presented his spiritual heir with tokens of successorship, including the robe of the faith representing transmission of Buddhist precepts and a document of the precise lineage of masters.

When Daikyū's condition became critical, followers surrounding him asked for a final statement.

Drawing himself up majestically, Daikyū assumed a joyful appearance. With a smile he opened his eyes, making sure everyone saw him do this. Then he passed away sitting there in a state of serene calm.

## A DRUNKEN BUDDHA

Suiwō and Tōrei were Zen master Hakuin's two most capable assistants. Suiwō was known as a master of great capacity, Tōrei as a master of subtle detail. Many of Hakuin's later successors actually received their advanced training from one or both of these younger masters.

Suiwō was already over thirty years old when he met Hakuin for the first time. Nothing whatsoever is known of his early life. The great master Hakuin saw Suiwō to be a man of exceptional spirit, and pressed him very hard to realize his potential.

Suiwō spent twenty years in Hakuin's school, but he lived ten miles away and never came to the temple except when there was a lecture. His private consultations with the teachers always took place

late at night, so no one ever saw Suiwō coming or going. On lecture days he would leave as soon as the talk was over. Thus it was hardly realized that Suiwō was Hakuin's disciple.

Suiwō was eccentric by nature. Fond of rice wine, he paid no attention to trivial matters, and often spoke and acted outside the bounds of normal convention. He hardly sat in meditation at all and scarcely read any scripture. He had no fixed abode but would sprawl out to sleep wherever he might be, considering himself lucky if he had managed to obtain enough wine to get tipsy. He enjoyed hobbies of chess and painting and lived life as he pleased. People couldn't decide whether he had hidden depths or was just a shallow man.

Although Suiwō did not care to live in Hakuin's temple, when the great master was in his final illness, Suiwō came back to take care of him. After Hakuin died, Suiwō inherited the temple, but he didn't do anything. Whenever people came to study Zen, Suiwō would simply tell them to go to Tōrei. Yet in spite of his refusal to talk about Zen, there were never fewer than seventy or eighty seekers surrounding him.

Now Daikyū and Reigen, Zen masters who had also studied with Hakuin, began writing letters to Suiwō urging him to get to work. In spite of their efforts, however, Suiwō remained serenely unmoved.

Seven years after Hakuin's passing, Daikyū, Reigen, and Tōrei finally converged on Suiwō and insisted that he be the master of ceremonies for the traditional seven-year memorial service to be held for Hakuin by his disciples. Unable to refuse, Suiwō rose to the occasion by lecturing on the Five Houses of Zen to an assembly of more than two hundred.

Suiwō was about fifty-eight years old at this time. Now the ranks of his followers swelled to more than a hundred. They lived in individual quarters all over the area, and there was not enough time for Suiwō to meet with them all when they came to see him.

Suiwō was also invited to speak at other places, attracting audiences of three to five hundred. In later years he drew as many as seven and eight hundred listeners to his lectures on the Zen classics.

Suiwō used to tell people, "An ancient said that it is preferable to be too relaxed than too intense. I do not agree; it is better to be too intense than too relaxed." He would add, "Don't be weak and dependent. Someone who keeps on seeking the truth unremittingly can penetrate in one or two nights."

Suiwō also used to say, "Everywhere else they are orderly and regular, their ceremonious bearing models of dignity. Here we have elephant eyes and monkey noses, with no hair on the shins. Of what use are worldlings making a living by reciting scriptures?"

Speaking of the school of his old teacher Hakuin, Suiwō said, "The only one of his followers who snatched all the spiritual goods from Hakuin's house was Tōrei. The only one who penetrated deeply into the source of his teaching was Daikyū."

Suiwō also said, "Even Zen monks who traveled freely throughout the land without inhibition found themselves at a loss when they met Hakuin. Why was this? Because 'brambles reached the sky, barbed wired covered the ground,' so that they could neither advance nor retreat. Therefore they had their flags and drums taken away, so they took off their armor and surrendered. None of the other Zen congregations have these brambles; that is why monks stride right past them, and they are unable to trip up anyone at all. I guess that's fitting."

When Suiwō was on his deathbed, his attendants asked for a parting verse. Suiwō scolded them. When they repeated the request, he took a brush and wrote,

I've been fooling  
 Buddhas and Zen masters  
 for seventy-three years.  
 As for the final statement,  
 What? What?  
 Kaaa!

Closing his eyes, he passed away.

## THE MASTER OF SUBTLE DETAIL

Tōrei first studied Zen with master Kogetsu. Later on he went through a severe apprenticeship with Hakuin.

Well prepared by his work with Kogetsu, Tōrei soon attained awakening under Hakuin's tutelage. Within a few years, he had learned the whole of Hakuin's inner teaching.

Unfortunately, the duress of Tōrei's exertions broke his body down, and he fell mortally ill. Finding no medical treatment of any avail, Tōrei thought to himself, "Even though I have found out all



about the source and the methods of Zen, what good will that do if I should suddenly die?"

So he wrote a book called *The Inexhaustible Lamp of Zen*. Showing it to Hakuin, he said, "If there is anything worthwhile in this book, I'd like to pass it on to future generations. If it's a bunch of claptrap, however, I'll toss it right in the fire."

Hakuin took a look at it and said, "This will be medicine to open the eyes of later generations."

Then Tōrei left Hakuin and went to Kyoto, where he lived quietly, taking care of his illness, resigned to accept whatever was in store for him, death or life.

One day while he was in a mindless state, all at once Tōrei saw through Hakuin's lifetime experience. From that point on he recovered spontaneously.

Overcome with joyfulness, Tōrei wrote Hakuin a letter, telling him what had happened. The great master called Tōrei back and made him his Zen successor.

After Tōrei's recovery, he and Hakuin collaborated to set up a curriculum for a Zen school. Most of the work on the detailed examinations in the curriculum was evidently done by Tōrei. Late in Hakuin's life, when his energy finally waned, Tōrei worked hard to prod and encourage the disciples. Many of Hakuin's last disciples were crude in their realization; the outstanding ones were those whose fine tuning was completed by Tōrei.

## BUDDHAHOOD IN THIS LIFE

Once Zen master Tōrei was giving a talk on the Teaching in Saga, on the mountainous outskirts of Kyoto. It was the dead of winter, and the weather was so cold that everyone in the audience looked intensely uncomfortable.

Tōrei bellowed, "Those of you who are cowed by cold weather should return to mundane life right away! How can you learn Zen? Why don't you look for it in your own hearts? Fish are in the midst of water, yet do not know the water is there; people are in the midst of sublime truth, but do not know the truth."

In the audience at that time was an early follower of the Mind Studies movement, a man named Nakazawa Dōni, who was later to establish Mind Studies in eastern Japan. Hearing these words from

Zen master Tōrei, he suddenly attained enlightenment. "Exposition of the Teaching means not putting the mind on externals," he later explained, adding, "This is what they mean by attaining Buddhahood in this very body."

### PREMATURE RECOGNITION

Ryōzai first studied Zen with Kogetsu. Later he followed Hakuin, under whose tutelage he attained awakening.

When Ryōzai came to Hakuin, the great teacher saw at once that he had an unusual capacity. Ryōzai spent several years with Hakuin, eventually receiving his recognition as a Zen master. Thus Ryōzai became the first of many teachers to be trained by the great Zen master Hakuin.

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1. Later on, however, Hakuin would say to people, "I gave Ryōzai the seal of approval too soon. Because of this, he cannot master things now. If I had waited another three years before giving him permission to teach, no one in the world would be able to criticize him."

Someone asked Hakuin why he had given Ryōzai approval so soon. The great master said, with deep regret, "At that time, I was only conscious of how difficult it is to find such an individual. I didn't realize it was too soon."

### THE GREAT WORK

Gasán went traveling when he was only sixteen years old. Entering a Zen cloister, in ninety days of intense work he attained some insight. After that, he went from teacher to teacher, studying with more than thirty Zen masters. None of them could do anything for him, so he returned to his original teacher Gessen.

Gessen recognized young Gasán's mastery and suggested that he give up wandering. At that time, Gasán himself also believed that he had mastered Zen.

Now it happened that Gasán had passed by Zen master Hakuin's school from time to time, but he had no desire to meet the famous teacher.

One day, however, he reflected, "Of the many teachers all over the land I have seen, not one could point out anything to me. Hakuin is the only one whose methods I do not know."

This thought inspired in Gasán the desire to meet Hakuin. He told

Gessen of his intention. Gessen said, "Why should you necessarily meet Hakuin?" Gasan again thought he was right and stayed where he was.

Another year passed, when Gasan happened to hear that Hakuin had been invited to lecture on the classic *The Blue Cliff Record* in Edo, the capital city. Now he thought, "As long as I haven't seen that old teacher, I am not really a great man."

Even though Gessen tried to stop him again, now Gasan was determined to go. He traveled straight to Edo to meet the great master Hakuin.

When Gasan had presented his understanding, Hakuin hollered, "What charlatan have you come from to foul me with so much bad breath?" And he tossed Gasan out.

But Gasan didn't give up. After being thrown out three times, he still thought he was really enlightened and that Hakuin was just trying to break him down on purpose.

Then one night as the lecture series was about to end, Gasan reflected, "It is in fact true that Hakuin is the greatest teacher in the land. Why would he reject people arbitrarily? He must have a point."

Now Gasan went to apologize to Hakuin for being rude, and asked for some instruction. Hakuin said, "You are immature. You'll pass your whole lifetime carrying a belly-skin of Zen around. Even if you can speak glibly, that won't empower you when you reach the shore of life and death. If you want to make your everyday life intensely satisfying, you must hear the sound of one hand clapping."

Later Gasan said to his own disciples, "I spent almost twenty years traveling all over the country, studying with more than thirty teachers. I was so sharp that none of them could cope with me. Finally I ran into old Hakuin and was kicked out three times, finding my usual empowerment useless at this point. Then I became a sincere follower.

"At that time, who in the world could have hit me but Hakuin? I do not value the greatness of his virtue or the breadth of his fame. I do not value the transcendence of his perception or his clear and thoroughgoing insight into the complex koans of the ancients. I do not value his fluent explanations or his fearless expositions. I do not value the number of his followers. I only value the fact that whereas all the other Zen teachers in the land could do nothing with me, by means of his harsh measures Hakuin managed to bring me to an impasse, finally enabling me to finish the Great Work.

"Obviously, this work is not at all easy. I followed Hakuin for only four years, when he was so old that he was sometimes too tired for interviews. As a result, I called on master Tōrei and learned the highest teachings from him. If Tōrei hadn't been there, I would never have been able to work out the last details."

### STERN MEASURES

Izu studied Zen with Hakuin for a long time. As a teacher in his own right, Izu inherited the harsh manner of the redoubtable master Hakuin but was even sterner. Whenever he would receive people asking about Zen, he would lay a naked sword next to his seat. If they were hesitant or argumentative, he would chase them out with the sword.

### LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

Teishū was unusually sharp by nature, and his erudition embraced both religious and secular classics. The only thing he could not understand was the principle of the *I Ching*, the ancient *Book of Change*.

Wishing to complete his learning, Teishū set out for the capital city of Edo to question the elder Confucian scholars about *The Book of Change*. Along the way, he passed by the temple of Zen master Hakuin. Since Hakuin was known as one of the greatest masters in the land, Teishū decided to seek lodging there and see him.

When they met, Hakuin asked, "Where are you going?" Teishū said, "To Edo." Hakuin asked, "What for?" Teishū said, "I don't understand the principle of *The Book of Change*, so I want to listen to the lectures of the elder scholars in the capital."

Hakuin said, "*The Book of Change* can hardly be understood without the power of seeing the essence of mind. Why don't you stay here for a while and try to see your essence? If you perceive the essence of mind, I will expound *The Book of Change* for you."

Teishū replied, "I will do just as you say." And he stayed there with Hakuin for intensive work. When the time was ripe, he forgot his doubts and actually did awaken.

### A MISTAKE

Chōdō studied Zen with master Kogetsu and realized the state of Nothingness.

Now at this time, the school of Zen master Hakuin was flourishing, and seekers from all over the country were flocking to the great teacher.

Chōdō wanted to go and have a Zen debate with Hakuin, but Kogetsu advised him not to go. Chōdō wouldn't listen, so Kogetsu said, "If you insist, then let me write a letter of introduction."

So Chōdō headed for Hakuin's place, carrying a letter of introduction from Kogetsu.

Chōdō reached the temple where Hakuin lived just as the great master was taking a bath. Barging right in, Chōdō presented his understanding. Hakuin said, "If you are this way, you haven't come here for naught. But go take a rest for now."

Now Chōdō thought that Hakuin also approved of him.

When Hakuin at length emerged from the bath, Chōdō went to meet with him formally, presenting the letter of introduction from Kogetsu.

Opening the letter from Chōdō's teacher, Hakuin found that it simply said, "This youngster is not without some insight, but he is a man of small measure. Please deal with him expediently." Hakuin immediately hollered at Chōdō, "You have a small capacity and an inferior potential. What good will it do to consider this completion of the Great Work?"

Having his view snatched away, Chōdō immediately went mad and never recovered. He went back to his hometown and built a little meditation hall, where he practiced Zen discipline by himself.

In Zen monasteries it is traditional to observe a special session of intensive meditation in the first week of the last month of the year commemorating the enlightenment of the Buddha. Chōdō used to bring child monks and cats to his meditation hall on these occasions and have them sit. When the cats would run away, Chōdō would catch them and beat them for breaking the rules.

Hakuin used to lament, "I have taught many people, but I only made mistakes in two cases, that of Chōdō and one other."

## TALKING AND LISTENING

Gettan used to say to his companions, "When you have a talking mouth, you have no listening ears. When you have listening ears, you have no talking mouth. Think about this carefully."



## THE ELEVENTH HOUR

Chōsha used to come to participate in the special annual intensive meditation session with Zen master Hakuin every single year, yet he never attained anything.

Finally one year Hakuin said to him at the conclusion of the session, "You come here every year, just like a duck diving into the water when it is cold. You are making a long journey in vain, without gaining half a bit of empowerment. I can't imagine how many straw sandals you have worn out over the years making this trip. I have no use for idlers like you around here, so don't come anymore!"

Deeply stirred, Chōsha thought to himself, "Am I not a man? If I do not penetrate through to realization this time, I will never return home alive. I will concentrate on meditation until I die."

Setting himself a limit of seven days, Chōsha went to sit in a fish-net shed by the seashore.

But even after seven days of sitting in meditation without eating or sleeping, Chōsha was still at a loss. There was nothing for him to do but drown himself in the ocean.

Removing his shoes in the traditional manner of a suicide rite, Chōsha stood in the waves. At that moment, seeing the shimmering ocean and the rising sun merging into a crimson radiance, all at once he became completely empty and greatly awakened.

## THE STONE ROBE

Nobody knows the real name of the Zen master they called the Stone Robe Monk. He lived alone in the neighborhood of Hakuin's temple and used to call on the great teacher from time to time.

A solitary individual, the master was so poor that he did not even own a robe. On very cold nights, he used to walk around his hut carrying a rock until he warmed up. Thus the local people took to calling him the Stone Robe Monk.

Later he disappeared. No one knows where he died, but the rock he used to carry around still sits in front of the hut.

## SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

Once on a journey Zen master Zenkō happened to see a ruined temple that he thought should be restored.

Completely without material resources of his own, Zenkō wrote a large sign saying, "This month, on such-and-such a day, the pilgrim Zen master Zenkō will perform a self-cremation. Let those who will donate money for firewood come watch."

Now Zenkō posted this sign here and there. Soon the local people were agog, and donations began pouring in.

On the appointed day, people jammed the temple, awaiting the lighting of the fire. Zenkō sat in the firewood, preparing to immolate himself. He called for the fuel to be ignited at his signal.

Now Zenkō went into silent meditation. A long time passed. All of a sudden, he looked up at the sky and nodded. Then he addressed the crowd, saying, "Listen, listen! There are voices in the clouds! Just as I was about to enter into extinction, the saints all said, 'It is still too early for you to think of leaving the defiled world! Put up with this world for a while, and stay here to save living beings.' So I can't go on with the cremation today."

Then he took the money that had been donated and was able to restore the abandoned temple with it.

## BUDDHISM AND THE WORLD

When Satsume was sixteen years old, she thought to herself, "Although I am not very beautiful, fortunately my body is sound. Undoubtedly I am to be married soon; I hope I get a handsome man."

Now she began to visit a certain shrine to pray, and she also started reciting a special scripture day and night. Even while she was doing her sewing and washing, the words of the scripture were constantly on her lips.

After several days of continual recitation, Satsume suddenly experienced an awakening of insight.

On one occasion, her father looked into her room and saw her sitting grandly on top of a copy of a Buddhist scripture. He was alarmed, thinking she may have gone mad; he gently admonished her, "What do you mean by sitting on a precious scripture? You will surely be punished by the Truth."

Satsume replied, "How is the wonderful scripture any different from my backside?"

Now her father thought this was even more bizarre; he went to tell the Zen master Hakuin.

Hakuin said, "I have a method that will help." He wrote a short poem, which he handed over and said, "Paste this on the wall of your home, where she will be sure to see it."

The poem said,

Hearing the call  
of a silent raven  
in the dark of night,  
one misses one's father  
before being born.

The man took the verse and did with it as Hakuin said. When she saw it, Satsume said, "This is the handwriting of master Hakuin. So even Hakuin only understands this much!"

Her father thought this was strange too, and told Hakuin about it. Hakuin said, "Bring Satsume here with you. I'll test her."

So Satsume and her father both came to visit Hakuin. The Zen master questioned the young woman closely, and Satsume answered fluently. Hakuin then presented a couple of koans. Satsume started thinking about them, but Hakuin said, "Go focus your mind on them."

Over a period of several days, Satsume passed through several levels of koans. Hakuin finally taught her that which goes beyond, but Satsume resisted and would not accept it. The Zen master then threw her out.

Satsume was ejected several times like this. By the time half a year had passed, she had seen through that which goes beyond and had thoroughly studied the most intricate and puzzling stories of the ancients. She was now a Zen master, even though still in her teens.

At this point, Satsume's father began looking for a suitable husband for her. At first she refused and would not marry, but Hakuin called her to him and said, "You have already seen through enlightened reality, so why should you reject mundane reality? What is more, marriage is an important duty for men and women. It would be better for you to go along with your father." So it was that Satsume got married.

After Satsume's passing, Hakuin's successor Suiwō said to his own disciples, "When our former teacher was alive, there were very many laywomen with perfectly clear insight. There were those among them

like Old Lady Satsu who were even beyond the reach of experienced Zen monks."

When Satsume was in her late years, she grieved exceptionally deeply over the loss of a granddaughter. The old man who lived next door chided her, "Why are you mourning so grievously? If people hear you, they'll wonder how you could still be acting like this even after having studied with Zen master Hakuin and attained insight into the essential. Please cut it down a little bit."

Satsume glared at the old man and retorted, "What do you know, baldy? My weeping and wailing are better for my granddaughter than incense, flowers, and lamps."

### THE PURELY MENTAL PURE LAND

Once a certain woman, whose name no one knows, attended a lecture by Hakuin. In his talk, the Zen master said, "The purely mental Pure Land, the Buddha in one's own being: once the Buddha appears, everything in the world radiates great light. If people want to perceive this, just turn to your own heart and seek single-mindedly.

"Since it is a purely mental Pure Land, how is the Pure Land arrayed? Since it is the Buddha in one's own being, what characteristics and refinements does the Buddha have?"

Hearing this, the woman thought, "That is not too hard." Returning home, she began to look into this day and night, bringing it to mind whether awake or asleep. Then one day, as she was washing a pot, she suddenly broke through.

Tossing aside the pot, she went to see Hakuin. She said, "I have come across the Buddha in my own body. Everything radiates with light. Marvelous! Marvelous!" She was so happy that she was dancing with joy.

Hakuin said, "This is what you say, but what about a cesspool? Does that radiate light?"

The woman went up and slapped Hakuin. "This old fellow isn't through yet," she said.

Hakuin roared with laughter.

### THE DAWN OF TRUTH

Genrō traveled all over Japan visiting Zen masters from the time he was nineteen years old. Eventually he thought to himself, "The teach-

ers everywhere are alike, giving guidance at random. They are unreliable. If I remain in a community, I will waste a lot of time on trivial things. It would be better for me if I lived alone in a deserted place in order to meditate single-mindedly."

One afternoon as he watched the setting sun, Genrō sighed to himself, "I have already spent five years working on Zen day and night. If I just spend my days this way, when will I ever pass all the way through?"

Genrō then sat on a boulder and plunged into intense concentration. Without realizing it, he sat there all through the night. Unaware of the breaking of dawn, Genrō suddenly heard the bell of a distant temple. At that moment his mind opened up and he attained great enlightenment.

Twenty-four years old at the time, Genrō composed an extemporaneous verse on this happy occasion:

At dawn, in response to the temple bell, the universe opens;  
The orb of the sun, bright, comes from the Great East.  
What this principle is, I do not know;  
Unawares my jowls are filled with gales of laughter.

## WHAT KIND OF WARRIOR

Seisetsu was most extraordinary even as a child. He left home and became a monk when he was just a boy.

Once the baron of the province came to visit the master of the temple on his way to the capital city. After they had chatted awhile, the master called little Seisetsu and had him pound the baron's back for him, to relieve the fatigue of the journey. The baron promised the boy that he would bring a religious robe for him on the way back from the capital the next year.

When the baron's stay in the capital city was over, he stopped by to see the Zen master again on his way back to his home fortress. The master had Seisetsu pound the baron's back for him this time as well, and the boy asked about the robe.

"I completely forgot," said the baron.

"What kind of samurai is this," exclaimed the boy, "who says one thing and does another?" Then he gave the baron a clout on the head and walked out.

The baron was deeply impressed by the unusual capacity of the boy, and he told the Zen master to take good care of him.



Later on Seisetsu studied with Gessen and Gasan, and went on to become one of the most redoubtable Zen teachers in the land.

Once when Seisetsu was seeing to the rebuilding of part of the monastery where he was teaching, a certain wealthy merchant came with a hundred ounces of gold, saying he wanted to donate it for the reconstruction project. Seisetsu took it without a word.

The next day the merchant came back to visit the Zen master. He remarked, "Although what I gave you was not so great an amount, it was an exceedingly costly donation for me. In spite of that, you didn't say a word of thanks. Why is that?"

Seisetsu hollered, "I am planting your field of blessings; why should I thank you?"

The merchant was very embarrassed. He apologized and thanked the Zen master.

## IRON FACE

Buttsū and Genrō were known throughout Japan as two of the fiercest Zen masters in the land. They were so ferocious in the ways they handled seekers that they were called Genrō the Wolf and Buttsū the Tiger.

Nobody knows where Buttsū came from or what his original name was. Some say he was originally a warrior from eastern Japan. He studied Zen for a long time and finally completed the Great Work. In his verse on awakening, he wrote,

This matter's been on my mind for eighteen years;  
 how many times have I gotten power  
 yet still couldn't sleep at peace?  
 One call, one answer, and clarity is complete:  
 I've vomited out the bellyful of Zen  
 that I had learned before.

Buttsū had a face of iron, severe and cold. He trained Zen students with harsh methods, not allowing human feelings to enter into the process at all. Many seekers who came to him could not bear this and left.

In the middle of the night of his death, Buttsū looked around and said, "Shall I go now?" Then he passed away while sitting in meditation, as though he had fallen asleep.

## PENETRATING ZEN

When Inzan was nine years old, a certain Zen master saw him and immediately realized that he was not ordinary. The Zen master went to the boy's home and persuaded his parents to let him become a monk.

The parents were easily convinced. "He was never of this world," they said, as they gave their permission for the boy to leave home to enter a Zen Buddhist order.

When Inzan was sixteen years old, he left his temple to seek a teacher to guide him to ultimate enlightenment and liberation. First he followed Bankoku, who taught the unique method of the late great master Bankei to a large congregation of followers. Three years later he went to Gessen, who was noted for the harsh manner of his way of teaching.

When Inzan arrived at Gessen's place, he was informed by the temple manager that there was no room for any more students. The manager suggested that Inzan was still rather young and would have time for intensive Zen practice later and that he might do well to go elsewhere to pursue academic studies in the meantime.

But Inzan was determined to study Zen with master Gessen. He pleaded for seven days, crying so hard that he finally wept tears of blood. Seeing Inzan's sincerity and determination, the manager told Gessen, who consented to see the young pilgrim.

Zen master Gessen asked Inzan, "You insistently ask to be allowed to stay here. What do you want to do?"

Inzan replied, "I am only here because the matter of life and death is important, and impermanence is swift."

Gessen retorted, "Here at place there is no big thing to life and no big thing to death. How could it seem that life passes by quickly and death comes swiftly?"

Inzan said, "It is precisely this freedom from life and death that I have been wondering about. Please take pity on me."

Gessen said, "You are young, a mere child. If you really want to practice Zen, you might as well go ahead."

So Inzan joined the congregation, studying day and night without slacking.

Two years later, at the age of twenty-one, Inzan participated in his

first session of collective intensive meditation. He felt that he had realized something, and went to tell Gessen.

The master saw that something was different about Inzan and posed a question. "I do not ask about the spoken or the unspoken; try to tell me the answer."

Inzan tried to say something. Gessen remarked, "After all you have fallen into intellectual consciousness," and sent him off.

Inzan went back to the meditation hall in a daze and did nothing but snivel and weep day and night. Everyone laughed at him and called him crazy.

Then one night in the midst of a contemplative trance Inzan suddenly saw through the meaning of "no big thing to life and no big thing to death." He went to tell Gessen, who commented, "You are right, but note that this is just a temporary byway. Do not think this is enough. If you keep on making progress and do not give up, someday you will have your own life."

In the spring of his twenty-sixth year, Inzan left Gessen and went traveling with some companions to visit the distinguished elder Zen masters of Kyoto and western Japan.

Inzan met with the elder masters and questioned them to make sure of his own understanding of Zen. All of the masters admired him and treated him kindly. No one prodded him anymore, so Inzan came to think there were no more enlightened masters in the whole country.

Inzan then left the area. Coming to central Japan, he went to see a Zen master living there. That master appointed Inzan abbot of a local temple.

Now this temple had no patrons, and no fields or gardens. Living contentedly in utter poverty, Inzan sat there for more than ten years.

One day, however, a traveling monk came by the temple with news of Zen master Gasan, a distinguished graduate of Hakuin's school, said to have the foremost eye of wisdom in the land.

Inzan packed his bag that very day and went to Edo, where Gasan was lecturing on *The Blue Cliff Record* to an audience of more than six hundred listeners.

When Inzan arrived, he went right in to see Gasan. The great master stuck out his hand and asked, "Why is this called a hand?" Before Inzan could reply, Gasan now stuck out a foot and said, "Why is this called a foot?" As Inzan tried to make some remark, the great master

Gasán clapped his hands and bellowed with laughter. Dumbfounded, Inzan withdrew.

The next day, Inzan went to see Gasán again. The great master said to him, "People who practice Zen today go through the impenetrable koans of the ancients breezily, without ever having done any real work. They versify the koans, or quote them, or add capping phrases, or give answers, all of them running off at the mouth, talking at random.

"For this reason many of them lose the spirit of the Way after they become abbots. Even if they don't run into trouble, none of them can really be teachers. It is truly pitiful.

"If you really want to practice Zen, then cast off everything you have studied and realized up until now and seek enlightenment single-mindedly."

Then Gasán told Inzan to contemplate an advanced koan dealing with his precise problem.

Inzan retreated into a local shrine to meditate, never coming out except for gruel and rice at dawn and noon. After several days like this, all of a sudden one morning he realized the meaning of the koan.

Hurrying back to Gasán, he presented his understanding. The great master was delighted. Meeting with Gasán every day after that, Inzan made a thorough study of the most puzzling stories and attained the inner secrets of Zen. He was then thirty-nine years old.

Later Inzan became a great Zen teacher in his own right, his fame resounding throughout the land. He had numerous distinguished disciples and left a rich spiritual bequest. After his death at the age of sixty-four, the imperial court awarded him the honorific title Zen Teacher, Lamp of Truth, Light of the Nation.

## CONTENTMENT

Kansán left home when he was nine years old. He had a brilliant mind and studied both Buddhist and Confucian classics. Inspired by one of the books he read, for a time Kansán devoted himself to the study and practice of esoteric Buddhism in western Japan. Later he went to the capital city of Edo, where he perused the massive Buddhist canon.

After nearly two decades of these studies, Kansán finally went to see a Zen teacher. Well versed in Buddhist practices, Kansán mastered the Zen teachings in two years of intensive work.

Subsequently Kansán was sent to take over the abbacy of a temple

in southern Japan. When he arrived, he found that drinking and carousing were so common in the area that the temple itself was accustomed to supplying visitors with wine, as if it were a lounge.

On the day that Kansan formally took over the abbacy of the temple, he destroyed every single wine jar, ashtray, and serving table. After that, guests were treated with a single cup of plain tea.

Three years later, Kansan retired. He disappeared into the mountains, putting a sign over the door of his hut that simply said, "Content."

### THE SOUND OF ONE HAND CLAPPING

When Taigen was a young man, he heard that the great Zen master Inzan was not only an enlightened Buddhist but an accomplished scholar of ancient Chinese history. Traveling directly to the Zen master's abode in provincial central Japan, Taigen asked to be allowed to study Zen with him and also to hear him lecture on a historical classic.

Inzan said to Taigen, "If you can hear the sound of one hand clapping, then and only then will I lecture on history to you."

Now Taigen was really excited. He plunged into deep meditation in order to solve the mystery of one hand clapping. To help his concentration, sometimes he would sit in a deep tub, and sometimes he would climb up into the mountain behind his hut to sit on a boulder. At times he would sit until dawn, not even realizing the whole night had passed.

At this time, Taigen was staying in a hermitage several miles from Inzan's place. Nevertheless, every day he would go to seek guidance, even when the road was several feet deep in snow. On numerous occasions in very deep snow he collapsed on the way, overcome by the cold, and had to be rescued by villagers.

Later Inzan moved to another temple, and Taigen followed him there to continue his apprenticeship. One night, after many more severe trials at the hands of the master, Taigen finally experienced great enlightenment.

### NATURE LOVER

Once there was a baron who was extremely fond of chrysanthemums. He had the whole rear garden of his mansion planted with them, and spent a lot of time and effort cultivating them.



In fact, the baron paid more attention to the care of his chrysanthemums than to his wife and concubines. Many of his retainers were punished for inadvertently breaking off a blossom. In short, the baron's passion for chrysanthemums made life miserable for everyone around him.

On one occasion, when a certain retainer accidentally broke off a blossom, he was ordered into confinement by the furious baron. Enraged by this treatment, the retainer resolved to disembowel himself in protest, according to the traditional warrior code.

Now it so happened that Zen master Sengai heard of this and hastened to intervene, preventing the retainer from committing suicide over such an affair.

Not content with a temporary measure, Sengai resolved to effect a permanent solution. One rainy night when the chrysanthemums were in full bloom, Sengai sneaked into the baron's garden with a sickle and cut down every single chrysanthemum.

Hearing a strange sound from the garden, the baron looked out and saw someone there. Rushing out wielding his sword in great alarm, he demanded to know what Sengai was doing.

The Zen master calmly replied, "Even weeds like this eventually become rank if they are not cut."

Now the baron realized how wrong he had been. It was like awakening from a dream. From that time onward, he no longer raised chrysanthemums.

## AN INNOCENT

Yamamoto Yasuo was a scholar of ancient Japanese literature and an expert in native poetry. Lamenting the decline of the imperial cultus, he wrote a book called *The Reality of the Gods* and killed himself in protest.

A wealthy man of social standing, Yamamoto left five children behind when he died, four sons and one daughter. His eldest son, a free-spirited youth, had no desire to inherit the family fortune. Giving up everything, he left home to study Zen, changing his name to Great Fool.

At the age of twenty-two, the young mendicant went traveling to look for a teacher. Finding a Zen master who could guide him, he mastered the teaching in a few years of intensive work.

Then he went traveling again, calling on Zen masters all over the

land, seeking further enlightenment. It was more than twenty years before he returned to his native province, where he built a hut. He was so poor that he wore a robe of patches, lived on gruel, and had no utensils save a single bowl, which he used for every purpose from grinding bean paste and cooking gruel to washing his hands and feet.

This Zen master loved to play with children. Wherever he went, he would gather a group to play kickball or hide-and-seek. Once when the master was in a game of hide-and-seek, the children went home, leaving him where he was. He stood still with his eyes closed till nightfall, when someone finally asked him what he was doing. He replied that he was playing hide-and-seek with the children and waiting for someone to come find him. He didn't even realize they had played a joke on him.

Once someone asked him why he liked to play with children. The master said, "I like their genuineness, their lack of falsehood." As a famous calligrapher, he was often approached with requests for writing, but he used to refuse if it didn't feel right to him. Whenever children asked him to write something, however, he would always be glad to take up his brush.

The master used to tell people, "There are three things I very much dislike: the poetry of poets, the writing of writers, and the cuisine of cooks."

## THE FIRST STONE

Once Zen master Dairyo was invited to a feast at the home of a wealthy landowner. Many other Buddhist monks were also present.

Someone in the household decided to play a joke on the monks. All of them were served with fish flesh, which Buddhist monks and nuns were forbidden to eat.

All of the monks at the feast abstained from the fish flesh except Zen master Dairyo, who ate it all, as if he didn't know what it was.

One of the monks surreptitiously pulled the Zen master's sleeve and said, "That's fish flesh!"

Dairyo looked the monk in the eye and retorted, "So how do you know what fish flesh is?"

## REALITY AND FAKERY

Zōbō pursued only literary studies before someone warned him that was not the way to ultimate truth. Then he went to a Zen master and learned to contemplate emptiness.

It took a long time for Zōbō to attain realization. Eventually, he got to the point where he was so absorbed in concentration that he forgot to eat and sleep.

One night as he was sitting quietly, unawares Zōbō fell asleep from exhaustion. When his Zen teacher struck him to wake him up, all at once he realized enlightenment.

Zōbō was twenty-three years old at the time. His teacher was strict and did not acknowledge people easily. Zōbō continued intensive study for over ten more years and finally completed the Great Work.

As a teacher in his own right, Zōbō was single-minded. Unconcerned with social conventions, he devoted himself solely to teaching Zen. Lamenting the degeneration of Zen schools, he roundly criticized imitation Zen masters and ignorant Zen followers.

Zōbō was also uncompromising in his private teaching and would not admit superficial understanding. Many seekers came to his school, but very few ever passed.

Zōbō was scarcely over sixty years old when he passed away in 1840. On the brink of death, he wrote a final verse:

Zōbō at sixty! Here's my real state:  
Where eight clouds are standing, I piss at the sky.  
It's a wonder, and a pity too,  
I didn't kill all the imitation Zen in the world.

After Zōbō's death, the emperor of Japan titled him Zen Master, Spiritual Mirror Shining Alone.

## RESPECT

Fūgai met more than ten Zen teachers, but his own mind was so sharp and free that no one could equal him. Finally he met the redoubtable Genrō the Wolf and attained great enlightenment at a single saying of the great Zen master. After he mastered the inner teachings, Fūgai left Genrō and disappeared into anonymity to mature his spiritual development.

Among Fūgai's successors was Tanzan, one of the outstanding masters of early modern times. Tanzan was also unusually sharp, and he saw through many of the Zen preachers of the day in his youth before he met master Fūgai.

Unlike his teacher Genrō before him, Zen master Fūgai was out-

wardly warm and gentle. Tanzan, in contrast, was a burly, virile man, temperamentally more like his spiritual grandfather Genrō. When Tanzan first met Fūgai, he took the mild gentility of the master as a sign of weakness and inwardly scorned him. Perceiving this, Fūgai suddenly posed a question so piercing that Tanzan broke out in a sweat all over his body, completely at a loss for something to say. Now Tanzan recognized Fūgai's unobtrusive mastery and became a true disciple.

Once Tanzan saw a painting of a tiger made by Fūgai. He remarked, "This tiger is like a cat, but even so it has its own inviolable majesty."

### PLUMBING THE SOURCE

Even as a child, Kokan wished to avoid the constraints of worldly entanglements. He was only seven years old when he left home to join Buddhist orders. He was initiated and given the precepts by the great Zen master Tōrei, who had been Hakuin's disciple. Within a few months, young Kokan was already capable of reciting scriptures, Zen poetry, and the recorded sayings of ancient masters.

When Kokan was nine years old, his mentor instructed him to pay a courtesy call on his parents. Traveling alone over the mountain path, Kokan slipped and fell into the river running through the valley.

Removing his robe, Kokan laid it out to dry by the side of the path, then sat on a boulder, stark naked, waiting for the robe to dry. Presently he fell asleep from exhaustion.

After a time a woodcutter passing by saw the sleeping boy and woke him up. "You're a traveling monk, aren't you?" he asked Kokan. "Why are you in such a state?"

Young Kokan told the woodcutter the truth of the matter. Then the woodcutter said, "It's almost nightfall. You'll never get where you're going today. Head back for the nearest village right away; I'll even escort you there."

Kokan laughed and said, "If I'm going to be a man, how can I turn back after having come this far?" Then he got up, put on his robe, and stalked off, finally to reach home in the middle of the night. His parents were very much surprised, but they took it in stride, remarking, "Your teacher has guts, letting you make the journey alone! Good thing you had the guts to do it!"

When Kokan was twenty, Tōrei sent him to see Zen master Gasan. Gasan told Kokan to hear the sound of one hand clapping.

Now Kokan went to work contemplating the sound of one hand. His concentrated doubt was so intense that felt as if he were carrying a heavy burden up a steep hill.

At this time it was the dead of winter, and the weather was extremely cold. Since Kokan had nothing but a single robe, Gasan took pity on him and asked one of the lay patrons to give him some padded clothing. Kokan accepted it as a courtesy but would not put it on.

Kokan also ignored the many cultural sites of the eastern capital and refused to go on sight-seeing tours with the other monks. "I have not yet mastered myself," he would say. "What leisure have I to go sight-seeing?"

Then one day as he was walking around the edge of the yard in meditation, all of a sudden Kokan experienced a great enlightenment.

When he told Gasan what he had realized, the elder master tested him with several koans. It turned out that Kokan still had some obstruction. Gasan said, "Although your entry into enlightenment has been ecstatic, you should still examine the root source of the sound of one hand in every detail."

After this, Kokan refined his practice and focused his energies tremendously. He had once asked Gasan who he should follow to complete his Zen studies after Gasan's death, and the old master had recommended Inzan. Now Kokan went to Inzan and worked intensively on cultivating thorough refinement.

Over a long period of time he attained all of the inner secrets of Zen and finished the Great Work. Inzan gave him formal recognition of his mastery and sent him to look after a hermitage. There Kokan spent sixteen years living in poverty and polishing his practice of Zen.

During that interval he often experienced awakenings. Once he had penetrated deeply into the root source of it all, he finally got to see that there was a special higher mystic function in the school of Hakuin, and he attained extraordinary freedom in his everyday experience. After that he taught people according to their individual potentials, and many benefited from his advice.

Like Hakuin, Gasan, and other great Zen masters, Kokan declined the honor of abbacy at a major monastery, preferring to work inconspicuously with sincere seekers only. He also returned a present of gold that had been given to him by a baron, saying he had not practiced Zen to win any prizes.

One year, the crops failed in the central seaboard provinces, and



famines ensued among the peasants. Kokan prepared gruel to feed the people who were fleeing starvation, begging along the road. They say that he helped an extremely large number of people in this manner.

As Kokan was nearing death, his foremost disciple asked him for a final verse. He hollered, "My final verse fills the universe! Why bother with pen and paper!"

The disciple said, "Even so, please release yet another expression, a statement of even greater fulfillment, to leave to future generations."

Kokan then smiled and wrote,

Seventy-four years  
bumping west and bumping east.  
The last word?  
Shh! Shh!

Kokan used to guide people by getting them to find out "the root source of the sound of one hand clapping." He was a strict Zen teacher and rarely gave anyone approval. When he died in 1843, he left only a few successors to carry on his work.

### THREE KINDS OF MENDICANTS

Gettan used to say, "There are three kinds of mendicants. First are those who teach others. Second are those who maintain the sanctuaries. Third are the rice bags and clothes hangers. Descendants of the Zen founder should take complete awareness for their sanctuary and teach others to perpetuate the life of wisdom of the Buddhas. As for those who are no more than rice bags and clothes hangers, they are criminals in Buddhism."

### LOOK INTO YOUR MIND

Kakushin went to China in the middle of the thirteenth century to study Zen. There he met a famous Zen master who asked him, "What is your name?"

Kakushin told the Zen master his name.

Noting that the name Kakushin means "Awakening the Mind" or "Awake Mind," the master wrote a verse for the pilgrim:

Mind is Buddha,  
Buddha is mind:  
Mind and Buddha,

being such, are there  
throughout all time.

After Kakushin's return to Japan, Emperor Kameyama heard of his Zen mastery and summoned him to teach in one of the imperial temples. Later the emperor also invited the master to the palace to ask him about Zen.

The master's profound discourse, immense intelligence, and uninhibited eloquence impressed Emperor Kameyama beyond anything he had ever known.

Realizing the exceptional quality of Zen Buddhism, the emperor converted the imperial residence into a Zen sanctuary.

The next emperor, Go-Uta, also invited Kakushin to a special imperial villa to teach Zen. The master said, "The Buddhas understand mind; ordinary people misunderstand mind. The source of all Buddhas is one; the realms of misunderstanding and understanding divide. Without depending on another power, you can know by inherent capacity. If you want to arrive at Buddhahood, you must look into your own mind."

## UNDISTRACTED

Utame was only fifteen years old when she first received instruction from an enlightened Zen nun, who taught her how to look into the innermost self.

Utame plunged into meditation day and night, paying no attention to anything else. Even when she was at her mirror putting on makeup, she was inwardly looking into the essence of mind. Sometimes she would become so absorbed that she would forget what she was doing and just sit there silently.

Now her parents, who had no idea what lay behind their daughter's strange behavior, began to think she might be suffering from depression or heading for a nervous breakdown. They tried to get her to go out to the theater and take trips to scenic places, but Utame had no desire for any of these diversions.

Finally one day her efforts came to fruition, and the young woman's mind opened up in great enlightenment.

Later Utame married and bore four children, two sons and two daughters. Her husband had the misfortune to go bankrupt, so Utame took up needlework to help support the family. She lived to be more

than seventy years old, eventually passing away one day in a state of serene repose.

## BEATING A BULLY

Descendant of a famous warrior, Butsugai was fierce and courageous. Although he entered Buddhist orders when he was only twelve years old, Butsugai mastered archery, horsemanship, and all the other traditional martial arts. Immensely strong, he could punch a hole in just about anything. Because of his physical power, he was called the Monk with Punching Power.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Japan was rocked by civil disturbances. At this time, a certain warrior band called the New Elite came to Kyoto, hoping to rise to power in a new national order. Rowdy and self-indulgent, this group of warriors became the terror of the townspeople.

One day Butsugai was walking along the street in Kyoto, when he happened to pass by the place where the New Elite were quartered. Drawn by the sound of bamboo swords clashing, Butsugai found himself looking in through the window.

Presently a few warriors came out, angrily demanding to know what Butsugai was doing there. He apologized, saying he was only a monk who had just come out of the mountains. The warriors decided to have some fun with this monk, so they challenged him to duel with them. "Anyone spying on us here," they insisted, "must know something about martial arts."

Butsugai couldn't refuse. He went into the training room with the warriors, who took up bamboo swords one after another to face the ragged monk.

Without evincing the slightest alarm, Butsugai took his iron ceremonial scepter and smashed down the sword of each attacker. In a matter of minutes, the Buddhist monk had overcome several dozen men.

Now the leader of the warrior band picked up a spear and stepped forward. "Your skills are too much for these young knights," he said to Butsugai, "but now I, Kondō Isamu, am challenging you to a match."

Butsugai appeared to be terrified. Falling to the ground in a gesture of utmost humility, he said, "Kondō Isamu! I have heard of you! They

call you a genius of the martial arts. A wandering monk like me could hardly hope to stand up to someone like you. Please let me go."

Further emboldened, the warrior refused to withdraw his challenge. He pressed Butsugai until the monk, unable to avoid a contest any longer, he again took up his iron scepter and stood facing the warrior chief.

Kondō said to Butsugai, "You need a weapon. Take a bamboo sword, or a wooden spear, or whatever you want."

Butsugai replied, "As a Buddhist monk, I am not supposed to pick up weapons. This ceremonial scepter will do."

The warrior would not let the monk off. He insisted that Butsugai use a weapon.

Ever resourceful, the Zen monk reached into his pouch and took out a pair of wooden bowls. Gripping one in each hand, he said to the warrior, "Okay, go ahead! Just try to spear me if you can!"

This insolence infuriated the warrior chief. Now he was determined to knock the monk down with a single thrust. Gripping his spear, he looked for an opening in the monk's unusual defense.

The warrior stood motionless and unblinking for nearly half an hour, unable to see a way to attack. Then he must have thought he noticed an opening, for all of a sudden he thrust his spear with every ounce of power and rage he could muster, intending to shatter the monk's rib cage.

Slipping the attack with great agility, Butsugai immediately caught the spear between the two bowls, holding it fast in a viselike grip.

Try as he might, the warrior chief could not wrest his spear free from the clamp of the monk's begging bowls. He pushed and pulled this way and that, until he was soaked in perspiration.

After a good long while of this, Butsugai suddenly released the spear, along with a piercing shout. The warrior tumbled backward, his spear flying twenty or thirty feet behind him.

Awed and humbled, the warrior chief bowed to Butsugai and said, "Your skills are truly outstanding, way beyond me. Who are you?"

"I am a wandering monk named Butsugai," the Zen Buddhist replied.

"So you're the famous Monk with a Punch!" exclaimed the warrior chief, who now treated his erstwhile opponent with greatest respect.

After this the name of Butsugai was heard throughout the ancient capital.

When Butsugai finished his Zen study, he went into seclusion to mature his enlightenment. Before long, however, people who had heard of him began to gather around him in great numbers to study, either Zen or the martial arts.

There was a renowned swordsman who met Butsugai once when he was a young man on a journey to study martial arts. Calling on Butsugai, the young samurai asked for some teaching.

Butsugai asked him, "What have you come here for?"

The young man replied, "I have come to die at the teacher's fists."

Butsugai considered this a remarkable answer and let the young swordsman stay for a while. Butsugai presented him with a verse, saying,

Even the power of the Howling Spirit—  
a single layer of mosquito netting.

By meditating on this verse, the swordsman later related when he had become renowned throughout western Japan, he attained inner understanding of the hidden essence of jujitsu, the "gentle art."

Butsugai became so famous that many of the major barons of western Japan invited him to their domains, offering him the choicest of temples for his residence. Butsugai refused all of them, remaining in a poor temple until he died, wearing old clothing and living contentedly with a bare subsistence, never seeking anything else.

## THE MIND OF SAGES

In 1262, Hōjō Tokiyori, regent of the Shōgun, went to see Zen master Funei. He announced, "Recently I have perceived that which is neither impermanent nor permanent."

The Zen master said, "Zen study only aims at perception of essential nature. If you attain perception of essential nature, you will understand everything."

The regent asked, "Please teach me a method."

The Zen master responded, "There are no two Ways in the world; sages do not have two minds. If you know the mind of sages, you will find that it is the inherent essence that is the root source of your own self."



## THE ART OF ART

Zen master Tetsuō was so famous for his brush painting that many people came to him just to study art. He always used to tell prospective students, "You must remember the saying, 'If you want to avoid depending on society, don't let criticism and praise disturb your heart.' When you can cultivate your art without leaving any mundanity at all in your chest, then mind and technique will naturally mature, and you will eventually be able to arrive at the subtleties. This is the way out of darkness into light."

Once a distinguished Confucian scholar and statesman came to visit Tetsuō. Observing the Zen master executing a painting, the scholar noted that every move of the master's arm and brush was in conformity with the classical principles of calligraphy.

When he remarked upon this, the Zen master explained, "In terms of correctness of mind, calligraphy and painting are one. When I make a painting, if so much as one cane of bamboo or one leaf on a tree is even slightly off from the way the stroke should be, I tear the whole thing up and throw it away, then put aside my brush, sit quietly, and clarify my mind."

## ZEN LITERATURE

Kaigan championed the neglected study of Buddhist and Zen literature in the middle of the nineteenth century. Many people thought he was just a scholar, not realizing that he was an enlightened Zen master.

Kaigan first studied scriptural Buddhism with the great Zen master Sengai. Later he studied Zen meditation with Seisetsu and Tankai. Kaigan completed his Zen study with Tankai and was recognized as a successor.

At one point Kaigan went to Kyoto to study at the academies of the other schools of Buddhism. Disturbed by what he found, Kaigan wrote,

At the Fifth Avenue bridge,  
I turn my head and look;  
east, west, south, north,  
ignorant monks are many.

Later on, Zen master Dokuon explained, "People of the time all considered Kaigan to be widely learned, with a powerful memory. And that is indeed true.

"However, he also had three Zen teachers and found out the innermost secrets of Zen, finally receiving the seal of approval from Zen master Tankai. People of his time thought Kaigan was a teacher of doctrinal Buddhism, but that was not his reality.

"What Kaigan was worried about was that there were many Zen followers with sterile intellects and few who understood the principles of the Teaching. It was because of this that he concentrated on preaching literary Zen, in order to develop and guide young seekers.

"Kaigan's attention was focused on rescuing people from the decadence of the times. He didn't have time to pay any mind to other things. That is precisely what made him great."

## ELEGANCE

Zen master Tetsuō wrote the following words on his fireplace screen:

"Be upright and honest, conscious of the principles of nature, compassionate and generous toward others, free from greed, contented. Carry out your everyday affairs correctly, without error. Take care of things without being attached to them.

"To be free from ordinary feelings about mundane objects is called the elegance of the ancients. We do not find this among the fashionable people of today. For this reason I close my door and do not admit visitors.

"I have no lofty reputation, nor do I wish an exalted name. In order to live as I will, I feign incompetence, only wishing to fulfill what is naturally so. I am no one's teacher. People who try to learn from me are crazy. That is because they study my craziness and do not study my heart."

## RESOLVE

Settan became a monk when he was only ten years old. One day he decided to go traveling to find a real guide, and he asked his mentor permission to leave. His mentor refused.

Determined to find the Way, Settan decided to go without telling anyone. Hanging a note on the temple gate saying, "Unless I attain the Way, I will never enter this gateway again," he left.

Finding his way to the congregation of Zen master Tōrin, Settan sat in meditation day and night. Tōrin was one of the few enlightened teachers left in those days, and his method was stern and unpredictable.

One day Settan finally decided he had no more time to waste. Climbing up to the top of a building, he vowed that he would not come down alive unless he attained enlightenment that night.

Sitting in deep meditation all through the night, by dawn Settan still had not broken through. Getting up in disgust, he went to the railing to jump off the building to his death.

All of a sudden, just as he was about to step over, he heard a cock crow. At that moment Settan's mind opened up, and he was greatly enlightened.

Overwhelmed with joy, Settan hurried to the teacher. When master Tōrin saw him, at once he affirmed, "You've broken through!"

### THE GOOD HEART

The layman Sasaki Doppo studied Zen with Ganseki. He later recounted how he had asked his teacher, "What is Buddha?" Ganseki replied, "The good heart is Buddha."

The layman added, "What is most basic in the human world is a good heart. Therefore the normal mind is called the Way."

He also expressed these ideas in a verse on Shinto, the Spirit Religion:

The defilement known as taboo  
is made up by the human mind;  
people who know the divine mind  
are themselves divine.

He also wrote,

The sun my eyes,  
the sky my face,  
my breath the wind,  
mountains and rivers  
turn out to be me.

### A POET

Jōsō the Buddhist monk was a student of the famous haiku master Bashō. His religious practices and attainments were generally kept secret, and he was mostly known only as a poet.

Originally a samurai, Jōsō was a hereditary retainer of a certain barony. As the eldest son, he was due to inherit his father's estate, but he was devoted to his stepmother and arranged for her son, his younger half-brother, to succeed to the family inheritance in his stead.

In feudal Japan, it was not possible to make such a decision arbitrarily. Deliberately wounding his right hand, Jōsō retired from official service on the grounds of disability, claiming he could not wield a sword. Unfit to be a warrior, he was no longer qualified to become head of a samurai house.

That was how the poet Jōsō freed himself from worldly affairs to become a Zen monk. After the death of his teacher Bashō, he secluded himself in a cave for three years, where he wrote out an entire Buddhist scripture on pebbles, one Chinese character to a pebble, and piled them up into a traditional "scripture mound." He also wrote a book of advice for both priests and ordinary people; although it was full of high-minded thoughts, he called it *The Layabout Book*.

In commemoration of the occasion of his retirement from the world, Jōsō composed this poem in formal Chinese style:

Having carried its house  
 on its back for years,  
 a snail turns into a slug  
 and thereby gains its freedom.  
 In the burning house,  
 his greatest fear  
 was that his spit would dry:  
 Now seeking the rain of religion,  
 he enters a forested hill.

### THE EX-ABBOT

At one time, Yūren was the abbot of a certain temple in Edo, the capital city of the Third Shogunate. He was so inspired by his readings of biographies of eminent Buddhists of ancient times, however, that he decided to leave his post to do further work on his own spiritual development.

Leaving a letter claiming to be ill and unable to manage his duties as abbot, Yūren traveled alone and in secret to Kyoto, the ancient capital and center of traditional culture.

Staying in various places in the Kyoto area, Yūren never accumu-

lated any possessions whatsoever throughout his life. Morning and night he chanted Buddhist invocations, and he composed poetry in his free time between religious exercises.

Yüren did not own a single book of poetry. He had no idea how to adorn his language and just expressed his thoughts. Yet for that very reason his poetry had a quality of genuine directness that set it apart from the crowd.

Once he wrote a verse for a caption on a picture of a beauty looking at a skull:

Now you surely  
won't pick up the mirror  
you've been looking in  
morning and night,  
seeing that this  
is your real appearance.

He wrote several poems with single letters for titles, among them this one:

Looking over the fields,  
I see the unknown smoke  
rising again today.  
Whose body will be  
the kindling tomorrow?

This poem is on geese flying past the moon:

Though the geese  
go flying by crying,  
my heart stays  
on the autumn night's moon.

Once a certain priest who had been living in borrowed quarters at a temple accidentally caused it to burn down. On this occasion Yüren wrote,

Use such an occasion to test  
the ultimate unshakability  
of the usually immutable mind.

At the request of someone going into the service of a noble, Yüren wrote,



When you're headed for good fortune,  
 don't forget to remember  
 that the world is inconstant.

This was Yüren's song to the spirits:

Though I've nothing to ask  
 for the self I've abandoned,  
 let me pray to the spirits  
 for the path of the heart.

## THE ORIGINAL RELIGION

The high priest Tsū-an was a commoner by birth. He was a selfless man, upright and honest. Not only did he study Zen, he was also well versed in all the genteel arts of the tea ceremony, incense compounding, flower arranging, and so on.

Tsū-an also studied medicine. Although his teacher specialized in *moxacautery*, he himself decided to travel around the country to examine and test the effects of various hot springs. He located two places where the water was outstanding, but they were in remote areas, so he developed a method of treating ordinary water that would produce similar effects. He had this formula printed and distributed it as an act of charity.

Tsū-an's mental and physical vigor did not decline as he grew old. He was a delightful and refreshing person. Once a housewife in his locality was sick for years, tormented by a ghost. During that time, whenever a physician would come, she would go wild and shout abuse, such that no doctor would dare approach her. When Tsū-an came, however, even if the woman was in her sickroom, she would become aware of his presence the instant he crossed the threshold. She would be terribly frightened and would submit docilely to his examination.

Tsū-an died in the year 1750 at the age of eighty. At noon of the day he passed away, he felt his own pulse and declared that his life would end before the hour was up. As it turned out, he actually died within the hour, leaving behind this parting verse:

The original religion  
 is realized without beginning.

As my eyes close forever,  
my essence is true emptiness.

### CURING ZEN SICKNESS

When Zen master Hakuin was a young man, like most people he attained partial insight before realizing complete liberation. He therefore determined to make an intensive effort to achieve a thorough breakthrough.

After a month of strenuous exertion, Hakuin reached the point where he would forget to eat and sleep. Finally his heart and lungs were adversely affected, and he had a constant ringing in his ears and chills in his feet.

Becoming enfeebled and suffering from anxiety and hallucinations, Hakuin was alarmed; he sought medical treatment, but to no avail. Finally someone told him about a man called Hakuyūshi, "the Pure Hermit," who lived in a mountain cave east of Kyoto.

Hakuyūshi was believed to be over two hundred years old. Outwardly he appeared to be an imbecile. Living deep in the mountains, he did not like to have visitors. Whenever anyone came looking for him, he invariably ran away. The local people considered him a wizard. He was an expert on astronomy and was also deeply versed in medical arts. If people sincerely sought answers from him, he would sometimes say something, which on reflection would always prove to be of great benefit.

Hakuin set off for Kyoto to see Hakuyūshi in the winter of 1710. Entering deeply into the mountains on the eastern outskirts of the ancient capital, he asked directions from woodcutters. Plowing through the snow, walking along the crags, after much difficulty he came to a cave with a reed blind hung at the entrance.

Looking in through the gaps in the blind, Hakuin saw Hakuyūshi sitting there with his eyes closed. He had dark hair reaching to his knees and a healthy ruddy complexion. On a desk were three books: a Confucian classic, a Taoist text, and a Buddhist scripture. There were no utensils or bedding anywhere in sight. The whole atmosphere was one of purity and transcendence, beyond the human realm.

Timidly and nervously, Hakuin told the hermit about his symptoms and asked for his help. At first Hakuyūshi feigned ignorance and

excused himself, but on Hakuin's earnest and insistent pleas he at length agreed to check his vital signs.

After making his examination, the hermit frowned and said, "You're done for. Excess in meditation has produced these grave symptoms. I'm afraid no one could cure you with the usual treatments of acupuncture, moxacautery, and medication. You have been maimed by inner contemplation. If you do not strive to build up the positive effects of inner contemplation, you will never get well. This is what is meant by the saying, 'One who falls on the ground must get up from the ground.' "

Hakuin said he would give up Zen meditation so that he might be cured of his affliction. Hakuyūshi smiled and said, "Zen meditation is nothing special. In general, meditation is correct meditation when there is no 'meditation.' Too much meditation is wrong meditation. You became sick because of too much meditation; now you should use nonmeditation to heal yourself."

Then the hermit instructed Hakuin in genuinely correct methods of pure meditation, citing Buddhist scriptures and Zen lore. He also mentioned a marvelous technique for relief of mental stress and fatigue, which he said was found in ancient literature. Hakuin asked him about the details.

Hakuyūshi explained, "When you feel ill during concentration exercises, you should rouse the mind to perform the following visualization. Imagine a ball of soft, pure, fragrant butter on top of your head. Its flavor subtly refreshes the whole head, then gradually flows down to the shoulders chest, lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines, and down the backbone to the hips. Now the congestion in your chest will flow downward like water, going down through the body, down the legs to the bottom of the feet, where it will stop.

"Then imagine that the penetrating moisture of the remaining flow accumulates and that all kinds of aromatic medicines are blended together in a tonic that soaks and permeates the body from the umbilical region downward.

"When doing this visualization, it is all just a manifestation of mind, so you will smell an exquisite fragrance and experience a subtle, soft tactile sensation in your body. Your body and mind will be harmonious and comfortable. Congestion will dissolve, your viscera will be in tune, your skin will become lustrous, and you will gain a great deal of energy and strength.

"If you persist in this, you will become physically well and mentally elevated. Whether the effect takes place slowly or quickly depends entirely on how diligent you are.

"In the past I had many illnesses, much worse than yours. By using this method, however, I was able to relieve most of my chronic ailments within a month. Now I live in these mountains without fear of cold and without suffering hunger. All this is due to the power of that visualization."

Hakuin left after receiving these instructions. After three years of practice, his sickness was cured. Not only was he relieved of illness, he was able to penetrate his doubt as well. He attained great ecstasy several times and had numerous blissful insights. He lived to a ripe old age, attributing his health and strength to the residual effects of the techniques he had learned from the hermit Hakuyūshi.

## ZEN IN DAILY LIFE

Man-an wrote to a government official: "People in all walks of life have all sorts of things to attend to. How could they have the leisure to sit silently all day in quiet contemplation? Here there are Zen teachers who have not managed to cultivate this sitting meditation concentration; they teach deliberate seclusion and quietude, avoiding population centers, stating that 'intensive meditation concentration cannot be attained in the midst of professional work, business, and labor,' thus causing students to apply their minds mistakenly.

"People who listen to this kind of talk consequently think of Zen as something that is hard to do and hard to practice, so they give up the inspiration to cultivate Zen, abandon the source and try to escape, time and again becoming like lowly migrant workers. This is truly lamentable. Even if they have a deep aspiration due to some cause in the past, they get to where they neglect their jobs and lose their social virtues for the sake of the Way.

"As an ancient said, if people today were as eager for enlightenment as they are to embrace their lovers, then no matter how busy their professional lives might be, and no matter how luxurious their dwellings, they would not fail to attain continuous concentration leading to appearance of the Great Wonder.

"Many people of both ancient and modern times have awakened to the Way and seen essential nature in the midst of activity. All beings

in all times and places are manifestations of one mind. When the mind is aroused, all sorts of things arise; when the mind is quiet, all things are quiet. When the one mind is unborn, all things are blameless. For this reason, even if you stay in quiet and serene places deep in the mountains and sit silently in quiet contemplation, as long as the road of the mind-monkey's horse of conceptualization is not cut off, you will only be wasting time.

"The Third Patriarch of Zen said, 'If you try to stop movement and resort to stillness, that stopping will cause even more movement.' If you try to seek true suchness by erasing random thoughts, you will belabor your vital spirit, diminish your mental energy, and make yourself sick. Not only that, you will become oblivious or distracted and fall into a pit of bewilderment."

## NO CHAFF

Once Zen master Settan was invited to a certain monastery to lecture on a Zen classic. The baron of the province attended the talk, seated behind a screen.

When Settan got up onto the lecture stand and saw the screen, he shouted, "Who is this impudent fellow, listening from behind a screen? There is no chaff at my lectures, so there is no need for a sieve! Unless you get that winnowing basket out of here, there will be no talk today."

Everyone in the audience went pale. The baron was extremely embarrassed. Apologizing to the Zen master, he had the screen removed and sat there listening to the talk along with everyone else.

## GUIDELINES

Settan once wrote a set of guidelines for Zen monasteries: "An ancient said that Zen study requires three essentials. One is a great root of faith. The second is a great feeling of wonder. The third is great determination. If one of these is lacking, you are like a tripod missing a leg.

"Here I have no special stipulations. I only require that you clearly recognize that everyone has an essential nature that can be perceived, and that there is an essential truth that everyone can penetrate; only then will your determination continue. And there are sayings at which to wonder. If people go off half aware and half awakened, they



cannot really succeed in Zen. It is imperative to be careful and thoroughgoing."

### TEACHER OF A NATION

Shōichi traveled to China in 1235, where he learned the secrets of Zen from one of the great masters of the time. After returning to Japan in 1241, Shōichi began to teach Zen in the rural south. In 1243 he was invited to Kyoto, the imperial capital, by the distinguished courtier Fujiwara Michiie. He died in 1280 at the age of seventy-eight.

When Shōichi met Emperor Gosaga in 1245, he presented him with a copy of the *Source Mirror Record*, an immense compendium of Buddhist teachings compiled by a famous Chinese Zen master of the tenth century. The emperor used to read this book whenever he had free time. When he finished, he wrote in the back of the text, "Having received this book from Master Shōichi, we have now seen essential nature."

When the courtier Fujiwara Michiie asked him for Zen instruction, Shōichi said, "It is a matter of having decisive willpower, so that you can be the master in the middle of all kinds of differences and distinctions."

### LOTUS IN THE MUD

Torio Tokuan said, "Do not consider yourself elevated in comparison to ordinary people. Those who are commonplace just rise and fall on the road of fame and profit, without practicing the Way or following the Way.

"They are only to be pitied, not despised or resented. Do not give rise to judgmental thoughts by comparing yourself to them; do not give rise to ideas of higher and lower.

"This is the attitude needed to enter the Way of the sages and saints, buddhas and bodhisattvas. Therefore we place ourselves in the state of ordinary people, assimilating to the ordinary, while our will is on the Way, and we investigate its wonders."

### THE GREAT DEATH

Itachi Jitoku was a knight in the employ of a certain barony when he ran afoul of a highly placed bureaucrat by speaking out too frankly

and directly. As a result, he was relieved of duty and imprisoned in a castle.

For thirteen years Jitoku sat in one room, indifferent to the privations of captivity. The rules of the barony allowed prisoners no reading material save Buddhist texts, so Jitoku borrowed a copy of the whole canon and began to read it through, passing his time absorbed in the ocean of Buddhist teachings.

At length Jitoku was pardoned and restored to his former status. Now over sixty years old, he went to see the noted Zen master Ekkei to deepen his understanding.

As soon as Jitoku entered the door, the Zen master jumped on him and punched him.

The knight was enraged. No one had ever struck him before, not even his father. He went to Dokuon, another Zen master, and angrily declared his intention to challenge Ekkei to a duel to the death.

Seeing that the knight was serious, Zen master Dokuon smiled and said, "Old Ekkei has always been willing to give his life for the sake of the truth. Even if you kill him, I'm sure he won't resent it. However, he was simply trying to help you. You don't know what power he has in his fist! If you kill him for no good reason, it will be no more than an assassination. Why not take a step back and try to achieve a breakthrough? I'm sure you will see how kind Ekkei was to you."

Feeling somewhat mollified, Jitoku took Dokuon's advice and went home to meditate. For three days and three nights he concentrated all of his energy, until he finally attained the Great Death of Zen, in which the barriers of the ego are dissolved.

Returning to Dokuon, Jitoku said, "Now I realize that Ekkei was still pulling his punches. If I had let him beat me to death, no doubt I'd have made an even greater breakthrough!"

## ZEN AND THE WORLD

When Zen master Gisan was given a title of honor by the emperor of Japan in 1866, he responded with these poems:

### HUMANITY AND LAW

Self-help and helping others:  
this trance of mine

is dutiful at home, loyal in public,  
never obscured in daily affairs.

THE BENEFIT OF BUDDHISM FOR NATIONS

Do not kill, and life will be sufficient;  
do not steal, and goods will be plenty.  
How excellent the moral teachings:  
they enrich nations and stabilize families.

PROTECTING THE NATION

Whatever is bad, do not do;  
whatever is good, carry it out:  
then above and below will harmonize,  
the good and the bad won't compete.

RECORD OF THINGS HEARD

*From the Treasury of the Eye of the True  
Teaching*

THE SHOBOGENZO-ZUIMONKI, TALKS OF  
ZEN MASTER DOGEN, AS RECORDED BY  
ZEN MASTER EJO





## INTRODUCTION

The *Shobogenzo-zuimonki* is a collection of talks by the great Japanese Zen master Dogen (1200–1253) given during the first years of his teaching career. These talks were recorded by Ejo, one of Dogen's first disciples and later his foremost successor; subsequently, this collection became a popular Zen classic, a source of daily inspiration to generations of Zen practitioners.

Dogen was born to a noble family and received the finest education available in Japan at that time; as evidence of his extraordinary intellectual capacity, he is said to have started composing poetry in Chinese at the age of four, and he read the Chinese translation of Vasubandhu's Buddhist classic *Abhidharmakosha* at the age of nine. In his early teens Dogen renounced the life of a court noble and official, for which he had been groomed, and devoted himself to Buddhist studies. Ordained as a monk at fourteen, within a few years Dogen had read the entire Buddhist canon and finally forsook the corrupt Tendai school to study the new Zen teachings brought to Japan by the pilgrim Eisai.

Eisai had also been a Tendai Buddhist monk, and had gone to China to study, with the hope of reviving the decadent Tendai church in Japan; finding Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism the predominant form in China then, Eisai journeyed to China a second time and spent five years mastering the Zen teaching. If Dogen actually met Eisai, it must have been shortly before the old teacher died; after Eisai's death, Dogen spent some nine years studying Zen with Eisai's successor Myozen. Later, Dogen had nothing but praise for Eisai, and regarded Myozen as his sole worthy successor, but determined to go to China himself to study further.

Dogen had many interesting and enlightening experiences during his five year sojourn in China, some of which he recounts in the *Zuimonki*. The most significant event of this period, however, was his

meeting with Ju-ching, who was to become his teacher. Here Dogen finally realized enlightenment that completely emancipated his mind and body, and was recognized as a true successor to the Zen heritage. After two more years of advanced study with Ju-ching, Dogen returned to Japan in 1227.

Dogen first stayed for a time at Kennin monastery, where he had earlier studied Zen with Eisai and Myozen; subsequently, he spent several years at over a dozen different places offered to him by well-wishing donors. In 1233 he came to stay in the Kannondori-in, a cloister on the grounds of an old dilapidated temple in Uji, a suburb of Kyoto. It was here that Dogen began to teach and attract followers. In 1236 a meditation hall was built, and the renovated temple was named Kosho Horin. It is said that a congregation of some fifty monks gathered there, and Dogen taught there for ten years; this was the site of the talks recorded in the *Shobogenzo-zuimonki*.

In 1243, with increased harassment from local Tendai factions, Dogen sought out a new abode deep in the mountains of old Echizen, in what is known as "Snow Country." Here he founded Eihei monastery, which later became headquarters of the Soto school of Zen, as Dogen's succession came to be known. After about ten years at Eihei, Dogen returned to Kyoto a final time, seeking medical treatment for the illness which was shortly to claim his life.

Dogen left an enormous body of works, commensurate with his role as a teacher, reformer, and founder of a school for the practical application of the original principles of Buddhism as he has experienced them in the living tradition of Zen. He lamented the corruption of Buddhism in Japan, especially the perversion of religious learning into a vehicle for worldly gain; he considered the entire history of Buddhism in Japan to have been warped in this way, and endeavored to establish a new kind of training ground and a fresh approach to study, based only on the will for enlightenment. While Dogen is especially famous for his towering intellect, in the *Shobogenzo-zuimonki* we see the extraordinary depth of Dogen's will and the strength of his character.

Perhaps the most insistent themes of the *Zuimonki* are the "mind of the Way," poverty, and selflessness. The mind of the Way is the spirit of enlightenment, acting for the sake of the enlightenment of all beings, studying the Way for the sake of the Way itself, without any hidden selfish motives. The poverty which Dogen teaches is both

physical and spiritual, meaning freedom from the entanglements of possessions and learned understanding. It is perhaps easier to understand why Dogen was so adamant on these points when we consider how the vast wealth of the Tendai church underlay so much political and religious competition. All the new Buddhist movements of Dogen's time—the Pure Land, Nichiren, and Rinzai Zen schools—were developed by monks who had broken away from the formalities of Tendai teachings and institutions, after long and exhaustive studies without enlightenment. Dogen adjured his students to give up the intellectual studies they had become habituated to, and to practice Buddhism with their whole bodies, to surrender spiritual pride and transcend even understanding.

While certain parts of the *Shobogenzo-zuimonki*, thus, are primarily applicable to monks, having been addressed to a certain audience under certain conditions, nevertheless, the underlying spirit of these talks is naturally universal, and their fundamental messages transcend the bounds of time and culture; bearing on essential issues of human being and effort, Zen Master Dogen's keen observations, his complete sincerity and unbending determination, can be a mirror and a guide for "a thousand generations."



## NOTE TO THE TRANSLATION

The talks which form the *Shobogenzo-zuimonki* are not arranged in a rigid system, and contain evidence of later editing and rephrasing. The two texts used for this translation are the *rufubon*, or popular version, edited by Menzan Zuiho (1683-1769), a leading Soto Zen monk of his time; and the so-called Choenji book, based on a recension of 1380. The latter text has been published with an annotated modern Japanese translation by Mizuno Mieko (Tokyo, Chikuma Shobo, 1963). The meaningful contents of these two versions are substantially the same, although there are a number of differences of detail. The first book of the older version corresponds to the sixth book of the popular edition. The language of the older version has been modified in Menzan's edition, using current vocabulary and adding inflections to make the text more readable. The difference between the two texts is obvious to anyone reading them in the original, but for the most part is not critical to an English translation. The sectioning of this translation generally follows the Iwanami edition of the *rufubon* by Watsuji Tetsuro, while the internal paragraphing generally follows that of Mizuno's edition of the Choenji book. Significant variations and adjustments based on comparison of the two texts have been noted where differences are more than a matter of style or language.





## BOOK I

### [ 1 ]

One day he said,

In the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*<sup>1</sup> it is recorded that in the community of a certain meditation teacher there was a monk who used a golden image of Buddha as well as a relic<sup>2</sup> of Buddha in worship; even in the communal dormitory he always burned incense and prostrated himself [before them], honoring and making offerings to them.

Once the meditation teacher said to him, "The image and relic of Buddha which you revere will eventually be wrong for you."

The monk did not agree. The teacher said, "This is the doing of evil spirits; you should quickly throw them away."

As the monk departed in a rage, the teacher immediately shouted after him, "Open up the box and look!" Though angry, the monk opened up the box; when he looked inside, he saw a poisonous serpent lying there coiled up.

As I reflect upon this, although the images and relics of Buddha are the form and bones left behind by the Tathagata<sup>3</sup> and should therefore be respected, nevertheless, if you think you can become enlightened just by worshipping them, this is a false view. It is a cause of becoming possessed by the poisonous snake of temptation.<sup>4</sup>

Because the merit of the Buddha's Teachings is something already established, they should be a blessing to men and gods just the same as a living Buddha. In general, it is true that if you honor and make offerings to the realms of the Three Jewels,<sup>5</sup> faults will disappear and you will obtain merit; the action of evil dispositions will dissipate and you will realize the fruit of humanity or godhead as a result. But to think that you will thereby obtain realization of the truth, this is a biased view. Because one who is called a "Buddhist" follows the Buddha's Teaching in order to arrive directly at the station of Buddha-

hood, you should simply meditate and discern the Way in accordance with the Teaching. The true activity which accords with the Teaching is that which the monastery now has as its basis: sole occupation with sitting.<sup>6</sup> You should reflect on this.

[ 2 ]

He also said,

Just because disciplined behavior and vegetarian diet is to be maintained, yet if you therefore insist upon these as fundamental, establishing them as practice, and think that you can thereby attain the Way, this is also wrong. It is just that this is the conduct of the patch-robed monks,<sup>1</sup> the tradition of the sons of Buddha; and therefore we follow and practice it. Do not take this to be fundamental just because it is a good thing.

Yet I do not mean to say that you should therefore violate precepts and be self-indulgent. To cling in such a manner is an erroneous view; it is that of an outsider. We just conform because it is the standard of the Buddhist family and the tradition of the meditation halls. As for making it into the fundamental concern, however, when I was staying in the temples of China, I never saw such a thing. For the purpose of true attainment of the Way, effort in seated meditation alone is the tradition of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. For this reason a fellow student of mine, Gogenbo, who was a disciple of the Zen Master Eisai,<sup>2</sup> taught me to abandon rigid adherence to vegetarianism and continual recitation of the preceptual scripture<sup>3</sup> while in the meditation hall in China.

Ejo asked, "Should the standards for study of the Way in the monastery adhere to the Pure Rules of Pai Chang?<sup>4</sup> If so, I see that he considered the accepting and maintenance of precepts as prerequisite. Also, I see that the transmitted tradition hands down the 'Fundamental Precepts.' In the oral teaching and face-to-face transmission of our school as well, the precepts handed down from the West<sup>5</sup> are given to students; these are the Bodhisattva Precepts. However, in the preceptual scripture it says, 'recite this day and night.' Why have us abandon this recitation?"

Dogen said, "It is so; students should certainly observe the regulations of Pai Chang. However, their form is the receiving of precepts, observance of precepts, sitting meditation, and so forth. When it says

to recite the preceptual scripture day and night and to wholeheartedly keep the precepts, it means that one should follow the practice of the Ancients and concentrate only on sitting. When sitting in meditation, what precept is not maintained? What merit is not produced? The practices carried out by the Ancients all had a profound intent. Without retaining your own subjective appreciation, you should follow the community and act in accord with the behavior of the Ancients.

## [ 3 ]

One day he said,

In the community of the meditation master Fo Ch'ao<sup>1</sup> there was a monk who wanted to eat meat when he was sick. Fo Ch'ao allowed him to eat it. One night the master himself went to the infirmary and looked in; there in the dim lamplight the monk was eating meat, while at the same time a demon was sitting on the sick monk's head eating that very same meat.<sup>2</sup> Though the monk thought it was going into his own mouth, it was the demon, not he himself, that was eating it. Henceforth, whenever a sick monk wanted to eat meat, the master knew he was possessed by a demon, so he allowed it.

As I reflect upon this, there should be due consideration as to whether or not to permit something. In the community of Wu Tsu Fa Yen<sup>3</sup> there were instances of eating meat. Whether permitting or forbidding, the attitudes of the Ancients all had to have had particular intent.

## [ 4 ]

One day he said,

Know that if a person is born in a particular House<sup>1</sup> and enters a particular path, he must above all cultivate the work appropriate to that House. If it is not your own path and you know it is not proper to your own station, it is wrong to cultivate it.

Now as men who have left home, when you enter the family of Buddha and become monks, you must practice the appropriate activity. To practice the appropriate activity and maintain the appropriate bearing means to abandon selfish clinging and follow the instructions

of the teacher. The essential meaning of this is to have no greed or desire.

If you would be free of greed, first you must leave selfhood behind. In order to leave selfhood behind, the contemplation of impermanence is the foremost mental discipline.

Most worldly people want to be always well spoken of and well thought of by others. However, they are not always well spoken of, nor well thought of. If step by step you abandon selfish clinging and follow the words of your teacher, you will progress. If you claim to acknowledge this truth, yet, saying, "That may be so, but I can't abandon such and such a thing," if you cling to it fondly and practice it, you will sink lower and lower. The foremost mental discipline for a monk in order to improve is that he should concentrate only on sitting. It is not a question of cleverness or dullness, of sagacity or stupidity; if you sit in meditation you will naturally become good.

[ 5 ]

He instructed,

Extensive study and broad learning is something that cannot succeed. You should firmly resolve to give it up altogether. Only in respect to one task should you learn the ancient standards of mental discipline. Seek out the footsteps of past masters, wholeheartedly apply effort to one practice, and avoid any pretense of being a teacher of others or a past master.

[ 6 ]

Once Ejo asked, "What is the principle of 'not being ignorant of cause and effect'?"<sup>1</sup>

Dogen said, "It is 'immutable cause and effect.' "

Ejo said, "How can one escape?"

Dogen said, "Cause and effect are clear."

Ejo said, "Then does cause evoke effect, or does effect evoke cause?"

Dogen said, "If it is so in every case, then take the example of Nan Ch'uan killing the cat:<sup>2</sup> when the assembly could not answer him, he immediately killed the cat. Later, when Chao Chou put his sandals



on his head and went out, this was the acting out of yet another stage."

[Dogen also said,] "If I had been Nan Ch'uan, I would have said, 'Even if you can speak, I will kill it; and if you can't speak I will also kill it. Who quarrels over a cat? Who saves the cat?' In behalf of the community, I would say, 'We cannot speak; go ahead and kill the cat, teacher!' Or I would say in behalf of the community, 'The teacher only knows about one stroke cutting into two pieces; he does not know about one stroke cutting into one piece.' "

Ejo said, "What is one stroke cutting into one piece?"

Dogen said, "This is the cat itself." He also said, "When the assembly did not reply, if I were Nan Ch'uan I would say the assembly had already spoken, and would have released the cat.<sup>3</sup> An Ancient said, 'The Great Function appears without remaining in set patterns.' " He also said, "The 'cat' we are talking about is the manifestation of the Great Function of Buddha Dharma. And it is a 'turning word.'<sup>4</sup> If it were not a turning word, we could not say, 'Mountains, rivers, and the great earth, are the marvelous pure illumined mind'; and we could not say, 'The very mind is Buddha.'" So in the expression of this turning word, see that the cat is identical to the Buddha-body. Furthermore, hearing these words, a student may suddenly become enlightened." He also said, "This cutting of the cat is just the activity of Buddha himself. What can you call it?" He said, "It must be called killing a cat."

Ejo asked, "Is this a form of wrongdoing, or not?"

Dogen said, "It is a form of wrongdoing."

Ejo said, "How to escape from it?"

Dogen said, "[The activity of Buddha and the wrongdoing] are separate, without appearing to be so."<sup>5</sup>

Ejo asked, "Does the term 'step by step liberation'<sup>6</sup> refer to something like this?"

Dogen said, "Yes. However, such considerations, even though they be a good thing, are not as good as no thing."

Ejo asked, "Does the expression 'violation of precepts' refer to transgression after having received the precepts? Or can a form of wrongdoing done before receiving the precepts also be called violation of the precepts? What about it?"

Dogen said, "The name of 'violation of precepts' should refer to transgression after having received the precepts. Wrongdoing which

is done before receiving the precepts is just called a form of wrongdoing, wrong action; it should not be called 'violation of precepts.' "

Ejo asked, "In the forty-eight lesser precepts, I see that it refers to transgression even prior to receiving the precepts also as 'violation'; what about this?"

Dogen said, "It is not so. When one who has not yet received the precepts is about to receive them, as he repents of the wrongdoing he has committed, aspiring to these precepts, his transgression of the ten great precepts with which he was formerly invested, as well as his subsequent violation of the lesser precepts, is called 'violation of the precepts.' The wrongdoing he committed in the past is not called 'violation of precepts.' "

Ejo asked, "I read that now as he is about to receive the precepts, for the sake of repentance of wrongdoing formerly committed, one should teach the ten great and forty-eight lesser precepts to him who has yet to receive them, and should have him read and recite them. Yet in a subsequent passage it says that one should not explain the precepts to one who has not received them. What about the contradiction between these two points?"

Dogen replied, " 'Receiving the precepts' and 'reciting the precepts' are different. To recite the preceptual scriptures for the purpose of repentance is also reading and contemplating the scripture. Therefore, one who has not yet been invested would recite the precepts. There can be no fault in explaining the preceptual scripture to him. The subsequent passage [which you mentioned] prohibits such an explanation to one who has not yet received the precepts, when it is done for the sake of profit. To one who is presently receiving the precepts, in order to have him repent, one should most certainly teach him the scripture."

Ejo asked, "Receiving the precepts is not permitted to those who have committed the seven grave wrongs.<sup>7</sup> In the former precepts, I read that even those guilty of grievous wrongs can repent. What about it?"

Dogen replied, "Truly they should repent. When they are not permitted to receive the precepts, this is a temporary method of repression or curbing, meaning to put a stop to [their evil ways]. And the former sentence [means] that even if one has violated the precepts he is pure and clean; it is not the same as before receiving [the precepts]."

Ejo asked, "Once repentance is permitted of the seven grievous wrongs, should they again receive the precepts?"

Dogen replied, "Yes. This was the standard espoused by the late high priest Eisai himself: once repentance is allowed, then they should receive the precepts. Even if they are guilty of grievous wrongs, if they have remorse and want to accept the precepts, you should administer them. This applies all the more to Bodhisattvas, who should cause others to accept the precepts even at the risk of incurring fault in themselves."<sup>8</sup>

[ 7 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

Do not use foul language to chastise and belittle monks. Even if it is an evil and incompetent person, do not scorn him or vilify him without consideration. In the first place, no matter how bad they may be, when more than four monks are assembled, this is the Community of Monks [Sangha] and is an important treasure of the nation. It should be most highly trusted and honored. Even if you are an Abbot, an Elder, even if you are a teacher, a wise man, if your disciples are out of line, you should teach and guide them with a compassionate heart, a kind heart.<sup>1</sup> At such a time, even if you strike those who need be struck, if you chastise those in need of chastisement, you should not allow feelings of depravation or vilification to arise.

When my late master Ju Ch'ing was abbot of T'ien T'ung, while the Community of Monks were sitting in meditation in the monks' hall, in order to admonish them for sleeping, he would use his slipper to hit them with, and chastise them with derogatory words; nevertheless, the Community of Monks were all glad to be beaten, and they praised him.

One time in the course of his address he said, "I am already advanced in age; by now I should have taken leave of the community and should be dwelling in a hermitage caring for my old age. Nevertheless, as the teacher of the community, in order to shatter the delusions of each of you, and to transmit the Way, I am acting as Abbot. Therefore, I sometimes bring forth words of chastisement, and I do things like beat you with a stick.<sup>2</sup> For this I have great trepidation; nevertheless, it is the way to uphold the standard of the Teaching in

place of the Buddha. O brethren, please extend your compassion to forgive me for this."

When he had spoken thus, the Community of Monks all wept. It is with just such a mind as this that one should handle the community and bring forth the Teaching. It is wrong to govern a community arbitrarily just because one is the Abbot and Elder, thinking of them as belonging to oneself and chastising them. So, needless to say, it is wrong to point out others' shortcomings and blame them for their faults when you are not such a man yourself.

You should watch out very carefully: when you see the error of another, if you think it is wrong and compassionately wish to guide him, you should employ tact to avoid angering him, and should contrive to appear to be talking about something else.

[ 8 ]

He also told a story, saying,

When the late General of the Right [Minamoto Yoritomo]<sup>1</sup> was first a captain of the Imperial Guard, once when he went out to attend an official part in the Imperial domain, there was a man there who got out of order. At that time the grand privy councillor said to Minamoto Yoritomo, "You must restrain him."

The general said, "Someone should report it to Rokuhara; he is the generalissimo of the Taira Clan."<sup>2</sup>

The privy councillor said, "It's very near here, so [go ahead]."

The general said, "I am not the man to do it."

These are excellent words; with such a mind he later governed the land. Students of the present day should also have this mind; if you are not such a man yourself, do not criticize others.

[ 9 ]

In an evening talk he said,

In ancient times there was a general named Lu Chung-lien who subdued the enemies of the court in the land of the lord of Ping-yuan. Though the lord of Ping-yuan tried to reward him with much gold and silver and other things, Lu Chung-lien refused it all and said, "It is only because it is the way of a general to do so, that I attack the

enemy well; it is not to obtain rewards or take things." So he said he dared not accept.

Lu Chung-lien is famous for his straightforwardness. Even in the ordinary world, those who are wise simply are what they are and accomplish their own way. They do not think of obtaining rewards. The mental attitude of students should also be like this. Having entered the Way of the Buddhas, carrying out various things for the sake of the Buddhist Teaching, you should not think there will be anything to gain in the way of reward. In all the inner [Buddhist] and outer [non-Buddhist] teachings, they only exhort us to be free from acquisitiveness.

[ 10 ]

After a discourse on the Teaching, he said,

Even if one is speaking in accord with the truth, if another says something prejudicial, it is wrong to argue the point to defeat him. Then again, even though you consider yourself evidently correct, if you say it was your mistake and quickly retreat, this is too hasty.

It is best just not to pick others apart, nor to declare it one's own bias, but to be unconcerned and desist. If you act as though you hadn't heard and forget it, others will forget too and will not be angry. This is a most important point to be mindful of.

[ 11 ]

He instructed,

Impermanence is swift; the problem of life and death is a great one. While you are alive for the time being, if you practice some activity and are fond of study, you should only practice the Way of Buddhas and study the Teaching of Buddha. Because composition, poetry, and songs are worthless, it is right that you should abandon them. Even in studying the Buddhist Teaching and practicing the Buddha Way, still you should not study many things at once. So much the more should the Exoteric and Esoteric holy doctrines of the Scholastic schools<sup>1</sup> be completely put aside. You should not fondly study many of the words of even Buddhas and Patriarchs. Even when concentrating solely on one thing, people who are of inferior capacity with dull faculties cannot succeed. So how much the more is it unsuitable to



try to do many things at once and have the tone of your mind out of harmony.

[ 12 ]

He instructed,

Of old, a man known as the meditation master Chih Chiao<sup>1</sup> aroused his will and abandoned his home in this wise: originally this master was a civil official. Endowed with intelligence and ability, he was an honest and upright wise man. When he was a provincial governor he stole government funds and gave them away. Others reported this to the emperor.

Upon hearing this, the emperor was greatly astonished, and all of his ministers thought it strange. The crime was not a minor one, and it was decided that capital punishment should be administered.

At this point the emperor discussed the matter, saying, "This minister is a man of talent, a wise and good man. Now he has purposely committed this crime; could it be that he has some deep motive? When you are about to behead him, if he shows any sign of grief or distress, behead him immediately: if he shows no such signs, then he must certainly have some deep intent, and you should not behead him."

When the imperial emissary brought him out to be beheaded, he showed no signs of distress; rather, his appearance was one of joy. He himself said, "I give this life to all sentient beings."

The emissary, surprised and struck with wonder, reported this to the emperor. The emperor said, "It is so; he certainly has some profound intent: I knew it had to be so." Therefore, he asked what his intention was.

The master said, "To leave public office, give up my life, practice charity, form a bond with all creatures, be born in a Buddhist family, and single-mindedly practice the Buddha Way."

The emperor was moved by this and allowed him to leave home. Therefore, he bestowed on him the name Yen Shou, "Prolonging Life," because he had stayed a certain execution.

Patchrobed monks of today should also once arouse such a mind; with a profound heart, which thinks little of your own life and has compassion for living beings, you should arouse a mind which aspires to entrust your bodily life to the Buddhist precepts. If you already

have such a mind, even for a moment, you should preserve it so as not to lose it. Without once arousing such a mind, there can be no awakening to the Buddha Way.

[ 13 ]

In an evening talk he said,

The basis for understanding talk about Zen in the school of the Patriarchs is to take the mind which thinks it already knows, and revise it step by step in accordance with the words of the teacher.

Even if the manner of your original knowledge has been that you know Buddha to be Shakyamuni,<sup>1</sup> or Amida,<sup>2</sup> etc., replete with excellent characteristics<sup>3</sup> and radiant halo, possessed of the virtue of teaching Dharma and benefiting living beings, yet if the teacher should say that "Buddha" is a frog or a worm, you should believe that frogs and worms are Buddha, and should abandon your former understanding. If you look for the auspicious marks and radiant halo and the various merits of a Buddha on those worms, it means that your emotional views have still not changed. It is just a matter of knowing what one sees just then as Buddha. If in this way you go on revising your emotive views and original attachments in accordance with the teacher's words, then you will naturally come to an understanding.

However, students of recent times cling to their own emotive views and base themselves on their own opinions: thinking that Buddhahood must indeed be such and such a way, if it is something different from what they themselves think, they say it can't be that way; as long as they are wandering in delusion seeking something which resembles their own emotional judgments, most of them make no progress on the Buddha Way.

Again, having climbed to the top of a hundred foot pole<sup>4</sup> without sparing your bodily life, then when you are told to let go your hands and feet and advance one step further, you say that it is only when one has life that one can study the Buddhist Teaching; in reality this is not really obeying the teacher. You should consider this carefully.

[ 14 ]

In an evening talk he said,

Even worldly people, rather than study many things at once without really becoming accomplished in any of them, should just do one

thing well and study enough to be able to do it even in the presence of others.

How much the more is this true of the supramundane Buddha Dharma: it is a way which since beginningless past has not been cultivated or practiced; and therefore, it is now still far from us. Our natures too are dull. In this exalted and far-reaching Buddha Dharma, if one takes on too many things at once, it will be impossible to perfect even one thing. Even concentrating solely on one thing, those whose faculties and capacity are dull by nature will have difficulty in thoroughly mastering it. Strive, students, to concentrate on one thing alone.

Ejo asked, "If so, then what thing, what practice in the Buddha Dharma, should we be solely devoted to cultivating?"

Dogen replied, "Although it should be in accord with potentiality and conform to capability, that which is now transmitted and solely practiced in the school of the Patriarchs is sitting meditation. This practice takes in all potentials and is a method which can be practiced by those of superior, middling, and inferior faculties alike.

"When I was in the community of my late master at T'ien T'ung monastery in China, after hearing this truth, while sitting still day and night, the monks thought in times of extreme heat or extreme cold that they would probably become sick; so they temporarily left off sitting. At that time I thought to myself, 'Even if I should become sick and die, still I should just practice this. If I fail to practice when I'm not sick, what is the use of treating this body tenderly? If I sicken and die, that is my will. To practice and die in the community of a master in the great country of China, and, having died, to be disposed of by a worthy monk, this would above all form an excellent affinity [for a good birth]. If I died in Japan, I couldn't be disposed of by such a man in accordance with the Buddhist ceremony, which is in conformity with Dharma. If I kept practicing and died before realizing enlightenment, from having established this affinity I should be born in a Buddhist family. If I do not practice, even if I maintained bodily life for a long time, it would be worthless. What would be the use? While my body is sound and I feel I will not fall ill, when unexpectedly I may drown in the ocean or meet an unforeseen death, how will I regret it afterward?'

"I continued to deliberate in this manner, and being firmly resolved, as I sat upright day and night, I did not get sick at all. Now

each of you should be thoroughly determined to practice and see; ten out of every ten of you should attain the Way. The exhortations of my late master at T'ien T'ung were like this."

[ 15 ]

He instructed,

People resolve to abandon even life, cutting off even their limbs and flesh, hands and feet; such acts are done in an insincere manner.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, thinking of worldly affairs, many make such resolutions because of a mind which grasps at fame and profit.

Just meeting situations as they arise, taking things as they come, is difficult. When a student is eager to abandon his bodily life, he should settle down for the moment and decide, in respect to what to say and what to do, whether it is in accord with the truth or whether it is not in accord with the truth: if it is in accord with the truth, he should say it, and if it is in accord with truth, he should do it.

[ 16 ]

He instructed,

People who study the Way should not be anxious over food and clothing. Just preserve the Buddhist precepts and do not carry on worldly business. The Buddha said, "For clothing there are rags; for food there are alms." In what age would these two things ever be exhausted? Do not forget the swiftness of impermanence and trouble yourselves in vain over worldly things. While life, which is like dew, is temporarily here, think of the Way of Buddhas and do not be concerned with other things.

Someone asked, "Although the two paths of fame and fortune are difficult to abandon, because they are great hindrances to the peace of the Way, they should be abandoned. Therefore, I give them up. Although food and clothing are minor factors, yet they are of great importance to the wayfarer. The wearing of rags and begging of food is that which people of superior faculties practice; and it was the custom in India. In the monasteries of China there are things like the permanent temple endowment;<sup>1</sup> therefore, they have no problem in that respect. In the temples of our country there is no permanent endowment, and the custom of begging has also now died out and has



not been transmitted. What can a body do whose faculties are inferior and incapable of endurance? To someone like me, then, even if I would covet the alms of a faithful patron, the fault of unworthy acceptance would come along with it. To be a farmer, merchant, warrior, or artisan would be gaining food by means of an improper way of life.<sup>2</sup> If one were to just leave it to fate, the result would still be poverty. When hunger and cold come, they would be distressing, and as such would hinder the practice of the Way.

"Some people criticize, saying, 'Your standards of behavior are extreme: you seem unaware of the times and blind to [people's] potentialities; they are of inferior faculties, and this is the Last Age.<sup>3</sup> If they were to practice in such a fashion, it would cause them to regress. It would be better to obtain the patronage of a donor or attach oneself to a lay supporter, take care of the body in a carefree and quiet dwelling place, and peacefully practice the Buddha Dharma with no worries about food or clothing. This is not greed for property or possessions; one should practice after having provided for temporal means of livelihood.'

"Although I hear these words, I cannot yet believe in or act upon them; what about such considerations?"

Dogen replied, "Just study the behavior of the patchrobed ones, the manner of Buddhas and Patriarchs. Although the three countries [India, China, and Japan] differ, those who genuinely study the Way never have such concerns. Just do not attach your mind to worldly affairs; you should wholeheartedly study the Way.

"The Buddha said, 'Other than robes and bowl, do not keep anything at all; what is left over from the food you have begged, you should give to hungry beings.' Even if you receive something, you should not store any up; how much less should you go to any trouble for the sake of food! In a non-Buddhist book it says, 'If you hear of the Way in the morning, it is all right to die that night.'<sup>4</sup> Even if we should die of starvation or die of cold, even for one day or one hour we should follow the Buddha's teaching.

"Over ten thousand aeons, a thousand lives—how many times will we be born, how many times die? All is because of arbitrary clinging to worldly entanglements. Following the Buddha's precepts for this one life, should we die of starvation, it would be eternal peace and comfort. But for that matter, I have never heard of a case in the whole canon of a single one of the traditional Buddhas and Patriarchs who



died of starvation or died of cold. Mundane provision of food and clothing is a lot to which one is born, and does not come by seeking; and though one does not seek it, it is not that it is not forthcoming. Just resign yourself to fate and do not hold this in your heart. If you use the 'Last Age' as a pretext for not arousing the mind of the Way in this very life, then in which life will you find the Way?

"Even if you are not comparable to Subhuti<sup>5</sup> or Mahakashyapa,<sup>6</sup> you should just study the Way according to your capacity. In a secular writing it says, 'Even if it is not Hsi Shih or Mao Ch'iang, those who love the flesh love the flesh; even if it is not Flying Rabbit or Green Ears, those who love horses love a horse; even if it is not dragon liver or phoenix marrow, those who love flavor love flavor.'<sup>7</sup> It is just a matter of using as much wisdom as one has.

"Even some lay people have such standards; Buddhists should also be thus. How much more so since the Buddha has even turned over the endowment of twenty years<sup>8</sup> to us in the last age; because of this, for the monasteries of the world, the honor and support of humans and gods has not ceased. Although the Tathagata was abundantly blessed with metanormal powers and could use them freely, he spent a summer eating wheat horse fodder. Should not his disciples in the last age respectfully look up to this?"

The person asked, "Rather than falsely accept the offerings of men and gods while breaking the precepts, or vainly waste the endowment of the Tathagata without having a mind for the Way, how would it be to follow the lay people, perform the tasks of the lay life, and live for a long time to accomplish the practice of the Way?"

Dogen replied, "Who told you to violate precepts or to be without the mind for the Way? You should just forcibly arouse the mind which seeks the Way, and practice the Buddhist Teaching. Indeed, we read that the Tathagata's blessings are bestowed equally without discussion of keeping the precepts or violating the precepts, without discriminating between beginners and those with experience; but I have not seen it written that if one breaks the precepts he should return to lay life, or that without the mind of the Way one should not practice. Who possesses the mind of the Way from the very outset? If you just in this way arouse that which is difficult to arouse, and carry out that which is difficult to carry out, you will naturally progress.

"Everyone has the nature of a Buddha: do not foolishly demean yourself. Again, in the *Wen Hsuan*<sup>9</sup> it says, 'A country flourishes be-

cause of a single man; the former sages are set at naught by later fools.' What this means is that when a single wise man appears in a nation, that nation flourishes; if a single fool appears, the way of the sage is abandoned. Consider this."

[ 17 ]

In the course of a talk on various subjects, Dogen said,

Many men and women of the world, young and old, talk about sexual intercourse and such things. They use this to divert their minds, taking it for amusing conversation. Although it seems like entertaining the mind for a while and amusing oneself in a leisurely way, it is something to be absolutely avoided by monks. Even in the ordinary world, it is something that does not occur when good, earnest people, conscious of propriety, engage in serious discussion. It is the kind of conversation which takes place at times of drunkenness and debauchery.

How much more so for monks: they should think only of the Way of Buddhas. Miscellaneous talk is spoken by a few eccentric and disorderly monks. In the monasteries of China, since they do not indulge in miscellaneous conversation at all, of course they do not speak of such [erotic] things either.

Even in this country, when the high priest Eisai of Kennin Temple was alive, such kind of talk did not come up at all; even after his death, while a few of those were left who had been his disciples, they did not ever speak of such things. Recently, in the last seven or eight years, the young people appearing now are sometimes indulging in such conversation. It is a sorry state of affairs.

Even in the Sage's Teachings it says, "Coarse and violent evil acts can cause people to wake up: useless talk can obstruct the True Path." Even be they merely words spontaneously spoken, useless talk is a factor which hinders the Way; how much more so of [erotic] talk like this; drawn by the words, the mind will surely be immediately aroused. One must be most circumspect. Even if you do not consciously determine not to speak in such a way, once you realize it is a bad thing, you can overcome it gradually.

[ 18 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

Most people of the world, when they do something good, they want it to be known by others; when they do something bad, they do not want others to know: because of this, since such a frame of mind is not in accord with the minds of the unseen beings,<sup>1</sup> they experience no recompense for the good things they have done, and they receive punishment for the bad things which they have done in secret. Because of this they turn around and tell themselves that there is no result from good actions, and that there is little benefit in the Buddhist Teaching. This is a perverted view which should most certainly be revised.

Do good privately, while others are unaware; when you have made a mistake and gone wrong, afterward reveal it and repent: if you act in such a way, then there will be reward experienced for the good you have done in secret, and having repented of the bad things which are revealed, the fault will be dissipated; therefore, there will naturally be manifest benefit even in the present, and you may be sure of future results.

A certain layman came and asked, "In recent times, whereas the laity make offerings to the Community of Monks, take refuge in and revere the Buddhist Teaching, due to the occurrence of much misfortune, wrong views have arisen and they are inclined not to take refuge in the Three Treasures. What about it?"

Dogen replied, "This is not the fault of the Community of Monks or the Buddhist Teachings; it is just the fault of the lay people themselves. The reason is that you give offerings to monks who maintain discipline of behavior and diet, even if it is just a matter of show; but when shameless monks who violate the precepts drink liquor and eat meat, you think it is improper and do not give them offerings. This discriminating attitude is in reality contrary to the intention of the Buddha. Therefore, the act of taking refuge and obeisance is void of merit, and there is no response. In the precepts too, various passages admonish this frame of mind. If it is a monk, you should make offerings to him whether he has virtue or not. In particular, one should not decide whether or not he has inner worth on the basis of his outward appearance.

"Although monks of the Last Age may outwardly appear to be distinguished in some way, yet there are wrong mental states and wrong actions which outweigh this. Therefore, without any thought of distinction between good monks or bad monks, if you make offerings and render them respect with an impartial mind just because they are disciples of Buddha, you will not fail to accord with the will of Buddha, and the benefits will be far-reaching.

"Furthermore, you should remember that there are the four expressions, 'hidden activity, hidden response; manifest activity, manifest response; [hidden activity, manifest response; manifest activity, hidden response].<sup>2</sup> Also there are the three periods of activity—reward in the present life, in the next life, and in succeeding lives. You should study these principles carefully."

[ 19 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

When someone comes and discusses his affairs, if it should happen that he requests a letter,<sup>1</sup> perhaps to ask something of someone else, or perhaps to file a public suit, at that time, if you should refuse the request of the one before you, saying, 'I am not a worldly man:<sup>2</sup> because my station is that of a recluse who has left the world, it would be wrong for me to say something to a lay person which is not appropriate to my status,' although this seems to be the true way for one who is not a worldly man, yet if we examine the inner state of mind there, if you do not comply because you are still thinking along such lines as 'I am one who has left the world; if I say something inappropriate to my status, people will surely think ill of me,' this is still selfish clinging to name and reputation.

Just take careful consideration when you are faced with such a situation; if it is something that should be of some benefit to the person who confronts you, then you should do it regardless of whether people will think ill of you. What is so bad about estrangement from a friend who is so lacking in understanding as to turn against you, saying 'This is improper; it is wrong'? Even though outwardly you may appear to others to be doing something partial and inappropriate to your status, the most important concern is to destroy selfish attachment and to abandon name and reputation. When people came to

them and asked of them, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas even cut off their bodies, flesh, hands, and feet. How much the more, then, when someone comes and asks for a single letter; to refuse that request, thinking only of your name and reputation, is deep attachment to self.

People are not sages: even if they think you are worthless, saying that you are someone who says things inappropriate to your status, still, if you abandon your own reputation to be of some help to others, you would be in conformity with the True Path. There are many instances in which the Ancients also appear to uphold this principle of conduct. I also take this principle into consideration. In a situation where someone asks you to communicate something rather unexpected to your patron or friends, it is easy to send a single letter and be a bit of help.

Ejo asked, "This matter is truly as you say: it is most reasonable to communicate a good thing that will be of benefit to someone. But in case someone wants to usurp another's possessions by some injustice or would say something detrimental to another, should one transmit the message?"

Dogen replied, "The matter of right or wrong is not for us to know. Just tell the other party, and also write in the letter, that although you have provided the letter because it was requested, he should deal with it in accordance with right and wrong. It is the person who will receive and deal with it, who should determine whether it is right or wrong. In matters such as this, which are not our concern, it is also wrong to distort the truth in speaking of them to that person.

"Again, even though it be an obvious wrong, if there is someone who thinks highly of you and is such a friend that you would not go against whatever he said, good or bad, and he has an unacceptable request to make of your patron on biased grounds, even if you may assent to his request, in the letter you should write that you are only saying it because you can hardly refuse to do it, and that it should be decided upon in accordance with right and wrong. If you always do it this way, neither one will feel any resentment. In affairs such as this, when dealing with people face-to-face and in reference to matters that arise, you should make very careful consideration. The essential point is that in confronting situations you should give up attachments to name, reputation, and self."



[ 20 ]

In an evening talk he said,

In the present time, most people, both the worldlings and those who have left the world, are concerned that others know when they do something good, and hope that others do not know when they do something bad. Because of this, there develops a lack of harmony between inside and outside. Be sure to harmonize inside and outside, repenting of mistakes, hiding real virtue and not adorning outward appearance. One must maintain a spirit of attributing good things to others, while taking bad things upon oneself.

Someone asked, "To hide one's real virtue and not adorn one's outward appearance is truly the way it should be. However, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas consider great compassion and the saving of beings to be fundamental: if ignorant monks and lay people should slander and criticize when they see that one's outward appearance is not good, they would incur blame for slandering the monks. Even if they are unaware of real virtue, if they respect, honor, and make offerings when they see the outward form, it should be a blessing. What about these considerations?"

Dogen replied, "If you just act in an unrestrained and dissolute manner on the pretext of not adorning your outer appearance, this is still contrary to what is right. To display bad behavior in the presence of householders or others, claiming that you are hiding your real virtues, this too is an extreme violation of discipline. Wishing to be known to others as one possessed to a rare degree of the mind of the Way, as a man of the Path, although you want others to be unaware of your own defects, yet this is something which all the gods, the benevolent spirits, and the Three Treasures secretly see and know. What is admonished here is the attitude which feels no shame on that account, yet wishes to be honored by worldly people.

"As you face the moment and meet the situation, you should just consider all things for the sake of the flourishing of the Teaching and for the benefit of living beings. After taking consideration, speak; after thinking, act: it means that one should not be wild. In all matters, you should determine what is right when you are confronted with them. Thought after thought does not linger; day after day flows away: the swiftness of impermanence is a fact right before our eyes. You need not wait for the teachings of a master or written scriptures;

thought after thought, without making plans for the next day, thinking only of the present day, the present hour, since the days to come are extremely indefinite and impossible to know, you should only think of following the Way of Buddhas just for today, as long as you are alive. To follow the Way of Buddhas means to abandon bodily life and carry out various activities for the sake of the flourishing of the Teaching and the benefit of living beings."

Someone asked, "In following the Buddhist Teaching, should we practice begging for alms?"

Dogen replied, "It should be so. However, there should be allowance made in accordance with the customs of the land. Whatever it may be, one should adopt whatever method there be whereby benefit to living beings may be far-reaching, and one's own practice also would progress.

"But by such a method as this [begging], where the streets are dirty, if one were to traverse them while wearing the Buddhist vestments, they would become soiled. Furthermore, the people are poor and house-to-house begging<sup>1</sup> would be inappropriate. It seems that the practice of the Way might regress, and the benefits would not be far-reaching. If we just observe the customs of the land and continue to practice the Way in the forthright manner, the high and low will give offerings of their own accord; both personal practice and the teaching of others will be accomplished.

"In such matters, too, one must consider what is right in view of the time and circumstances, unconcerned with the views of others. Forgetting one's personal profit, one should strive to do what will promote the Way of Buddhas and the benefit of living beings."

[ 21 ]

He instructed,

Regarding the fact that students of the Way must abandon worldly feelings, there are several levels to be mindful of: they are to abandon the world, abandon home, abandon the body, and abandon the mind. You should consider them well.

Although they have fled society and dwell hidden in the mountains and forests, there are those who do not break with their family, which has continued generation after generation, and they still think of their families and relatives.

Again, although one flees society, abandons home, and goes far from the land of one's relations, when one thinks of his own body, determined not to do anything painful, disdaining to carry out something which may give rise to illness, even though it be the Way of Buddhas, he has still not abandoned his body.

Again, although one carries out difficult and painful practices without anxiety for his body, as long as his mind has not entered the Way of Buddhas and he refuses to do what is contrary to his own inclinations, even though it be the Way of Buddhas, he has not abandoned his mind.

### Notes to 1

1. Compiled by Tao Hsuan (595-667), prodigious author and founder of the South Mountain Sect of the Vinaya (Lu), or discipline sect in China, based on the four-part books of discipline.
2. Sanskrit *sharira*; purple crystals found in the cremation ashes of a Buddha. These were supposedly often found in the ashes of great Buddhists in China and Japan, and enshrined in stupas.
3. Japanese *Nyorai*; one of the epithets of a Buddha. Literally, the Sanskrit means (one who has) Thus Come, or Thus Gone. The Japanese, via Chinese, chooses the former.
4. Sanskrit *Mara*; the Tempter.
5. The Three Jewels, or Treasures, are Buddha, Dharma (his Teaching), and Sangha (the Community of Followers).
6. Japanese *shikan taza*; "only sitting." This is one of the most important terms of Soto Zen; it means sitting meditation without any specific object of concentration, such as the *koan*. Dogen's teacher Ju Ch'ing had emphasized pure sitting as superior to all other practices.

### Notes to 2

1. Japanese *noso*. The word *no* means patching or mending, and it also means robe, specifically the robe of a Buddhist monk. In the early days of Buddhism, Shakyamuni and his followers used to wear garments made of rags sewn together. Later, when Buddhism had become an established religion, monks often took to wearing fine robes presented by the faithful. The Zen monks, however, generally known as the most frugal and austere of early Buddhists in China and Japan, referred to themselves as

- "patchrobed monks," identifying themselves with the ancient tradition of poverty and simplicity.
2. Myoan Eisai (1141–1215), usually referred to by Dogen as the late *Sojo*, or "high priest" of Kennin Temple, journeyed to China twice. The first time he went with the idea of revitalizing the decadent Tendai School; on his second trip, which lasted five years, he received the teaching of the Huang-Lung line of Lin Chi Ch'an (Rinzai Zen). Back in Japan, he founded the Kennin Temple in Kyoto, where he taught the so-called "Three Teachings"—Tendai, Shingon (esoteric Buddhism), and Zen. Thus, he is known as the founder of Rinzai Zen in Japan. Dogen first studied Zen under Eisai's pupil Myozen, and has naught but praise for Eisai himself, though he scorned that latter's posterity for their rapprochement with secular powers, and their luxurious living habits.
  3. The *Bonmokyō* (Brahmajala-sutra) contains the so-called "Bodhisattva Precepts," or "Fundamental Precepts," consisting of ten great and forty-eight lesser precepts. It is thought to have been composed in China.
  4. Pai Chang Huai Hai (720–814), a great Chinese master, is said to have put together "pure rules" (*ch'ing kuei*) for the organization and conduct of specialist Zen monasteries; the earliest extant codification, said to be based on Pai Chang's work, dates from the eleventh century.
  5. In the Zen tradition, the transmission from the West is usually taken to refer to Bodhidharma, the legendary founder of the sect who came from India to China in the fifth or sixth century. Since Buddhism as a whole came to Japan via China and Korea, it is all a transmission "from the West."

### Notes to 3

1. Honorific title of Cho An Te Kung (1144–1203). This story is not found in the Choenji text of the *Zuimonki*.
2. That the demon represents the sickness is clear from what follows.
3. Wu Tsu Fa Yen (?–1104) was a great master of Lin Chi Ch'an. He did not leave the householding life until the age of thirty-five. According to *Eihei Dogen Chiji Shingi*, after he had penetrated Zen, his master sent him to be a miller at the foot of the mountain where the monastery was; he was accused of drinking wine, eating meat, and keeping ladies. When he heard of this, Fa Yen kept meat and wine around, and flirted with women customers whenever Zen students were around. Later it was discovered that he had secretly put three hundred thousand pieces of cash into the communal temple stores, which he had earned from his various business activities.

## Note to 4

1. A "House" or "Family" connotes a specialty, or walk of life.

## Notes to 6

1. This expression is taken from a famous story about Pai Chang Huai Hai. Once an old man who used to attend Pai Chang's lectures, told him that in the distant past someone had asked him whether or not one who cultivates the great practice still falls into cause and effect. The old man had replied that such a one would not fall into the province of cause and effect; because of this reply, he became a "wild fox" for five hundred lives. Then he asked Pai Chang to save him from this condition, and posed the question to him as to whether or not one who cultivates the great practice still falls into cause and effect. Pai Chang said, "He is not ignorant of cause and effect." The old man was then enlightened. The full story appears in example II of the collection *Wu Men Kuan* (*Mumonkan*), which is available in several English translations.
2. This incident also appears in the *Wu Men Kuan* (example XIV): once, when the monks of the eastern and western halls in his temple were arguing over a "cat," Nan Ch'uan grabbed the cat, held it up before them, and said, "If anyone in the community can speak, you will save the cat; if you cannot speak, I will kill the cat." No one spoke, so he killed the cat. Later, Nan Ch'uan's great disciple Chao Cou returned to the temple, and Nan Ch'uan related this incident to him. Chao Chou immediately put his sandals upon his head and walked out. Nan Ch'uan said, "If you had been here, you would have saved the cat." Nan Ch'uan P'u Yuan (748-834) and Chao Cou Ts'ung Shen (778-897) were both outstanding Chinese Zen masters.
3. This reading follows the Choenji text; the *rufubon* has it, "I would have said, 'The assembly cannot speak,' and would (not) have let the cat go." The former text has *hoge-semashi*, whereas the latter has *hoge-shitemaji*; in the latter, the *nigori* may have been improperly added, in which case the proper reading would be *hoge-shitemashi*, making it positive instead of negative in meaning.
4. A "turning word" epitomizes the revolution from delusion to enlightenment. In Zen texts it is used to refer to the answer to a problem, or to an expression of the teaching.
5. This is a difficult passage; the Choenji text has it, "They are separate (different), but both contained (in the act)." Evidently it means that kill-



- ing the cat as an act of Buddha (to teach) and killing the cat as a form of wrongdoing are separate, or different, yet contained in the same outward appearance.
6. Sanskrit *pratimoksha*, "aimed at liberation." Precepts are recited out of context in the fortnightly *uposatha* ceremony, each one governing a distinct aspect of discipline, aimed at liberation. Each monk is supposed to examine his conduct in respect to each point raised. The act of killing the cat as a form of wrongdoing is distinct from the act as the act of Buddha in respect to the relation of the participants, just as one's relation to one's deeds is different after actually repenting or turning away, even though the deed in itself is the same.
  7. The seven grievous wrongs, or "seven perversions" are (1) shedding the blood of a Buddha, (2) killing one's father, (3) killing one's mother, (4) killing one's teacher, (5) killing one's instructor, (6) disrupting the Community of Monks which strives to turn the Wheel of Dharma, and (7) killing a sage. The bad results of these deeds are experienced immediately.
  8. The putative fault of the Bodhisattva would be that of transmitting the precepts to someone who appears unworthy.

### Notes to 7

1. Literally, the heart of an old woman; a Zen expression for kindness and compassion.
2. *Chu pi* (*shippei*), a bamboo stick used for beating.

### Notes to 8

1. Minamoto Yoritomo (1147-1199) fought against the Taira Clan and became the Shogun, or supreme military commander in Japan in 1185. He set up his capital in Kamakura, ushering in what is known as the Kamakura Era (1185-1334).
2. Rokuhara, in Kyoto, was the headquarters of the Taira Clan, military rivals of the Minamoto Clan; in 1160, Taira no Kiyomori (1118-1181) had himself appointed Shogun, and played a dominant role in Kyoto politics.

## Note to 11

1. This refers to the Tendai and Shingon schools, respectively.

## Note to 12

1. Yung Ming Yen Shou (904-975) became a successor in the third generation to the Fa Yen sect of Chinese Zen. He was the author of *Tsung Ching Lu*, a prodigious compilation of 100 scrolls of essays and quotations from Buddhist and Zen texts.

## Notes to 13

1. Shakyamuni, the "sage of the Shakya clan," is an epithet of the historical Buddha Gautama.
2. Amida is a transhistorical Buddha, the object of devotion of the Pure Land schools of Buddhism. He is said to reside in the western direction, in a land called Sukhavati, "Abode of Happiness."
3. Buddhas (and all great men according to Indian tradition) are said to possess thirty-two auspicious marks, plus eighty minor excellent characteristics.
4. Ch'ang Sha Ching Ts'en, a distinguished disciple of Nan Ch'uan (see notes to book I, section 6), once composed the following verse:

The man immobile atop a Hundred Foot Pole—  
 Though he has attained Entry, this is not yet real.  
 Atop the Hundred Foot Pole, one must advance—  
 The universe in the ten directions is the Whole Body.

This is found in *Ching Te Chuan Teng Lu*, vol. 10.

## Note to 15

1. One way in which Gautama Buddha himself is said to have defined the Middle Way was to practice neither self-indulgence nor self-mortification, since both of these revolve around the concept of an individual self. In Chinese records there are to be found cases of voluntary dismemberment and self-immolation. The point which Dogen makes is that such

acts are insincere when they become objects of pride or show: hence the "abandonment" is incomplete, no matter how dramatic the show. That is why Dogen says the student should restrain his impulses and decide what to do on the basis of truth.

### Notes to 16

1. Permanent temple endowment, or, literally, "ever-abiding goods" refers to the real estate and other property of a temple; this was not "owned" by anyone, but was community property, of which personal use was forbidden. That this institution did not exist in Japan is an astonishing statement, inasmuch as the temples were great landowners. Probably it refers to the newly introduced Zen sect, specifically Dogen's community, which was subject to oppression from the old established sects, and, as is quite clear from this book, experienced great poverty and lack.
2. The four ways of life enumerated here are the Confucian description of society, representing for the Buddhists the secular life. The Zen monasteries of China engaged in agriculture and business, but Dogen's outlook in these matters was extremely pristine and pure, perhaps because of the extreme degeneracy of the Japanese Buddhist institutions of his time.
3. The idea of three periods of the Dharma—True, Semblance, and Final—evolved some time after the death of the historical Buddha. The first two are generally supposed to last five hundred years each, while the Last Age, the degenerate age, would last as long as ten thousand years. The eras are described not simply in terms of the state of the Buddhist teaching, but in terms of the human condition.
4. This is quoted from the Confucian Analects (*Lun Yu*) IV, 8.
5. Subhuti was one of the Buddha's ten great disciples, known for his excellent understanding of emptiness.
6. Mahakashyapa, another of the Buddha's ten great disciples, was known for his great austerity, and is traditionally recognized as the second Patriarch (after the Buddha himself) of Zen.
7. Hsi Shih and Mao Ch'iang were exemplary beauties among women; "Flying Rabbit" and "Green Ears" were famous steeds.
8. Out of an idealized life span of one hundred years, Shakyamuni Buddha actually lived only eighty years: traditionally it is said that he bequeathed the remaining twenty years to his disciples.
9. The *Wen Hsuan* is an anthology of classical Chinese literature; Dogen has studied it in youth, and quotes from it a number of times in this text.

*Notes to 18*

1. These represent forces in the total makeup of cause and effect, which are not apparent or explicable; sometimes they are spoken of as the deities of Hinduism or Shinto, which came to be thought of as protectors of Buddhism.
2. The last two sets are to be understood; the text gives "etc."

*Notes to 19*

1. Inasmuch as monks were presumably literate; in Japan as elsewhere, monks often performed clerical tasks for the secular world.
2. Literally, "not a human being"—a *hinin*, or "outcaste."

*Note to 20*

1. The standard practice followed by Buddha and his disciples was to beg at seven successive houses each time, regardless of whether a house were rich or poor.

## BOOK II

### [ 1 ]

He instructed,

If the wayfarer first just subdues his mind, it will be easy to abandon his body and the world as well. But if he thinks of others' views in respect to his speech and behavior, and refrains from doing something because people would think ill of it as a bad thing, or if he tries to do good when the opportunity arises, because if he did this thing others would look upon him as a true Buddhist, these are still worldly feelings. But if one, therefore, selfishly follows his own will and does bad things, he is a wholly evil man.

The point is to forget evil intention, forget one's own body, and just act wholly for the sake of the Buddha-Way. One must be mindful in all events.

For beginners in practice, even though they be worldly feelings, though they be human feelings, to subdue evil in the mind and practice good in the body, is none other than abandonment of body and mind.

### [ 2 ]

He instructed,

When the late high priest Eisai was in Kennin Temple, a poor man once came alone and said, "My family is so poor that we have had no food for several days.<sup>1</sup> Husband, wife, and child, we are on the verge of starvation. Please have compassion and save us."

At that time there was no clothing, food, or goods in the temple at all. As Eisai thought of what to do, he came to a dead end. At the time there was a little bit of beaten bronze to be used for the halo in the construction of a statue of Yakushi Buddha:<sup>2</sup> this Eisai took and broke



it off himself; rolling it up into a ball, he gave it to the poor man and said, "You can exchange this for food to stave off starvation."

That layman rejoiced and left. At the time Eisai's disciples criticized him; they said, "This was supposed to be the halo of an image of a Buddha; what about the wrongdoing involved in making personal use of the Buddha's goods?"<sup>3</sup>

The high priest said, "That is truly so. But if we consider the Buddha's own will, the Buddha cut off his flesh and limbs and gave them to living beings. To living beings who are right now about to starve to death, even to give them the whole body of Buddha still would be in accord with the will of Buddha." He also said, "Even if I were to fall into evil ways because of this wrongdoing, still I should save living beings from starvation."

The loftiness of mind of the past master should be considered by students of today as well. Do not forget it.

Another time, some disciples of the high priest Eisai said, "The rooms of the Kennin Temple are near the riverbed. In later times there may be flooding."

Eisai said, "We should not think of the disappearance of our monastery in future generations. Even of the Jetavana Monastery<sup>4</sup> only the foundation stone is left. Nevertheless, the accomplishment of having built the monastery is not lost; and for the time being, immeasurably great would be the meritorious accomplishment of one year of a half a year of carrying on the Way."

Now, as I think about this, since the building of a monastery is a great task of a lifetime, one might also think about how to avoid calamity even in the future; nevertheless, even in that frame of mind, one should reflect upon the loftiness of mind which thought along such lines [as Eisai].

### [ 3 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

In the time of Emperor T'ai-tsung<sup>1</sup> of T'ang [his minister] Wei Cheng said to him, "The people are slandering the emperor."

The emperor said, "If the sovereign has humanity, he should not worry that people revile him; if he lacks humanity, he should worry if he is praised by others."

Even a worldlying was like this; monks should have such a mind above all. When one has compassion and has the mind of the Way, it

is not of any consequence to be criticized and reviled by ignorant people. But if you lack the mind for the Way, to be thought of by others as possessing the Way, is something to be wary of.

Emperor Wen of Sui<sup>2</sup> said, "Secretly cultivate virtue, await fulfillment." What this intends to say is to practice good virtue, awaiting fulfillment, treating the common people with tenderness.<sup>3</sup> If a monk has not yet attained to this, he should pay utmost heed. If one just inwardly cultivates the work of the Way, the virtues of the Way will appear outwardly of their own accord: without expecting or hoping to be known to others, if one single-mindedly goes along with the Teachings of the Buddha and follows the way of the Patriarchs, people will naturally be drawn to his virtue.

The mistake that has arisen among students here is that they consider the respect of others and the forthcoming of property and riches to be the manifestations of virtue; and other people also know that and think so too. Knowing in your heart that this is the affectation of the demons of temptation, you should be most deliberate. In the Teachings this is called the doing of demons. I have never heard, among the examples of the three countries, that one should regard material wealth and the reverence of the ignorant as virtues of the Way. Those who were said to have the mind of the Way from ancient times in the three countries were all poor and suffered bodily pain: frugal in all things, possessed of compassion, imbued with the Way, they were said to be people of genuine practice.

What is to be called the manifestation of virtue does not refer to abundance of material wealth and pride in offerings received. There must be three levels in the manifestation of virtue. First is that it be known that such a man is practicing such a way. Next is that people aspire to that way. Afterwards, they likewise study and likewise practice that way; this is called the manifestation of virtue.

#### [ 4 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

People who study the Way must abandon human emotions. What is called abandonment of human emotions is to go in accord with the Way of Buddhas. People of the world are mostly possessed of the nature of the Lesser Vehicle: discriminating good and bad, distinguish-

ing right and wrong, taking right and discarding wrong—this is all in the nature of the Lesser Vehicle.

One must only first abandon worldly emotions and enter into the Way of Buddhas. To enter into the Way of Buddhas is to abandon the act of distinguishing good and bad in your own mind, cease thinking "good" or "bad," forget conscious thoughts about the welfare of your own body or about the condition of your mental state, whether good or bad, and follow the speech and behavior of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. What you think in your own mind to be good, or what people of the world think is good, is not necessarily good. Therefore, forget the views of others, abandon even your own mind, and follow the Teachings of Buddha.

Even though your body be painful and your mind in distress, be resolved because you are one who has utterly abandoned his own body and mind; even if it be painful and likely to cause distress, if it was the practice of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, of the virtuous ones of days gone by, you should carry it out. Even though you think a certain thing may be good and should be in accord with the Way of Buddhas, though you wish to perform and carry it out, if it is something not included in the practice<sup>1</sup> of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, you should not do it. Thus, you will not fail to have understood the Teachings as well.

This is to abandon contemplation in your own mind of the doctrines you have originally learned, and just gradually shift your mind over to the words and behavior of the Patriarchal teachers<sup>2</sup> which you are now reading. If you do so, your wisdom will advance and your understanding open up. If there is a reason you should abandon what you have gained from the words of the Doctrinal school, which you have been originally studying, then you should abandon it and see from the point of view of this present meaning.

If you still are thinking deep inside, "The fundamental purpose of the study of the Teachings is for finding the path to liberation; how could I lightly abandon the accomplishment of many years of study?": then this mind is called a mind which is bound by birth and death. You should contemplate this thoroughly.

[ 5 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

The biography of the late high priest Eisai of Kennin Temple was written by the lay Buddhist<sup>1</sup> councillor of the middle rank Akigane.

In his [first] refusal at the time, he said, "Let it be written by a Confucian. The reason for this is that Confucians forget their bodies from the beginning and from youth to maturity take up scholarship as their fundamental concern. Therefore, there are no errors in what they write. Ordinary people are essentially concerned with their own employment and social relations; since they take up scholarship as a sideline, even though they be personally good, mistakes occur in the course of their writing."

As I think of this, the fact is that people of ancient times forgot their bodies to study even in learning the Outside [non-Buddhist] Classics.

The late high priest Koin said, "What we call the mind of the Way means taking such a doctrine as 'Three thousand worlds in an instant of thought,'<sup>2</sup> studying it, encompassing and holding it within your breast; this is called the mind of the Way. To pointlessly wander around lost with a rainhat hung around your neck, is called the action of the deluding influence of pride."<sup>3</sup>

## [ 6 ]

In an evening talk he said,

The late high priest Eisai has said, "The things such as food and clothing which everyone in the community uses, do not think that I give them to you. All of it is what is offered by various gods.<sup>1</sup> I have just distributed it as I got it. And you are each fully provided with your one-time span of life; so do not run around in haste. Do not think of gratitude to me." Thus did he ever admonish. I consider these to be most excellent words.

Also, the assembly of the Chinese meditation master Hung Chih<sup>2</sup> at T'ien T'ung monastery had provisions sufficient for a thousand people. There were thus enough provisions stored for seven hundred in the halls<sup>3</sup> and three hundred outside the halls;<sup>4</sup> but because a great Elder [Hung Chih] was living there, monks came from all directions like clouds, so that there were a thousand people in the halls and five or six hundred people outside. One of the directors of affairs petitioned Hung Chih, saying, "The monastery provisions are sufficient for a thousand people; but crowds of monks have gathered, and there is not enough to go around. Could we deviate from the norm and turn some of them away?"



When he had said this, Hung Chih said, "Everyone has a mouth; it is not your concern. Do not worry about it."

Now as I think about this, everyone gets the food and clothing which is his lot in life: it does not come by taking thought for it, and it is not that it won't come if you do not seek it. Even householding people leave it to fate, thinking of loyalty and cultivating filial piety.<sup>5</sup> How then could leavers of home concern themselves with extraneous matters? There is the endowment bequeathed by Shakyamuni, there is the food and clothing offered by the gods to the worthy. And there is also the natural lot of life which we have by birth. Even without seeking it or thinking about it, just leaving it to fate, one must have his lot in life. Even if you pursue and obtain riches, what happens when impermanence suddenly arrives? Therefore, students should just study the Way wholeheartedly, without keeping other things on their minds.

Someone said, "For the flourishing of the Buddhist Teaching in the Last Age in this outlying region,<sup>6</sup> if we contrive to dwell as ease in a quiet place, without worry about things like food and clothing because of outside support, and practice the Way of Buddha with food and clothing fully provided, the benefit should be widespread." Now in my opinion, this is not so. For that matter, as long as people who maintain appearances and are attached to self gather together to study, among them there would not appear a single one with an awakened mind. Attached to profit, addicted to desire for wealth, even if a thousand or ten thousand were gathered together, it would still be worse than if there were none at all. Only the active causes of civil dispositions would pile up of themselves; it is because of the lack of the spirit of the Buddhist Teaching.

If one is pure and poor, suffering hardship, sometimes begging for food, sometimes eating wild fruits, studying the Way in constant hunger, it is when someone hearing of this comes and wishes to learn that I feel he is a true bearer of the mind of the Way, and that is the flourishing of the Buddhist Teaching. If there be no one because of the hardship and poverty, or if there be many people gathered with an abundance of food and clothing but lacking the Buddhist Way, these two are eight ounces and a half a pound.<sup>7</sup>

People of the present age generally regard the activities of constructing images and building pagodas as the flourishing of Buddhism. This too is wrong. Even with lofty halls adorned with polished jade



and beaten gold, there could be no one who would attain the Way because of these. This is just a portion of merit, incorporating the wealth of householders into the Buddhist world to do good. Although it happens that they also experience a great result from a small cause, for monks to be occupied with such affairs is not the flourishing of Buddhism. Even in a grass hut or under a tree, pondering even a single phrase of the Teaching, practicing a single period of sitting meditation, this is indeed the true flourishing of Buddhism.

The fact that I am now soliciting contributions and working as much as I can to establish a monks' hall,<sup>8</sup> I do not necessarily consider to be the flourishing of Buddhism. It is just that for the time being, while there is no one to study the Way and I pass the days and months without purpose, I think that it is better [to do this] than to be idle; it may provide an opportunity for the deluded [to become enlightened], and it will serve the purpose of a place to sit in meditation for the seekers of the Way in the present age. Still, there should be no regret even if a thing conceived and begun is not completed: if even one pillar is set up, I do not care if in the future they shall see that someone had conceived of such an undertaking but could not complete it.

## [ 7 ]

Some people exhorted Dogen to go to eastern Japan for the propagation of Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> He replied,

"No. If someone had an aspiration for the Buddhist Teaching, he would cross mountains, rivers, and seas to come and study it. Even if I were to go to exhort people without that aspiration, it is uncertain as to whether they would listen. Would I just be fooling people for my own material support? Would it be because of greed for wealth? Because that is distressing to the body, my feeling is to let it be."

## [ 8 ]

He also said,

People who study the Way should not read the books of the Scholastic [Buddhist] schools, nor study the Outside [non-Buddhist] Classics. If you must read, read the recorded sayings [of the Zen

Patriarchs] and the like. As for the rest, you should put them away for the time being.

Meditating monks of recent times are fond of literary things, to compose verses and write sermons; this is wrong. Even without expressing it in verse, one may write what he thinks; though the literary style may not be polished, one may write down the teachings. A person who is so lacking in the mind of the Way that he would refuse to read it because it is crude, would only delight in words and would fail to grasp the principle even if there were exquisitely clever phrases in a highly polished literary style.

Since this is something that I had originally studied fondly since childhood, even now from time to time beautiful phrases from the Outer Classics occur to me, and things like the *Wen Hsuan* also appear to me; yet because I consider it to be pointless, I think that in fact it should be utterly abandoned.

[ 9 ]

One day he said,

While I was in China, once when I was in a meditation cloister reading records of sayings of the Ancients, a certain monk from Ssu Ch'uan who was a Man of the Way asked me, "What is the use of reading the recorded sayings?"

I answered, "So that I would know the behavior of the Ancients."

The monk said, "What is the use of that?"

I said, "To return to my native land and teach others."

The monk said, "What is the use of that?"

I said, "It is to benefit the living."

The monk said, "After all, what is the use?"

As I later decided what the truth was here, to read the recorded sayings, the public cases, and so forth, thus knowing the acts of the Ancients, or to speak of them for the edification of those who are deluded, all of this is ultimately of no use to one's own practice or the guidance of others.

Devoted solely to sitting, once you have illumined the Great Matter, then afterward, even if you do not know a single letter, in elucidating and pointing it out to others, it can never be exhausted. For this reason did that monk say, "Ultimately, what is the use?" Thinking that this is the real truth, I subsequently gave up reading the re-

corded sayings and the rest; totally concentrating on sitting, I was able to clarify the Great Matter.

[ 10 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

Without real inner virtue, one should not be esteemed by others. Since people in this country esteem others on the basis of outer appearances, without knowing anything about real inner virtue, students who lack the mind of the Way are thus dragged down into evil ways, and become subject to temptation. It is easy to be esteemed by others. To put on a shallow pretense of having abandoned one's status<sup>1</sup> and turned away from society, is merely a fabrication of outer appearance.

While simply having the appearance of an ordinary person of the world, one who goes on harmonizing the inner mind is a genuine aspirant to the Way. Therefore as an Ancient said, "Inside empty, outside accords." What this means is to have no selfish thought in the inner mind, while the outer appearance goes along with others.

If one utterly forgets such things as "my body" and "my mind," and enters into the Way of Buddhas, acts in accord with the standards of the Buddhist Way, inside and outside are both good, now and afterwards are both good.

Even in the Way of Buddhas, it is wrong to rashly abandon that which is not to be abandoned, with the intention of abandoning one's self or abandoning the world. Among those in this country who pose as Buddhists and devotees of the Way too, he who acts badly for no reason, in the name of abandoning the self, without regard to how others may see him, or, in the name of nonattachment to the world, does such things as walk in the drenching rain, in spite of the fact that it is both inwardly and outwardly useless to do such things, people of the world immediately think what a venerable man he is, how detached from the world he is, and so forth. In their midst, if one observes the regulations of the Buddha, heeds the standards of discipline, and carries out his own practice and the conversion of others in accord with the Buddha's regulations, people will paradoxically say he smells of [greed for] fame and profit, and will have nothing to do with him. But that, on the other hand, for oneself is following the Buddha's Teachings and perfecting inner and outer virtue.

## [ 11 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

Students of the Way, it is useless to be known to people of the world as a wise or knowledgeable man. But when there is even one person who is really and truly seeking the Way, one should not fail to explain what one knows of the Teaching of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. Even if it is someone who has tried to kill you, if he asks with a sincere heart, seeking to hear of the True Way, you should forget feelings of enmity and explain it for him. Beyond that, it is completely useless to pretend to know about things like the Exoteric and Esoteric as well as the Inner and Outer Classics. If someone should come and ask about these things, there would be nothing wrong at all in replying that you don't know. If you are troubled because others will think it bad to be ignorant, and you yourself feel like a stupid man, and so, in order to learn things, you study widely the Inner and Outer Classics, and furthermore fondly study many things so as to know about the worldly concerns of ordinary people, or else pretend to others to be knowledgeable, this is a serious mistake. It is really useless for the study of the Way.

Even if you pretend not to know what you do know, since this is strained and artificial, it is after all an affront, and it is wrong. There is nothing wrong with not knowing in the first place.

When I was a child I enjoyed and studied things like the Outer Classics. Subsequently, even till I went to China and received the Dharma, I opened up the Inner and Outer Classics, even so far as to become fluent in the local language; an important task, it was something exceptional even in the worldly way. Even the lay people considered this extraordinary: and even though it was in one respect a necessary task, as I now consider fully, it happened to be a hindrance to the study of the Way.

But even if you read the Teachings of the sages, if you go on gradually imbibing the principles you read in the writings, you should grasp their meaning. However, you look first at the literary style, watch for parallel phrases and rhyming sounds, think to yourselves "this is good, this is bad," and only afterwards embrace the principles. Therefore it were better to go on from the very beginning to imbibe the principles without knowing so much.

In writing talks on the Teaching as well, if you try to express it in

literary style, thinking that if the sound harmony is off, it would be a hindrance, this is the fault of knowing. Let the language and style be as they may; if one would record the principles one by one as he thinks of them, even if those who come afterwards may think the phraseology is poor, as long as the principle comes across, it is important for the work of the Way.

Other talent and learning is also thus. Tradition says that the late Ku-Amidabu was originally a great scholar of the Exoteric [Tendai] and Esoteric [Shingon] schools. After he abandoned the world, after he had entered the gate of Buddha-remembrance,<sup>1</sup> it happened that there was a teacher of Shingon who came and asked about the doctrines of the Esoteric school: at that time, Ku-Amidabu answered him, "I have forgotten them all; I do not remember a single letter." Thus, in effect he did not answer. Just such as this should be the model of the mind of the Way. It seems he must have had some recollection; but the fact was that he did not say anything useless. It seems that the way of thoroughgoing remembrance of Buddha must indeed be like that.

Students today should also have such a mind. Even if you already have talent and learning of the Doctrinal schools, it would be a good thing to forget all of it. Needless to say, you should certainly not study them now. Even the recorded sayings of our [Zen] sect should not be read by one who is truly engrossed in study. As for the rest, it should be obvious from this.

[ 12 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

At the present time, people of this country, whether in respect to speech or in respect to behavior, mostly think of good and bad, right and wrong, in terms of the seeing, hearing, consciousness and knowledge of worldly people: "If I do that, others will think it bad; if I do this, others will think it good"—in this way they cling, even into the future.

This is totally wrong. People of the world cannot necessarily be considered good. However people think, let them think so; let them even call you a madman: in your own mind do that which would accord with the Way of Buddhas, and refrain from doing that which does not conform to the Buddhist Teaching. If you pass your whole



life in this way, it is of no consequence how people of the world may think.

To "flee the world" means that one does not let the feelings of worldly people hang on his mind. If you just study the actions of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, learn the compassion of the Bodhisattvas, repent in the hidden presence of all the heavenly beings and benevolent spirits, and go on the Way by acting in deference to the regulations of the Buddha, you should have no trouble at all.

It is also wrong to be shameless before other people, to indulge in doing what is bad, on the grounds that it doesn't matter if people say or think it is bad. You should just act in total reliance upon the Buddhist Teaching without depending upon the views of other people. In the Buddhist Teaching too, such indulgence and shamelessness is restrained.

[ 13 ]

He also said,

Even in the manners of the mundane world, even if you are in a dark room or in a place where others cannot see you, even when changing clothes and sitting and lying down as well, to carelessly fail to conceal the private parts, lacing a sense of propriety is censured as shamelessness before celestial beings and demons. Just conceal those places which are to be concealed, just the same as when others can see, and be ashamed of that which is shameful.

In the Buddhist Teaching also, the prohibitions and precepts are also like this. Therefore, one on the Way does not speak of inside or outside, does not choose between light or darkness; mindful in his heart of the Buddha's regulations, one should not do what is bad just because no one will see or know.

[ 14 ]

One day a student asked, "Although I have occupied my mind with the study of the Way for months and years, yet I have attained no measure of intuitive enlightenment. Many of the Ancients said that the Way does not depend upon intelligence or brilliance, and does not require one to have knowledge or acumen. Thus, I understand that I should not demean myself just because I have inferior faculties and

poor capacity. Is there perhaps an ancient standard for a way of concentration that I can keep in mind?"

Dogen said, "Yes. Without use of knowledge or talent, not to depend upon brilliance or intellect, is true study of the Way. Yet it is wrong to urge people to misguidedly become like blind and deaf ignoramuses.

"Because the study of the Way does not use great learning or gifted abilities at all, no one should be despised as having inferior faculties or poor capacities. Sincere study of the Way should be easy. Yet even in the monasteries of the great country of China, among several hundreds or a thousand people gathered under one teacher, those who truly find the Way and obtain the truth are but one or two persons. Therefore, there must be some ancient standard for concentration.

"Now as I consider what this is, it is a matter of whether one's determination is thoroughgoing or not. People who arouse a true and genuine aspiration and engross themselves in study to the full extent of their capacity, do not fail to attain. As for the description of the essential point to be mindful of, what thing must be concentrated upon, what practice is to be considered most urgent, that is as follows.

"First is only that the aspiration of joyful longing be earnest. For example, suppose a person has a conscious desire to steal a precious jewel, a desire to defeat a powerful enemy, or a desire to embrace a distinguished beauty; while traveling, abiding, sitting and reclining, in the midst of affairs as they pass, though various different events come up, he goes along seeking an opening, his mind occupied [with his quest]. With this mind so forcefully earnest, there can be no failure of attainment.

"In this way, when the aspiration to seek the Way has become sincere, either during the period of sole concentration on sitting, or when dealing with illustrative example of the people of olden times, or when meeting the teacher, when one acts with true aspiration, though [his aim] be high he can hit it, though it be deep he can fish it out.

"Unless you arouse a mind comparable to this, how will you accomplish the great task of the Buddha-Way, which cuts off the turning round of birth and death in a single instant of thought? If someone has such a mind, we do not talk about whether he has inferior wisdom or degenerate faculties, we do not discuss whether he is a stupid

and ignorant evil man; he will definitely attain enlightenment. And to arouse this determination, it is necessary to earnestly contemplate the impermanence of the world.

"This task is not something which is to be considered as a temporarily prescribed method of contemplation. And it is not that you should invent something nonexistent to think about. It is the truth in reality right before our eyes.

"One ought not depend upon the instruction of others, the words of the Sagely Teaching, or the inner principle of witnessing the Way. Born in the morning, dead at night; the fact that people we saw yesterday do not exist today is something that meets the eye everywhere and is close about the ears. This is something one sees and hears in respect to others: as one applies it to his own bodily self and considers what is true, even if one may expect a life of seventy or eighty years, in accordance with the truth that one must eventually die, one does die.

"During that interval, amidst its sorrows and joys, gratitude and love, resentment and enmity, and so forth, if one succeeds as he wishes, he may have passed the time in anyway at all. But only believing in the Way of Buddhas, one should seek the true bliss of nirvana. How much the more so for people grown old, people whose lives are half gone; since the remaining years can only be so many, can you be lax in studying the Way?

"Yet even this truth is put off to the future. In actual reality it is this day, this moment, that one should think of the things of the world and of the things of the Way of Buddhas; tonight or tomorrow, you may contract any kind of disease, with such oppressive physical pain that you cannot distinguish east from west; or you may incur enmity and injury from some kind of demons or spirits and may die suddenly—you may meet some kind of trouble with brigands, or enemies may appear and you may be killed, wounded, deprived of life. It is truly uncertain.

"Therefore, in a world of such troubles as these, to deliberate upon various means of livelihood in order that one may extend one's life as far as possible—in spite of the fact that the time of death is completely uncertain—and besides this to even plot evil towards others, to pass the time in vain, these are acts which are foolish in the extreme.

"It is just because this principle is really true, that the Buddha him-

self spoke of it to the masses of living beings; and in the general teachings and talks on the Way of the Patriarchal teachers as well, this principle alone is expressed. In our gatherings in the Teaching Hall and requests for instruction also, it is customary to say, 'Impermanence is swift; the matter of life and death is a great one.'

"Returning to it again and again, without forgetting this principle in the mind, just thinking for this day, this time only, without losing a moment, you should put your mind into the study of the Way. After that it is really and truly easy. As for natural superiority or inferiority, or the sharpness or dullness of faculties, they are not to be discussed at all."

[ 15 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

The fact that most people do not flee the world appears as if they were attached to their own bodies; but the fact is that they are not thinking of their own bodies. This means that they have no foresight. Also, it is because of failure to meet a good teacher.

Even if one hopes for gain and sustenance, if one does obtain the benefit of eternal bliss, even if one wishes to have the offerings of dragons and celestial beings, and considers name and repute, if one does attain honor as a Buddha or Patriarch and obtain the epithet of an Ancient Worthy, wise people in later generations should respect and look up to it when they hear of it.

[ 16 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

An Ancient said, "Having heard the Way in the morning, one may well die that night."<sup>1</sup>

Now people studying the Way should also have such a mind. Over a period of vast aeons and many lives, where you have been born in vain and have died in vain so many times, when you have, by a rare chance, gotten a human body and happened to encounter the Teaching of the Buddhas, if you don't rescue this body now, in what lifetime will you rescue this body? Even if you look after and maintain the body, you could not succeed. Since life must eventually be left be-

hind, if one would abandon even a day or an hour of it for the sake of the Buddha's Teaching, it would be a basis for eternal aeons of bliss.

While thinking about what is to come, about livelihood for tomorrow, if one does not abandon the world which must be abandoned, does not travel the path which is to be traveled, and thus passes the days and nights in vain, this is a matter for regret. One must simply resolve that if there be no means of livelihood tomorrow, then may he die of starvation, may he die of the cold, but he must above all arouse the mind which, even for today, this one day, having heard the Way, would die if that were in accord with the will of a Buddha. In this case, it is certain that one will be able to attain the Way.

Without this mind, even though it may seem like you have turned away from the world and are studying the Way, if you are still holding back, and keep such matters as summer and winter clothing on your mind, thinking of maintaining life tomorrow and even next year, if you try to study the Buddhist Teaching in this way, even if you study for ten thousand aeons, in a thousand lifetimes, I don't think you would succeed.

Yet maybe there could be such a person. But according to what I know, it doesn't seem to me that this could be the Teaching of Buddhas and Patriarchs.

[ 17 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

Students should think of the fact that they will surely die: this truth is indisputable. But even if you do not think about that fact, you should, for the time being, determine not to pass the time in vain; you should not spend time in vain by doing useless things, but by doing things which are worthwhile should you pass the time.

Among those things which are to be done, today, which of all things is most important? Know that everything outside of the actions of Buddhas and Patriarchs is all useless.

[ 18 ]

Ejo once asked, "In the activity of a patchrobed monk, if one mends and patches old and worn out clothing and such without throwing them away, it seems as if he is greedy in being sparing of things. Yet



if he discards the old and uses the new accordingly, he has a mind which is greedy in seeking what is new. There being fault in either case, ultimately how should one deal with this?"

Dogen replied, "If one just detaches from both greed in sparing and greed in seeking, there would be no impropriety in either case. However, would it not be appropriate to mend what is worn, making it last a long time, and not to covet anything new?"

[ 19 ]

After an evening talk, Ejo asked, "Should we perform such duties as the requital of the debt of gratitude to our fathers and mothers?"

Dogen answered, "Filial piety and obedience are most certainly to be exercised. However, in that filiality and obedience there is a difference between householders and leavers of home.

"Householders observe such Teachings as those of the *Classic of Filial Piety* [*Hsiao Ching*], serving [their parents] in life and serving them in death; worldly people all know this.

"Because leavers of home abandon the debt of gratitude and enter into non-doing, in the manner of a leaver of home, when it comes to requital of debt, it is not limited to one person; thinking with deep gratitude of all sentient beings alike as fathers and mothers, he returns the roots of goodness he creates back to the universe. If one were to limit it specially to his parents in this life's single generation alone, he would go against the path of non-doing.

"In daily practice of the Way, continuous immersion in the study, if one just goes on following the Way of Buddhas, that is to be considered the true way of filial piety. The dedication of offerings on death anniversaries and the practice of good during the period of limbo are activities which lay people resort to.

"The patchrobed ones should know the depth of their debt to their fathers and mothers such as it truly is. And you should know that everything else is also like this. To specially divine a day to practice virtue, or especially choose one person to whom to dedicate it, does not seem to be the intention of the Buddha. As for the passage in the preceptual scripture about the day of death of father, mother, and siblings, this seems to be temporarily applied to householders. In the monasteries of China, although they have such ceremonies on the

death anniversary of the master, it doesn't appear that they practice this on the death anniversaries of parents."

[ 20 ]

One day he said,

A person is said to have dull faculties when his determination is not thoroughgoing. When a worldly person falls from a horse, even before he hits the ground, various thoughts arise. When something happens that is so serious that one will injure his body or lose his life, anybody would use what intelligence he has by nature or by learning, to think [what to do]. At such a time, those of sharp faculties and those of dull faculties alike think of things and decide what is right.

Therefore, thinking that one may die tonight or die tomorrow, forming the idea that one is in a hopeless situation, in earnestly driving his determination on, one cannot fail to realize enlightenment. Rather than being superficially clever in worldly wisdom, it is the one who seems to be of dull faculties, yet who arouses a sincere determination, who quickly attains enlightenment. That the likes of Cudapanthaka,<sup>1</sup> who lived when the Buddha was in the world: even though he could hardly recite even a single verse, because his root nature was earnest, he obtained realization in the course of one summer retreat.

Our lives are only here for now. As long as you study the Buddhist Teaching with the earnest intent to obtain awakening before you die, there should not be a single person who would fail to attain.

[ 21 ]

One evening he said,

In the meditation cloisters of China, it happens that they sift their wheat and rice and such, getting rid of the bad and taking the good, making it into cooked rice or whatever.

A certain meditation teacher criticized this in a verse, saying, "Even though your head be broken into seven pieces, do not sift the rice." His meaning was that monks should not arrange vegetarian meals or the like; depending on what there is, they should eat the food when it is good, and when it is bad, they should eat it without disgust. It is just a matter of using the faithful donations of patrons

and the pure and clean food from the temple provisions to ward off hunger and support life to practice the Way. It means that one should not choose between good and bad on the basis of taste. The members of my congregation now should also have such a mind.

[ 22 ]

As someone asked, "If a student, hearing that one's own self is the Buddha-Way and that one should not seek outside, would deeply believe in these words, abandon his former practice and study, and spend his lifetime doing good or evil deeds according to his basic nature, how is this understanding?"

Dogen said, "In this understanding, the words and the principle are contradictory. If, on the premise that one should not seek outwardly, you abandon practice and leave off study, it seems like there is something sought by this practice which is abandoned. This is not non-seeking.

"Just realize that practice and study are fundamentally the Buddha-Way itself; without any object of seeking, even if in your heart you want to do things like the evil deeds of the world, do not do them, and do not weary or take notice of the boredom of the practical exercise of the study of the Way: on the basis of this practice, cultivating it single-mindedly, it is when you carry on without any quest from your own mind, even as to fulfilling the Way or obtaining the result, that you would be in conformity with the principle that you should not seek outwardly.

"Nan Yueh's 'polishing a tile to make a mirror' also was admonishing Ma Tsu's quest to become a Buddha.<sup>1</sup> It is not that he proscribed sitting meditation. Sitting is itself the act of a Buddha; sitting is itself non-doing. This is just one's own true body. The thing is that you should not seek a special way to enlightenment beyond this."

[ 23 ]

One day after private instruction, he said,

Many monks of recent times say that one should go along with worldly customs. Now as I consider this matter, it is not so. Even in the mundane world, the wise say that it is impure to follow the vulgar ways of the populace. Take the likes of Ch'u Yuan,<sup>1</sup> declaring that

"All the world is drunk; I alone am sober," he did not go along with the ways of the people, and in the end drowned in the Ts'ang river. How much the more so in the Buddhist practices is everything contrary to worldly actions. Laypeople adorn their hair; monks shave their hair off. Laypeople eat a lot; monks eat once a day. Everything is contrary. Afterward, though, they become people of great peace and bliss; therefore do monks turn away from the habits of the world.

[ 24 ]

One day he said,

In the method of governing the world, from the emperor above to the multitudes of people below, all of those who occupy specific offices cultivate the appropriate work. When those who are not suitable are occupying office, that is called rebelling against heaven.

When the course of government is in harmony with the inner will of heaven, the world is tranquil and the people are at ease. Therefore, the emperor arises in the third quarter of the third watch [about half past two A.M.], making that the time for the government of the land. It is not an easy thing.

As for the methods of Buddha, it is just a matter of a change of station and difference of work. The king of a nation by himself uses his intellect to plan the course of government, considering former guidelines, seeking ministers endowed with knowledge of the Way; when the affairs of government and the will of heaven are in mutual harmony, this is called governing the world. If this is neglected, heaven is rejected, the world is in confusion, and the people suffer.

From there on down, all the various dukes, nobles, officers, knights, and common people each have the work which they do. To follow this is called humanity. To go against this confuses the affairs of heaven, and therefore is subject to the punishment of heaven.

Therefore, you people who study the Way of Buddhas should never for a single moment wish to rest your bodies idly on the pretext of detachment from society and of having left the householding life. Although at first it seems to have benefit, later on it would be greatly detrimental. Following the manners of leavers of home, you should completely master this station and carry out its tasks.

In the government of the mundane world, though they consider

precedent and seek the worthy, if there are no examples handed down by former sages and past masters, then it even happens that they would follow the example of the times on their own; but for Buddhists, there are definite precedents and written teachings right before us. Also, teachers who bear the accepted tradition presently exist.<sup>1</sup>

I have a thought. In all phases of comportment, if in every respect you consider former guidelines and follow past masters in cultivating your practice, how could you fail to attain the Way?

Laypeople want to be in accord with the will of heaven; patched-robed ones want to be in accord with the will of Buddha. They carry out their tasks equally, but the [latter] result obtained is superior; once attained, it is attained forever. For the sake of such great tranquility and joy, to suffer one generation of illusory transformation, this body, to follow the will of Buddhas, should alone be in the heart of the wayfarer.

Nevertheless, there is nothing in the Buddhist Teachings which encourages anyone to rashly torment the body or do things which are not to be done. If you go in accord with the practice of restraint and the refinements of behavior, your body will naturally be at ease, your behavior consistent and unobtrusive to others. Therefore, abandoning the selfish ideas of bodily comfort which you are now entertaining, you should acquiesce completely to the Buddha's regulations.

[ 25 ]

He also said,

When I was studying in the meditation cloister of T'ien T'ung in China, the Elder Ju-ch'ing used to sit in meditation until about half past eleven at night, and rose in the morning from about half past two to sit in meditation. We sat together with the Elder in the monks' hall. There was no relaxing even for one night.

During that time, many monks fell asleep. The Elder walked around hitting sleeping monks with his fist, sometimes taking off his slipper to strike them with, shaming and exhorting them, awakening them from their sleep. If they still slept, he would go to the Hall of Illumination and ring the bell, call the servants to light the lamps, and given an impromptu general talk, such as:



"Since you have gathered in a monks' hall, what is the use of idly sleeping? Why then have you left your homes and entered a monastery? Have you not seen the sovereigns and officials of the world—who among them takes life easy? The lord masters the Kingly Way and the ministers fulfill loyalty and integrity, and so on down to the peasants, who cultivate the fields, wielding the hoe: who passes easily through the world? Having entered a monastery to avoid all this, if you pass the time in vain, after all, what will be the use? The matter of life and death is a great one; impermanence is swift: the doctrinal schools and the meditation schools alike exhort us in this way. Tonight, tomorrow, one may meet any kind of death; one may suffer any kind of illness. As long as you are alive for the time being, it is foolish not to carry out the Way of Buddha, instead of passing the time in vain by lying down and sleeping. It is for this reason that the Buddhist Teaching is declining. When the Buddhist Teaching was flourishing everywhere, in all the monasteries they concentrated on sitting in meditation. In recent times, because they do not encourage sitting meditation everywhere, the Buddhist Teaching is running thin."

I saw with my own eyes how he admonished the congregation of monks with such reasoning, and made them sit and meditate. Students of the present day too should think about his manner.

Also, one time his attendants who waited on him close by said to him, "The monks in the monks' hall are sleepy and tired, and may become sick, or their wills may flag. Perhaps this may be due to the long period of sitting: how would it be to shorten the time period for sitting meditation?"

The Elder was very indignant; he said, "It should not be so. When those who lack the mind of the Way tarry idly in a monks' hall, even were it for just a little while, they would still fall asleep. If they have the mind of the Way and a will to accomplish its practice, the longer the time the more they would rejoice in cultivating it.

"When I was young, as I traveled to see the Elders of various regions, a certain Elder admonished me in this fashion: 'Previously I would beat sleeping monks so hard my fist would almost break; but now I am old and my strength is faded, so that since I cannot beat them hard, no more good monks appear. It is because the Elders of the various regions are lax in encouraging sitting meditation that the Buddha's Teaching has declined. I should hit harder.' "

He also said,

Is the Way attained by means of the mind, or by means of the body? In the Scholastic schools they say that body and mind are identical; though they say that the Path is attained by way of the body, yet they say it is because of this identify. Therefore, the fact that it is truly the attainment of the body is not made clear.

Now in our school, both body and mind attain together. Between them, as long as you use your mind to judge and compare the Buddhist Teachings, you will never attain it in ten thousand aeons in a thousand lifetimes. When you let go of your mind and abandon knowledge and understanding, that is when you attain.

Cases like "Seeing form, illuminating the mind; hearing sound, awakening to the Way;<sup>1</sup> are also the attainment of the body. Therefore, if you completely abandon the thoughts and views of the mind and simply sit, the Path will be found near at hand. Thus, the attainment of the Way is accomplished by means of the body. Therefore, it is my feeling and advice that you should concentrate on sitting alone.

### *Notes to 2*

1. Literally, "no smoke (in the hearth)"; nothing to cook.
2. Sanskrit Bhaishajyaguru, Buddha of medicine and healing.
3. That is, personal use of community property of the Sangha.
4. This refers to the vihara in the Jetavana grove in India, bought by Anathapindika from a Prince Jeta, it was given to Shakyamuni Buddha and his followers. Thus, it is a most ancient and famous site of Buddha's teaching, in modern day Oudh (ancient Kosala).

### *Notes to 3*

1. The second emperor of the T'ang dynasty, T'ai Tsung lived from 598 to 649, and reigned from 627 to 649. Even today he is recognized as a great emperor. He is said to have admonished his ministers that for a ruler to squeeze and exploit his people was just like gouging out his own flesh to eat.
2. Founder of the Sui Dynasty, Emperor Wen lived from 541 to 604, and reigned from 589 to 604. His greatest feat is to have unified China after

centuries of political division and strife. He was exemplary in his frugality, encouraging the livelihood of the peasants by land allotment, and restricting government spending.

3. *Itsukushu suru*: this means to have compassion for, to treat tenderly, or to make upright; according to Dogen's line of thinking represented here, these meanings are virtually synonymous.

### Notes to 4

1. The Choenji text gives, "not in the heart of the Buddhas and Patriarchs."
2. This refers to the Zen records, based on the words and deeds of the masters, rather than the theories and doctrines of the intellectual or Doctrinal schools which had hitherto been studied by Buddhist scholars in Japan.

### Notes to 5

1. *Nyudo*: literally, one who enters the Way; this refers to lay people who take the tonsure and accept the basic Buddhist precepts. Sometimes called "lay monks," this was a very popular institution among the Japanese aristocracy.
2. This is a formula of the Tendai school, representing the highest perception of their Teachings. The three thousand worlds represent all times and all conditions of existence; to embrace them all in a single mental instant is the highest meditative attainment of the Tendai school.
3. *Tengu*, or "heavenly dog," has the vernacular meaning of a braggart; it is a long-nosed creature which dwells in the mountains—the long nose associates it with pride. Wandering around with a rainhat hung round the neck refers to one making a living by means of his appearance as a monk, without really having the mind of the Way, thus arrogating monkhood to his own self.

### Notes to 6

1. Gods are conceived of as beings who enjoy wealth and power and all earthly delights; thus it can be used as a polite way of referring to rich people.
2. Hung Chih Cheng Chiao (1091-1157) was an outstanding master of Ts'ao-Tung, or Soto Zen, the sect which Dogen transmitted to Japan. His

*Tso-ch'an Chen*, "Guide to Sitting Meditation," was highly regarded by Dogen, who considered it the finest work ever written on the subject; Dogen's own paraphrase of it is contained in the *Shobogenzo*, 27.

3. Meditating monks.
4. Temple workers; the great Sixth Patriarch of Zen, Hui Neng, had been such a worker rather than a monk when he was in the community of the Fifth Patriarch.
5. Loyalty and filial piety were cardinal Confucian virtues, means of advancement in a Confucian utopia.
6. Japan is here referred to as an "outlying area" in respect to China and India, classical centers of Buddhist culture.
7. That is to say, "six of one and a half-dozen of the other."
8. A monks' hall is also referred to as a meditation hall; it is a special institution of the Zen communities.

### Note to 7

1. Kanto, eastern Japan, was where the military government was seated in Dogen's time. In those days, as today, many teachers of philosophy and religion resort to the ruling class as an obvious source of support. In particular, a number of Zen teachers came to Japan from China in the thirteenth century and received protection and support from the military establishment at Kamakura; as refugees (from the Mongols), however, their circumstances were somewhat special. Dogen's teacher Ju-ch'ing had warned him to stay away from rulers of men.

### Note to 10

1. Or, "body": in this case I have chosen "status" since this reflects the custom of the time of nobles and officials "abandoning" secular affairs and taking Buddhist orders. Often, however, this was to the advantage of political maneuvering or decadent living.

### Note to 11

1. *Nembutsu*; this refers to the practice of the Pure Land schools of reciting the name of Amida Buddha. Although the man concerned was already ordained, he is said to have "abandoned the world" (*tonsei*) when he entered the Pure Land Way because he gave up the status of a great scholar

of the established powerful schools, to live in retirement and devote himself to recitation of the Buddha's name.

### Note to 16

1. *Lum Yu* IV, 8. This is probably the saying of Confucious which is most frequently quoted in Zen circles.

### Note to 20

1. Cudapanthaka, one of the Buddha's disciples, is representative of the most ignorant and stupid. Unable to remember any phrases of the Teaching, he was given a broom by the Buddha; by concentrating on this, eventually he attained liberation.

### Note to 22

1. Huai Jang of Nan Yueh (677-744) visited his future disciple Ma Tsu Tao I (709-788) and found the latter sitting constantly in meditation. Nan Yueh asked him, "What are you striving for by sitting in meditation?" Ma Tsu said, "I am striving to become a Buddha." Nan Yueh then picked up a piece of tile and began to rub it on a rock. Ma Tsu asked him what he was doing, and he said, "I am polishing the tile to make a mirror." Ma Tsu asked, "How can you polish a tile to make a mirror?" Nan Yueh said, "Granted that polishing a tile will not make it a mirror, how can sitting in meditation produce a Buddha?"

### Note to 23

1. Ch'u Yuan (289?-243? B.C.) was a statesman during the Warring States period in ancient China. He was from Ch'u, now corresponding to central China, but then a southern area of Chinese civilization. Accused in an intrigue and exiled south of the Yangtse River, he wrote the famous *Ch'u Tz'u*, "Elegies of Ch'u," eulogizing the beauties of his homeland and lamenting the political troubles of his time. Eventually, he cast himself in the Mi Lo River (not the Ts'ang, as Dogen relates).



*Note to 24*

1. It is evident that Dogen considered himself among their number.

*Note to 26*

1. This famous slogan is based on the enlightenment of two ninth-century masters, Ling Yun Chih Chin and Hsiang Yen Chih Hsien; both had studied for a long time with the famous teacher Kuei Shan Ling You, but attained nothing. One day Chih Chin saw some peach blossoms and was immediately enlightened. Chih Hsien went to live by the abandoned tomb of an ancient master; one day as he was sweeping the area, a piece of tile he swept hit a bamboo trunk, and when he heard the noise, Chih Hsien awakened to the Way.

## BOOK III

### [ 1 ]

He instructed,

Those who study the Path must let go of mind and body and enter wholly into the Way of the Buddha. An Ancient said, "Atop a hundred foot pole, how will you step forward?"<sup>1</sup> Thus, having climbed to the top of a hundred foot pole, there is a mind which thinks that it will die if it lets go its foothold, and so holds fast. The admonition to take a step forward means that having concluded that it would not be bad, then, so as to cast off body and life, one must deliberately abandon everything, from his worldly occupations to his lifetime career. As long as he does not abandon this, no matter if he studies the Way with the same urgency as of beating out a fire on his head, it would still be impossible to attain the Way. You must settle your resolve and cast off body and mind together.

### [ 2 ]

Once a certain nun asked, "Even worldly women strive to study for the Buddhist teaching. As for a nun, even though there may be slight imperfection in her person, I do not know why she should not be fit for the Buddhist Teaching. What about it?"

Dogen said, "This interpretation is wrong. Although it happens that laywomen do study the Buddha's Teaching while remaining as they are, and do have some attainment, if a person who has left home does not have the heart of a leaver of home, she cannot attain.

"It is not that the Buddha's Teaching chooses among people; it is because people do not enter into the Buddhist Teaching. The standards and mentalities of leavers of home and householders must be different. If a householder has the heart of a leaver of home, he can

escape; for a leaver of home to have the heart of a householder is a double fault.

"The fact is that the approaches must be much different. It is not that the doing is difficult; it is that it is difficult to do well. Because in spite of the fact that the journey of escape to find the Way seems to be on everyone's mind, those who really accomplish it are rare.

"The matter of life and death is great; impermanence is swift. Do not relax your mind. If you abandon the world, you must abandon it truly. As for temporarily established names, let them be what they may."

### [ 3 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

As I look upon the people of society in the present time, those people who obtain good results and promote their families are all upright and straightforward of mind, and are benefactors of others. Therefore, they maintain their homes and flourish even through their children and grandchildren.

As for people who are crooked in their minds and malevolent toward others, even if for a day it seems their results are good and their homes maintained, eventually they turn out badly. Or even if they appear to pass their whole lifetimes without trouble, their posterity will inevitably decline.

Also, when doing good for others, if one does it with the wish to be well thought of and well liked by that person, this may seem better when compared to evil, but it is still thinking of oneself and is not really good for others.

Even though it be unknown to them, one who does what is good for others, even for the future, though not thinking of whose may be the benefit, who provisionally does what would be good for the sake of others, is called a truly good person.

All the more should a ragged monk uphold a mind which surpasses even this. His consideration of sentient beings does not distinguish between familiars and strangers; maintaining a will to help them equally, even though he does not think of his own profit at all, of mundane or transcendental benefits, and is neither known nor liked by others; he simply does in his heart what is good for others, and is not himself known by others to possess such a mind.

The rule for this is that one must first abandon the world and abandon one's own body. If one just truly abandons his body, he has no mind to wish to be well thought of by others. If, however, you say 'let the people think what they may,' and then do bad things, indulging yourself, this also goes against the will of the Buddha.

Just do what is good, carry out good deeds for the sake of others without thinking of obtaining a reward or of glorifying your name; being truly without possession, work for the benefit of living beings.

Thus, the most essential point to concentrate on is to detach from yourself. If you would maintain this mind, first you must contemplate impermanence. A lifetime is like a dream; time passes swiftly by. Dewlike life rapidly vanishes. Since time has never waited for anyone, as long as you are alive for the time being, you should think of being good to others, even in respect to the slightest matters, in accordance with the will of the Buddhas.

[ 4 ]

In an evening talk, he said,

People who study the Way must be utterly poor. As I see the people of the world, for those who have wealth, the two problems of anger and shame are sure to arise.

When one has a treasure, when he thinks that others will steal it, and he determines that it will not be taken from him, anger suddenly arises. Or perhaps in discussing this, when it comes to dialogue and settlement, eventually it creates a conflict and they engage in battle. While it goes on this way, anger rises and disgrace too befalls.

When one is poor and covets nothing, he has already avoided these problems and is free and at ease. The proof is right before your eyes; don't wait to find it in the scriptures.

What is more, the ancient sages and past worthies criticized it, and all the gods, the Buddhas, and Patriarchs, all put it to shame, when foolish people, nevertheless, store up property and treasure, and embosom so much anger and hatred; this is the shame of shames.

To be poor yet think of the Way is what the past worthies and ancient sages looked up to; it is that over which all the Buddhas and Patriarchs rejoiced.

The degeneration of Buddhism in recent times is right before our eyes. From the time I first entered and saw Kennin Temple, till the

time when I saw it seven or eight years later, the things that had gradually changed were that they had put lacquered storage chests in each room, and each individual had his own utensils; taking a liking to fine clothing, they accumulated material possessions and indulged in rude talk: by reflecting upon the decline of such things as salutation and ceremonial obeisance, the state of other places can be inferred from this.

Buddhists should not possess anything at all besides robes and bowl. What is there to put in it that one might need to make a lacquered chest? One should not have so much that he hides it from others. It is just because of fear of thieves that one thinks of hiding things away; if one abandons them and does not hold on to them, he will then be at ease. It is only when one thinks he will not be killed by others even though he must kill them, that the body suffers and the mind is worried: if one has determined that even if people kill him, he would not retaliate, then one's mind is not worried and he does not trouble about thieves. One would never be ill at ease.

[ 5 ]

One day he said,

When the Zen master Hai Men was Great Elder at T'en T'ong, there was a monk in his congregation known as Senior Yuan.<sup>1</sup> This man was one who had grasped the truth and awakened to the Way; his practice and attainment excelled even that of the Elder.

One night he went to the abbot's quarters, burned incense, bowed, and said, "Please allow me the head seat of the rear hall."<sup>2</sup>

At that time the Zen master wept and said, "Since the time I was novice, I have never heard such a thing as this. For you, a meditating monk, to seek the head seat, or the position of Great Elder, is a serious mistake. You have already awakened to the Way better than I have. But is your seeking for the head seat for the sake of advancement? If I were to allow you, you could be allowed even the front hall<sup>3</sup> or the position of Great Elder. Your attitude is base and ignoble; from this indeed can be inferred that of the other monks, who are not yet enlightened. The decline of the Buddhist Teaching can be known by this." So saying, he shed tears and wept sadly.

Although he deferred in shame at this, still eventually he was asked to occupy the head seat. Afterwards, the Senior Yuan recorded



this talk, shaming himself and bringing his teacher's excellent words to light. As I consider this, the Ancients thought it shameful to seek advancement or to want to be the head of something or to be the Great Elder. Just think of awakening to the Path; there should be nothing else of concern.

[ 6 ]

One evening he said,

After Emperor T'ai Tsung of the T'ang dynasty assumed the throne, he dwelt in the old palace. Because it was ruined, there was a dampness in the air, and the chilly wind and mists would afflict his jadelike body. When his ministers and others submitted to the throne that a new palace should be built, the emperor said, "It is the farming season, the people would surely be distressed. We should wait until fall to build it. To be afflicted by the dampness means that one is not accepted by the earth; to be affected by wind and rain means that one is not in harmony with heaven. If one goes against heaven and earth, he cannot maintain his body. If one does not trouble the people, he should harmonize naturally with heaven and earth." So saying that if he harmonized with heaven and earth they would not afflict his body, after all he did not build a new palace, but abode in the old building.

Even a worldling thus thought more of the people than of his own body. How much more so should children of Buddha, inheriting the custom of the house of the Tathagata, take compassion on all living beings, as upon an only child.

One should not revile and torment his attendants or followers on the excuse that they are his servants. How much more so should fellow students and equal companions respect and honor the abiding Ancients of venerable years, just as if they were the Tathagata: the words of the precepts are clear about this.

Therefore students of the present time as well should think of doing what would be good for others, without distinguishing in your hearts between high and low, relative or stranger, even though this does not show outwardly and is unknown to others. Whether in respect to matters great or small, no one should torment or break the hearts of other people.

When the Tathagata was in the world, many outsiders slandered and scorned the Tathagata. The Buddha's disciples asked, "The Tatha-

gata has always taken gentleness as fundamental, and has compassion in his heart; all living beings should honor him equally. Why do such stubborn creatures as these exist?"

The Buddha said, "When I led a congregation in the past, I often reprimanded my disciples with acts of scolding and carping. Because of this, the present situation is as it is." So it is to be seen among the books of monastic rules.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, even if one leads a group, acting as the chief Elder in residence, when he is going to correct the errors of his disciples, he should not make use of scolding or criticizing speech. If he just uses gentle words to admonish and encourage, then those who would obey will still obey.

Even more should students completely give up using coarse language to family and dependents, or vilely slandering others. Be very careful.

[ 7 ]

He also said,

The concern of a patchrobed monk should be to maintain the comportment of Buddhas and Patriarchs. Most importantly, above all one should not covet property and wealth. The reason for that is that the profundity of the Tathagata's compassion is difficult to fathom, even by way of simile. But all that he did was for the sake of living beings. He would not do even the slightest thing that would not be of benefit to living beings.

That is because as long as he was the crown prince of a universal monarch, whereas once he had succeeded to the throne he could have done with the world as he liked, taking pity on his disciples with treasures, and swaddled them with his possessions, why did he abandon his title, and practice begging on his own? Because there must certainly have been some useful conditioning factors both for the sake of beings of the final age, and to help his disciples traverse the Way, he did not keep his property and wealth, but practiced begging for food. Thenceforth, those of the patriarchal teachers of India and China who were also known by others as good people, were all at the extremity of poverty and begged for their food.

All the more do the Patriarchs of our sect only exhort that we should not accumulate property and wealth. Even in the Scholastic

sects, when they praise this [Zen] sect, above all they praise poverty: in the books and records that have come down to us as well, this poverty is recorded and praised. I have never heard of anyone rich in material wealth who carried out the Way of the Buddhas. All those known as good Buddhists wore patched rags and always begged for food.

In the beginning, when the Zen sect was first called a worthy foundation and its meditating monks were considered different from others, it was because even in the old days when they were abiding amongst others in the Teaching Halls and Discipline Cloisters<sup>1</sup> and the like, they forsook their bodies and were poor people. In the inherited tradition of this fundamental sect, this fact before all should be known. You do not need to depend on the reasoning of the words of the Sage's Teaching: there was even a time when I myself owned fields, gardens, and the rest; and there was a time too when I possessed property and wealth. As I compare the state of my body and mind of that time to now, when I am so poor that I hardly have a robe and bowl, I feel that my state of mind right now is better. This is evident proof.

[ 8 ]

He also said,

An Ancient said, "If you are not as good as that person, do not talk about how he acts."

What this intends to say is that if you have not studied and do not know the merits of the person, when you see the person make a mistake, you should not think, "That's a good person, but the deed is bad; so good people also do bad things, don't they!" Just take the person's virtues, do not grasp the person's faults. The saying that the gentleman holds to virtue but does not hold to fault, means the same thing.

[ 9 ]

One day he said,

People should cultivate secret virtue. If they cultivate hidden virtues, there will surely be unseen bestowal of manifest benefits.

Even if they are mud or wooden images, coarse and crude, you should respect images of Buddhas; even though they be shabby pro-

ductions of yellow scrolls and red rolls, you should believe and honor the scriptures; even if they are undisciplined, shameless monks, you should look up to and accept the essence of monkhood. If you pay honor and respect within your heart, with a believing mind, you will certainly experience evident blessing. Just because they are undisciplined, shameless monks, roughly depicted Buddhas, or shabby copies of the scriptures, if you therefore do not believe in or respect them, you will certainly experience punishment. Being the proper legacy of the Tathagata, they are Buddhist images, scriptures, and monks, who are a blessing to humans and gods. Therefore, if you take refuge in them and honor them, there will surely be benefit. If you do not believe, you will incur punishment. No matter how exceptionally debased they may be, we should take refuge in and honor the realms of the Three Treasures.

To indulge in evil doings with the excuse that "A Zen monk does not cultivate good, nor does he have any use for virtue," is extremely one-sided. I have never heard of any precedent for indulgence in evil in the ancient standards. The Zen Master T'an Hsia T'ien Jan<sup>1</sup> burned a wooden Buddha; though it is exactly something like this which seems to be evil doing, it was a device to explain the Teaching at a certain level.

When we look at the record of that master's deeds, when he sat it was always with dignity, when he stood it was always with proper bearing; he was always as though facing an honored guest. Even when sitting down for a little while he always crossed his legs and folded his hands; he took care of the community property as one would take care of his eyes. Whenever there were any diligent in practice, he would not fail to praise them; even a little bit of good he deemed important. His ordinary mode of action was exceptionally excellent; his record is set down as a mirror and guide for the monasteries.

Moreover, from what we learn of all the masters who have attained the Way, of the former Patriarchs who were awakened to the Path, they all maintained disciplined behavior, regulated their conduct, and considered even a little bit of goodness to be important. I have never heard of any masters who were awakened to the Path who made little of good roots.

Therefore, students, if you wish to follow the Way of the Patriarchs, do not take good roots lightly. You should be wholehearted in faith and aspiration. The Buddhas' and Patriarchs' journey on the

Path is always where manifold good accumulates. Once you have perceived that all dharmas are the Buddha Dharma, then you should know that evil is definitely evil and is far from the Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs, and that good is definitely good and becomes an affinity with the Buddhist Way. If so, how could you not esteem the realms of the Three Treasures?

## [ 10 ]

He also said,

Now if you want to travel the Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs, then expect nothing, seek nothing, grasp nothing; without thought of profit you should go the Way of the former sages, and practice the behavior of the successive Patriarchs.

If you say that having cut off all seeking, one should not seek the fruit of enlightenment, and therefore you give up practice and remain in your former evil ways, after all, you have stuck to your original desires and fallen back into your old pit.

If you do not harbor any expectations at all, but just to be a bit of blessing to humanity and the gods, maintain the proper dignity of monkhood, consider what actions would help rescue living beings, joyfully cultivate all virtues, abandoning your former evil, yet without lingering over your present good, if you continue to pass your whole lifetime like this, the Ancients would call you one who has "broken through the black lacquer bucket."<sup>1</sup> such is the conduct of Buddhas and Patriarchs.

## [ 11 ]

One day a monk came and asked about how to concentrate on the study of the Way. Accordingly, the master taught him,

"A person who studies the Way first of all must be poor. If his possessions are many, he will surely lose his will. If householders who study the Way are still bound by their wealth, cling to their houses, and associate with their relations, even if they have an appropriate aspiration, there are many factors veiling them from the Way.

"Although from ancient times many laypeople have engaged in this study, even those among them who were known to be good still did not compare to monks. While monks have no possessions except



three robes and one bowl, do not think about where to live, and are not greedy for food or clothing, if they study the Path unbendingly, each will obtain benefit according to his capacity. The reason for this is that poverty is near to the Way.

"Mr. P'ang,<sup>1</sup> although a layman, was not inferior to a monk: his name is remembered in the Zen centers because when the man began to engage in meditation, he took all his family wealth and went to throw it in the sea. People remonstrated with him, saying 'You should either give it to someone else, or use it for Buddhist services.'

"Then he answered them, 'Since I considered it an enemy, I have abandoned it; knowing it to be harmful, how could I give it to others? Wealth is an enemy which causes trouble to body and mind.' So after all he threw it all in the sea.

"Afterwards, he wove bamboo baskets and sold them to make a living. Though he was a layman, it was when he had thus abandoned his property and wealth that he was known as a good man. So much the more must monks abandon it altogether."

[ 12 ]

A monk said, "In the monasteries of China, there is established communal property, and such things as are in the permanent endowment; thus they serve as sustaining factors for the monks in their practice of the Way, and they have no such worries. Since there is no such establishment in our county, if [supplies] are totally given up, it would become quite a disturbance to the practice of the Way. Therefore I feel that some consideration should be made for food and clothing for sustenance; what about it?"

Dogen said, "Not so. Rather than China, it happens more in this country that people support monks without reason, and give people things they don't deserve. I don't know about others, but I have practiced this thing and realized its truth. I have already passed ten years without possessing anything at all, and without making any plans. To think of storing up even a little bit of wealth is a great problem. Even if you do not think of how to accumulate it, it is there naturally. Everyone has his lot in life; heaven and earth bestow it. Even though one does not himself run seeking for it, one will surely have it.

"How much the more so for Buddhists, who have the endowment left by the Tathagata; without seeking it is naturally obtained: if you

just abandon everything and practice the Way, you will have it by nature. This is the evident proof."

[ 13 ]

He also said,

People who study the Way often say, "If we do such a thing, the people of the world may criticize us." This is very wrong.

No matter how people may criticize you, as long as it is the conduct of Buddhas and Patriarchs, or according to the principles of the Sage's Teaching, you should follow and practice it. And even if everyone in the world praises it, if it is an act which is not in the principles of the Sage's Teaching, or is something that the Patriarchs would not do, you should not carry it out.

For this reason, if the people of the world, be they relatives or strangers, should praise you or revile you, even if because of that you go along with their ideas, when your own life is ending and you are drawn by evil actions to the brink of falling into evil ways, those people cannot save you in any way. And even if you are slandered and despised by everyone, if you follow and practice the Way of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, because it can really and truly help you, you should not fail to practice the Way with the excuse that others will criticize you.

Furthermore, those people who criticize or who praise in this way are not necessarily those who have mastered and proved the practices of Buddhas and Patriarchs. How could it be possible to judge the Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs on the basis of worldly good and evil?

Therefore we should not go along with the sentiments of worldly people; simply because it is the fact that we should follow and practice the Buddha's Way, we should practice it wholeheartedly.

[ 14 ]

Also a certain monk said, "My aged mother is still alive, and I am her only son. It is solely due to my support that she gets along in the world. My gratitude and love are profound, and my desire to be filial and obedient is deep. Because of this I go along somewhat with society and go along with people, using the power of their benevolence to supply my mother with food and clothes. If I were to forsake society

and dwell in seclusion, my mother could hardly hope to live for even one day. Yet it is also a difficult thing to remain in the world because of this, and thus not enter completely into the Way of Buddhas. If there is a reason why I should, after all, give up and so be able to enter the Path, what is the gist of it?"

Dogen replied, "This is a difficult matter; it is not for anyone else to decide. You must just think it over thoroughly on your own, and if you sincerely have a will to enter the Way of Buddhas, then if you settle whatever preparations or expedients are necessary to provide for the secure livelihood of your mother, and enter the Buddhist Path, it will be good on both sides.

"Anything that is earnestly desired is attained: though it be a powerful opponent, a voluptuous woman, or a precious jewel, if one's earnest desire is deep enough, there must surely be some kind of means which will develop. This even has the unseen help of the benevolent spirits of sky and earth, and will not fail to work out.

"We read that the Sixth Patriarch of Ts'ao Ch'i<sup>1</sup> was a woodcutter in Hsin province who sold firewood to support his mother. One day in the market place he heard a traveler reciting the Diamond Scripture and awakened his mind; when he left his mother to seek out Huang Mei, he obtained ten ounces of silver to supply food and clothing for his mother. In this case too, it seems as if heaven might have given it to him because he was earnest in his desire.

"You should consider this carefully; it is most reasonable. If you wait out your mother's life, and then afterward enter unimpeded into the Buddhist Way, successively fulfilling your original aspirations, it would be wonderful. Yet you never know: neither old nor young are safe, so supposing your mother lingered on for a long time while you yourself die first; since your preparations would have gone wrong, you will regret not having entered the Buddhist Path, and your old mother will be submerged in guilt for not having permitted you to do so: then there would be no benefit for either one, and you will incur mutual reproach; how will it be then? Once you have given up your life to enter the Way of Buddhas, even if your old mother should starve to death, would not the virtue of having allowed her only son to enter the Way be a good help to her attainment of the Way?

"Although it is, of course, gratitude and love which are difficult to abandon even over vast aeons and many lives, if you forsake them now that you have got a human body in this life and have encoun-

tered the Teaching of Buddha, this is the essence of true requital of debt. How could this not be in conformity with the will of Buddha? I have read that if one child leaves home, seven generations of ancestors obtain release.<sup>2</sup> There is also the reason that why should you think only of one generation of evanescent life, thus missing the opportunity for eternal peace and happiness? You must judge these carefully on your own."

### Note to 1

1. See note 4 to book I, section 13.

### Notes to 5

1. "Senior" is literally "the head seat"; the order of precedence in a monks' hall is determined by seniority in number of years ordained. A number of the head seats, however, are occupied by monks chosen especially to fulfill certain functions in the organization of the community.
2. The monks' hall is divided into front and rear when the congregation is large. The monk occupying the head seat of the rear hall is supposed to be a model for the community, and fulfills the duties of the head seat of the front hall when the latter is lacking.
3. The head seat of the front hall leads the community in meditation and disciplines the monks, sometimes lecturing or giving private instruction in place of the teaching master. This position is to be filled by someone qualified to be even a Great Elder, or teaching master of a temple. As deputies of the master, the positions of head seat of the front and rear are both very important offices.

### Note to 6

1. *Vinaya*; the evolution or incident of each monastic rule is provided as context to the precepts; these are among the oldest books of the Buddhist canon, different from the so-called Bodhisattva Precepts mentioned in book I.

### Note to 7

1. Temples devoted to lecture and study of scriptures, or to the observance of the ancient modes of monastic conduct, as given in the *Vinaya*. The independent Zen monastery is usually said to have been founded by Pai Chang Huai Hai (720-814). See book I, section 2.

### Note to 9

1. T'ien Jan (739-824), whose name means "natural" or "spontaneous," was a successor to the great Shih T'ou Hsi Ch'ien. Once, at Hui Lin temple during the wintertime, he burnt a wooden image of Buddha to warm himself. Someone scolded him for this act, but he said he was doing it to get the *sharira*, relics of a Buddha's cremation. When the man said that there are no relics in a mere piece of wood, T'ien Jan said, "Then what are you blaming me for?"

### Note to 10

1. A lacquer bucket is a metaphor for ignorance.

### Note to 11

1. P'ang Yun was a friend of T'ien Jan (see section 9), and was first awakened by Shih T'ou Hsi Ch'ien; later he was completely enlightened under the tutelage of Ma Tsu Tao I (see book II, section 22), and is known as the latter's successor. He was originally a man of the landlord class, and a scholar of Confucianism. Later, his wife, son, daughter, and himself were all known as enlightened people. After breaking up his household and throwing away his possessions, he traveled around with his daughter, weaving bamboo goods for a living, and visiting the leading Zen masters of the day (most of whom were successors of Shih T'ou and Ma Tsu). Many of his sayings, conversations with Zen masters, and about three hundred of his poems, have been recorded and left to posterity.



*Notes to 14*

1. Hui Neng (638-713), the Sixth Patriarch of Zen in China, and one of the most illustrious figures of the sect. His father had been an official and was exiled to the far south of the Chinese empire (Canton); he died when the Patriarch was still a boy, leaving him to support his mother by cutting wood. The Diamond Scripture (*Prajnaparamita Vajracchedika Sutra*) was one of the scriptures used by the Fifth Patriarch Hung Jen in his teaching (on Mt. Huang Mei); when, according to tradition, Hui Neng heard the sentence, "Without any place of abode should one arouse the mind," he was suddenly awakened and determined to seek out the Fifth Patriarch.
2. This idea was apparently invented to reconcile the Buddhist Way of leaving home to the secular Chinese Confucian tradition, which demands that a man have children to maintain the sacrifices at the ancestral shrine.

## BOOK IV

### [ 1 ]

One day after individual study meetings, he said,

Students of the Way, do not cling to your own understanding. Even if there is something you do understand, you should ask yourself whether there might still be something not fully resolved, or whether there may be some meaning which is better than this; seek far and wide for those who know, and inquire also into the words of people of former times.

Yet do not cling fast even to the words of those people of old. Thinking that this too may be wrong, even though you believe it, if there should be something superior to this next, then you should turn to that.

### [ 2 ]

He also said,

The National Teacher Hui Chung of Nan Yang<sup>1</sup> asked the purple-vested imperial attendant monk Lin,<sup>2</sup> "Where do you come from?"

The attendant replied, "From south of the city."

The Teacher said, "What color is the grass south of the city?"

The attendant replied, "It is yellow."

The Teacher then asked a page boy, "What color is the grass south of the city?"

The boy said, "It is yellow."

The Teacher said, "Even this boy can also be granted purple vestments and discuss the mysterious in the imperial presence."

Thus he was saying that even a page boy, as the teacher of a nation's emperor, could reply with the true color; your view does not surpass the ordinary way. Later, someone said, "Where is the fault of the imperial attendant monk failing to transcend the ordinary? The

page boy too spoke of the real color. This is the very making of a real teacher." So he did not accept the National Teacher's interpretation. Thus we know that one need not necessarily depend upon the words of the Ancients, but must only think of what is really true. Although a doubting mind is bad, still it is wrong to cling to that which you should not believe, or to fail to ask about a meaning which you should seek.

### [ 3 ]

He also instructed,

The foremost concern of a student is first to detach from the notion of self. To detach from the notion of self means that we must not cling to this body. Even if you have thoroughly studied the stories of the Ancients, and sit constantly like iron or stone, if you are attached to your body and do not detach from it, you could not find the Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs even in ten thousand eons, in a thousand lifetimes.

All the more, though you may say you have understood the temporary and true methods of teaching, and the true Exoteric and Esoteric doctrines, if you do not leave off your feeling of attachment to your body, you are idly counting the treasures of others, without having a half-penny of your own.

I only ask that students sit quietly and look into the beginning and end of this body as it truly is. The body, limbs, hair, and skin come from the two drops of father's semen and mother's blood; when the breath ceases, they separate and decay in the mountains and fields, eventually turning into mud and earth. What do you have to cling to as your body?

How much more is this so when we look at it from the point of view of the elements; in the accumulation and dispersal of the eighteen realms,<sup>1</sup> which elements can you definitely consider as your own body? Whether it is within the Teachings or outside of the Teachings,<sup>2</sup> the fact is the same, that neither beginning nor end of one's body can be grasped is the essential point to be aware of in practicing the Way. If you have first arrived at this truth, the Real Buddha-Way is something that is obviously so.

## [ 4 ]

One day he instructed,

An Ancient said, "Familiarity with good people is like walking through mist and dew; although they do not drench your garment, in time it becomes imbued with moisture."<sup>1</sup> What this means to say is that if one becomes well acquainted with the good, without realizing it, he himself becomes a good man. In the case of the servant boy who attended the master Chu T'i,<sup>2</sup> although it is not known when he studied and we do not read when it was that he practiced, because he was in the company of someone who had studied for a long time, he realized the Way.

In sitting meditation as well, if you do it for a long time, you will spontaneously become suddenly aware of the Great Matter, and should know that sitting meditation is the correct entrance.

## [ 5 ]

On January 28, 1236, Dogen first requested me, Ejo, to occupy the first seat<sup>1</sup> of Kosho Temple. Thus after an informal meeting, he first asked me as head monk to take up the whisk and preach.<sup>2</sup> I was the first head monk of Kosho Temple.

The message of the informal meeting was to bring out the matter of the transmission of the Buddhist Teaching, according to the method of our sect. [Dogen said,]

"The first Patriarch came from the West and dwelt in Shao Lin, awaiting a man of potential. As he bided his time, sitting facing a wall, in a certain year, during the coldest part of winter, Shen Kuang<sup>3</sup> came seeking him. The First Patriarch knew that he was a vessel of the Supreme Vehicle, so he received him: the robe and the Teaching were handed down together,<sup>4</sup> their descendants spread throughout the land, and the True Teaching is now widely known.

"Now this temple invites its first head monk, and today, for the first time, let the 'taking up of the whisk' be carried out. Do not worry how small the congregation is; do not be concerned that you are a beginner. At Fen Yang<sup>5</sup> there were only seven or eight people, and at Yao Shan<sup>6</sup> there were no more than ten. Nevertheless, they each carried out the Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs. This was called the flourishing of the monasteries.

"Have you not read about awakening to the Way through the sound of bamboo, of enlightening the mind by the sight of peach blossoms?<sup>7</sup> Do you think there is any cleverness or stupidity in the bamboo? Any delusion or enlightenment? How could there be shallow or profound, wise or stupid among the flowers? Although the flowers bloom every year, that doesn't mean that everyone attains the Way. Although the bamboo echoes from time to time, that does not mean that all who hear it witness the Path. It is only by virtue of long study and persevering practice, with the supporting help of hard effort in discernment of the Way, that they realized the Path and understood the mind. It is not that the sound of the bamboo alone was sharp, nor is it that the color of the flowers was especially lush. Although the echo of bamboo is marvelous, it does not sound of itself; it depends upon the help of a piece of tile to make a sound. Although the color of the flowers is beautiful, they do not bloom of themselves; they need the spring breeze to open.

"The conditions for the study of the Way are also like this; although the Way is complete in everyone, the realization of the Way depends upon collective conditions. Although individuals may be clever, the practice of the Way is done by means of collective power. Therefore, now you should make your minds as one, set your aspirations in one direction, and study thoroughly, seek and inquire.

"Jade becomes a vessel by carving and polishing. A man becomes humane by cultivation and polish. What gem has highlights to begin with? What person is clever from the outset? You must carve and polish, train and cultivate them. Humble yourselves and do not relax your study of the Way.

"An Ancient said, 'Do not pass time in vain.'<sup>8</sup> Now I ask you, does time stop because you value it? Does it not stop even though you value it? You must realize that time does not pass by in vain; it is man who passes it in vain. This means that people, like time, should not go idly by, but should earnestly study the Way.

"Thus participation in the study must be done with like minds. It is not that I am taking it easy from teaching by myself alone: the way in which the Buddhas and Patriarchs carried out the Way was generally always like this. Although there were many who realized the Way by following the instructions of the Tathagata, there were also those who realized the Way because of Ananda.<sup>9</sup> Do not belittle the new head monk, saying that he is not a man of capacity. Recite the



story of Tung Shan's 'three pounds of hemp'<sup>10</sup> to instruct your fellows."

So he got down from the seat, and after causing the drum to be sounded again, the head monk took the whisk. This was the first "taking of the whisk" at Kosho Temple. Ejo was thirty-nine years old.

[ 6 ]

One day he instructed,

Ordinary people say, "Who does not desire fine clothing? Who is not fond of rich flavors?" Nevertheless, people who wish to know the Way enter into the mountains, sleep in the clouds, endure cold, and endure hunger. It is not that our predecessors experienced no suffering; it is that they endured it to preserve the Way. Thus, people of later times heard of this, aspired to their way, and respected their virtue.

Even in the ordinary world, those who are wise are like this; should the Way of Buddhas not also be so? Even the Ancients did not all have [Buddha's] golden bones; even when he was in the world, not all of them were of superior capacity. In considering the various monks in the context of the collection of behavioral codes [the *Vinaya-pitaka*], there were those who developed unbelievably far out states of mind. Nevertheless, we read that later on they all attained the Way and became Arhats.<sup>1</sup> Thus, even though we too may be mean and inept, knowing that if we rouse our minds to practice, we shall surely attain the Way; then our minds are aroused.

In the past, too, they all endured pain and forbore cold and cultivated their practice in the midst of their distress. Students now, even though you be in sore distress, still you should just force yourselves to study the Way.

[ 7 ]

He instructed,

Students of the Way, the fact that you fail to attain enlightenment is just because you retain your former views. Although you do not even know who originally taught you, yet you think that what is called "mind" is thought and knowledge; when I say that the mind is plants and trees, you do not believe it. When I speak of Buddha, you

think that it must have auspicious features and a radiant halo; when I explain that Buddha is tiles and pebbles, it startles your ears.<sup>1</sup> Such grasping views are not transmitted by your fathers, nor did your mothers teach them. It is just that you have tacitly come to believe them for no reason over a long period of time, by picking up what people say. Therefore, because it is the established Teaching of Buddhas and Patriarchs, if it says that mind is plants and trees, know plants and trees to be mind; and if it says that Buddha is tiles and pebbles, believe that tiles and pebbles themselves are Buddha: if you go on changing your original convictions, you should find the Way.

An Ancient said, "Although sun and moon are bright, the floating clouds cover them; though the tangled orchid vines are about to bloom, the autumn wind withers them." The *Cheng Kuan Cheng Yao* ["Essentials of Government, compiled in the Cheng Kuan Era"] quotes this as a simile for a wise king with evil ministers. Now I say, "Though the floating clouds cover, it won't be for long; though the autumn wind withers them, they will bloom again." Even if his ministers are evil, if the wisdom of the king is unbending, it should not be influenced by them. Now if you would know the Way of Buddhas, you must also be like this. No matter how bad a state of mind you get into, if you keep strong and hold out over a long period of time, in truth the floating clouds must vanish and the autumn wind must cease.

[ 8 ]

One day he instructed,

When students are beginners, whether they have the mind of the Way or not, they should carefully read and study the Sagely Teachings of the sutras and shastras.<sup>1</sup>

I first aroused the aspiration for enlightenment somewhat because of impermanence; eventually I left the Tendai school, and as I sought all over, cultivating the Way, during the interval when I was staying at Kennin Temple, because I did not meet a true teacher and there were no worthy companions, I went astray and gave rise to wrong ideas.

Because even the teachers of the Way taught first to become equally as good as the past scholars, to be known to the nation and famous throughout the land, even as I studied the doctrines of the

Teaching, I thought first of being equal to the ancient wise men of Japan, and wanted to be the same even as the Great Teachers.<sup>2</sup> As I read such books as the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*<sup>3</sup> and the *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*, and saw how it was with the eminent monks and Buddhists of China, they were not like my present teachers. And since I realized that a state of mind such as I had developed is held in contempt in all the sutras, shastras, biographies and such, when I came to think about what is right, even if one wants name and fame, rather than be well thought of by the inferior people of the present time, one should only have shame before the sages of antiquity and the good people of later ages. And even if one thinks of equaling someone, rather than the people of Japan, we should be ashamed before the past masters and eminent monks of China and India, and think of being equal to such as them. We should even want to equal the hidden beings of the heavens, to Buddhas and Bodhi-sattvas.

After I had grasped this truth, I considered the Great Teachers and others of Japan as like dirt or tiles, and my former state of body and mind was completely changed. When we look at the actions of the Buddha during his lifetime, we see that he forsook the rank of king, and entered into the mountains and forests; even after he had realized the Way, he begged for food all his life. In the *Vinaya* it says, "Knowing his house was not a home, he abandoned his house and left home."

An Ancient said, "Do not be so proud as to hope to equal the great wise ones; do not be so mean as to hope to equal the ignoble." What this means is that both are conceits. Even if you are in a high place, do not forget that you may fall. Even if you are safe, do not forget danger. Even though you are alive today, do not think that you will also be so tomorrow. The imminent danger of death is right at our feet.

[ 9 ]

He pointed out,

Foolish people think and say pointless things. There is an aged nun working here, who while showing shame at her present low position, still tells people about how she was once high class. Even if people

now believe it was so, I don't see what the use of it is; I think it is quite useless.

It seems as though this feeling is present in everyone's thoughts. And it is obvious how they lack the mind of the Way. One should change such feelings and be a little like other people.

Also there is a certain lay monk who is extremely lacking in the mind of the Way. Because he is nevertheless a friend, I want to tell him to pray to the Buddhas and spirits that his mind for the Way be aroused, but he would certainly become angry and our relationship would be strained. However, as long as his mind for the Way is not aroused, complacence can be of no use to either of us.

[ 10 ]

He instructed,

Of old it was said, "Reflect thrice before speaking." What this means is that whenever you are going to say something, or whenever you are going to do something, only after reflecting three times should you speak or act. The intention of that ancient Confucian was that upon considering three times, if each time it is good, then you should say or do it. The meaning of the wise ones of China when they spoke of reflecting thrice was that one should reflect many times; that one should think before speaking, think before acting, and if each time you consider something, it is always good, then do or say it.

Patchrobed monks also must be like this. Because there might be something wrong in what you think or say, first reflect upon whether or not it is in conformity with the Way of Buddhas, carefully consider whether or not there will be any benefit for self and others, and only then, if it should be good, you should so act and speak. If a wayfarer always watches over his heart in this way, he would not go against the will of Buddha his whole life long.

In the past, when I first entered Kennin Temple, the community of monks guarded their actions of body, mouth, and mind as well as they could, each determined not to say or do anything which would be detrimental to the Buddhist Way or to the interests of other people. As long as the remains of the high priest Eisai's virtue lingered there, it was like this. These days, though, there is no such propriety.

Students now should know that if there is something which definitely would have worth for self and others and for the sake of the

Buddhist Way, you should even forget about your own bodies to say or do it. As for those things which are pointless, do not do or say them. When venerable Elders are speaking or acting, juniors should not interrupt. This was a regulation of the Buddha; consider it carefully.

This mind which forgets the body to consider the Way exists even among secular people. In olden times there was a man of the state of Chao<sup>1</sup> named Lin Hsiang-ju; although he was a lower class man, because he was intelligent, he was employed by the king of Chao and handled the affairs of the land.

Once, as the envoy of the king of Chao, he was sent to carry a gem known as the Jewel of Chao into the state of Ch'in.<sup>2</sup> Because the king of Ch'in had said he would give fifteen cities in exchange for that jewel, the king of Chao sent Hsiang-ju to carry it; at this point, the other ministers conferred with each other, saying, "To entrust such a jewel to the hands of such a lowly man as Hsiang-ju makes it seem as if there were no people in our land. It would be a disgrace to us other ministers; we would be scorned by future generations."

At the time, someone secretly informed Hsiang-ju that they were plotting to kill him on the way and steal the jewel, and told him that he should decline this mission in order to save his life. Thereupon Hsiang-ju said, "I dare not decline. When I take the jewel to Ch'in as the envoy of the king, it would be a joy for me that later generations would hear Hsiang-ju was killed by treacherous ministers. Although my body will die, my reputation as a worthy man should remain." So saying, he went after all. When the other ministers heard of his words, they said that they could not kill such a man, so they gave up the idea.

Although Hsiang-ju eventually saw the king of Ch'in and presented the jewel to him, it seemed that the king of Ch'in did not want to give the fifteen cities in return. Thus, Hsiang-ju, devising a plan, said to the king of Ch'in, "There is a flaw in that jewel; I will show you." So he asked for the jewel back, and then said, "As I look upon the king's face, it appears that you want to keep your fifteen cities; therefore I will use my head to break this jewel against that bronze pillar." As he looked at the king with angry eyes and moved toward the pillar, he looked as though he would really break the jewel.

Then the king of Ch'in said, "Don't break the jewel. I will give the fifteen cities. You keep the jewel while the arrangements are being



made." But Hsiang-ju secretly had someone take the jewel back to his own land.

Later, when the kings of Chao and Ch'in were amusing themselves at a place called Min Ch'ih, the king of Ch'in told the king of Chao to play the lute, at which he was expert. The king of Chao picked the lute without even consulting Hsiang-ju. At the time Hsiang-ju was angry that the king of Chao had obeyed the order of the king of Ch'in, and went himself to make the king of Ch'in play a flute. He said to the king of Ch'in, "You are skillful on the flute, and the king of Chao wants to hear you, so you should play." When he said this, the king of Ch'in refused. Hsiang-ju said, "If you refuse, I'll kill you."

At that point, a Ch'in general approached with his sword. Hsiang-ju glared at him with his eyes bulging out. The general was frightened and retreated without drawing his sword; so after all, the king of Ch'in said he would play the flute.

Later, when Hsiang-ju became a top minister and handled the affairs of the land, another chief minister was jealous of the fact that he himself was not so entrusted with the responsibility, and so he tried to kill Hsiang-ju. At that time Hsiang-ju fled and hid here and there; he did not even appear at the court when it was in session—he appeared to be afraid.

Then Hsiang-ju's retainers said, "It would be an easy matter to kill that other minister; why do you hide in fear?"

Hsiang-ju said, "It is not that I fear him. I stood off a general of Ch'in with my eyes and even stole the jewel of Ch'in; needless to say, I could kill that minister. However, the raising of an army and the stockpiling of weapons is for the purpose of defending against an enemy nation. Now as great right- and left-hand ministers who protect our country, if the two of us are at odds, and we start a war in which one of us dies, then one side will be weakened. Thus the neighboring countries will rejoice and will mobilize their armies for war. For this reason, since I wish for both parties to remain unharmed to protect our nation, I will not start a fight with him."

When the other minister heard of this speech, he was ashamed and returned to pay obeisance. The two men then worked together to govern the country.

It was thus that Hsiang-ju forgot his own body and was mindful of the Way. Now in thinking of the Way of Buddhas as well, one's mind

must be like that of Hsiang-ju. It is said that it is better to have the Way and to die than to live without the Way.

[ 11 ]

He instructed,

It is hard to determine what is good or bad. Worldly people say that it is good to wear silk, brocade, and embroidery, and they say that garments of coarse cloth and rags are bad. In the Buddhist Teaching these latter are considered good and pure, whereas gold, silver, brocade, and silk are considered bad and defiled. Thus it is in respect to all things.

In my case too, when I make a little rhyme and write some fancy words, it even happens that some laypeople say it is exceptional. Then again, there are also people who criticize me for being able to do such things, inasmuch as I am a leaver of home and a student of the Way. Which is to be definitely taken as good, and which is to be abandoned as bad?

It is written [in the *Vinaya*], "What is praised as pure in character is called good; what is scorned as impure in character is called bad." It is also said, "That which would incur pain is called bad; that which should bring about happiness is called good."

In this way should one carefully discriminate; seeing real good, one should practice it, and seeing real evil, one should shun it. Because a monk is something that comes from within purity, he considers as good and pure that which would not arouse human desires.

[ 12 ]

He instructed,

Many people of the world say, "Although one may have the aspiration to study the Way, the world is in its Last Age, and people are inferior, unfit to carry out practice according to the Way. One should just go the easy way according to his capacity, and think of forming a basis whereupon one might hope for awakening in another lifetime."<sup>1</sup>

Now I say that these words are completely wrong. In the Buddhist Teaching, the setting of the three periods of True, Semblance, and Final is a kind of temporary expedient. When the Buddha was in the world, the mendicants were not necessarily all outstanding; there

were also those who were unbelievably debased, with inferior faculties. Therefore, the Buddha's establishment of various kinds of disciplinary rules was all for the sake of evil beings, people of inferior faculties.

Everyone is a vessel of the Buddhist Teaching; do not think you are not fit for it. If you follow and practice it, you should obtain realization. Since you have minds, you should be able to discriminate good from bad; you have hands and feet, so there is no reason why you can't join your palms or walk.<sup>2</sup> Thus the practice of the Buddhist Teaching is not a matter of choosing the vessel; each human life is a vessel of this endowment. The other realms of life, such as animals, are not suitable. People who are studying the Way should not wait for tomorrow; on this day, this hour alone, you should go in accord with the Way of the Buddhas.

[ 13 ]

He instructed,

There is a proverb which says, "The downfall of a castle comes from the whispering of words within its walls." It is also said, "When there are two opinions within a house, it cannot even buy a pin; when there is no divergence of opinion within the house, it has the means to buy even gold."

Even in the secular world, to maintain a household or safeguard a castle, without union of minds, eventually it will be ruined. How much more so should leavers of home studying under a single master harmonize like the merging of water and milk. There is also the law of sixfold harmony and respect.<sup>1</sup> Do not each set up separate rooms and concentrate on the study of the Way with your bodies apart, according to your individual frames of mind. It is like riding on one boat to cross the sea; you should study the Path in the same way, with unity of mind, uniformity of behavior, mutually reforming each other's faults, and following each other's good points. This is the form that has been practiced since the time the Buddha was in the world.

[ 14 ]

He instructed,

At the time that the meditation master Fang Hui of Mt. Yang Ch'i<sup>1</sup> first took up teaching, since his temple was old and dilapidated and

it was a hardship to the monks, the director of affairs told him it should be repaired.

Fang Hui said, "Though the building is broken down, still it must be better than open ground under the trees. If one spot is leaking, then you should go sit in a spot where it doesn't leak in order to meditate. If the community would attain enlightenment by the building of a hall, then it should be built even with gold and jewels. Enlightenment does not depend on how good or bad one's dwelling place may be; it should only be a matter of how great or small the accomplishment in sitting meditation."

The next day, in a community lecture, he said,

While Yang Chi'i's abode has chinks in the walls,  
The whole sitting platform is covered with pearls of snow.  
Drawing in their necks, they sigh in the dark.

After a long pause, he said, "I think back to the Ancients sitting under the trees."

It is not only the Way of Buddhahood; the way of government is also like this. Emperor T'ai Tsung of T'ang did not build a palace.

Lung Ya<sup>2</sup> said, "To learn the Way, first one must, for a time, learn about poverty. Having learned about poverty, only after becoming poor, is the Way then near."

From of old in the time of Shakyamuni up until the present day, I have never seen or heard of a true and genuine student of the Way who possessed abundant wealth.

[ 15 ]

One day a visiting monk said, "In recent times, the way of fleeing society is that each individual makes provisions for his own food and other needs, preparing so that he will have no worry about them later. Though these are minor concerns, still they are sustaining factors in the study of the Way. If they are lacking, one's efforts will be thwarted. Now according to what I have heard of how it is with you, you make no such provisions at all, but merely leave it to fate. If this is true, won't you have some trouble later on?"

Dogen replied, "Everything has its precedents: it is not that I presume to abide by my private prejudices. All the Buddhas and Patriarchs of India and China were like this. If one pursued selfish schemes to stay alive, there would be no end to it.<sup>1</sup> Also, it is impossi-

ble to plan for sure the concern of the morrow. This way is that which has been practiced by all the Buddhas and Patriarchs and there is nothing selfish about it. If something is lacking or we have no food at all, then when the time comes I will devise some expedient. It is not something to think any further about."

[ 16 ]

He instructed,

There is a story, though I don't know if it is true or not, about the late lay monk, Councillor Jimyoin;<sup>1</sup> one time when a highly treasured sword belonging to him was stolen, since the thief was among his own warrior band, the other warriors found him out and brought him to the lay monk, who said, "This is not my sword; this is an injustice." So saying, he handed back the sword.

Though it was certainly his sword, everyone knew that he had given it back out of consideration for the shame and disgrace of that warrior; in spite of everything, that time he let it go by without incident, and therefore his descendants prospered.<sup>2</sup>

Even in the conventional world, people with heart are like this. How much more so should leavers of home have such a heart. Since people who leave home never have any personal property, they consider wisdom and virtue to be their treasure. In a case where another is wrong, lacking in the mind of the Way, one should not bring it out directly and put him down; one should use tact and speak in such a way as to avoid arousing his resentment.

It is said that the way of the coarse and violent does not remain long. Even if you chastise justly, if your language is rough, that justice won't last long. Petty people of inferior capacities inevitably are angered at the slightest harsh word from others, thinking of their shame and disgrace. Great people of superior character should not be like this. Magnanimous people are otherwise; even when they are attacked, they do not think of revenge. Nowadays in Japan there are many petty people. It is necessary to be careful.

### *Notes to 2*

1. Hui Chung (? -775) was a successor to the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng. He first saw the Patriarch when he was only sixteen years old; after



receiving the "mind seal" he lived on Mt. Pai Ya, near Nan Yang, for over forty years. Around 760, the emperor Su Tsung (r. 756-762) heard of him and summoned him to the capital, entitling him National Teacher. He was also teacher of the Emperor Tai Tsung (r. 763-775). Hui Chung was probably the last man alive who had succeeded to the Sixth Patriarch and was greatly revered by later generations.

2. Purple is the color associated with the highest status or rank; permission to wear it was to be granted by the emperor. When a monk was given an honorific title by the emperor, he was customarily given purple vestments.

### Notes to 3

1. These are the six senses (including mind), six realms of sense objects, and the six associated consciousnesses.
2. This refers to the verbal Teachings (the "Scholastic" or "Doctrinal" schools often mentioned in this text) and the Zen Teaching (outside of scriptures). To detach from the idea that self exists is fundamental to both.

### Notes to 4

1. From the *Kuei Shan Ching Ts'e*, "Admonitions to Kuei Shan," written by Kuei Shan Ling You (771-854) who was a successor to Pai Chang Huai Hai, previously mentioned as the founder of the sectarian Zen monastic institution.
2. The master Chu T'i used to just raise his finger whenever anyone questioned him. When someone asked his servant boy about the master's teaching, the boy also raised his finger. When Chu T'i heard of this, he cut off the boy's finger; the boy ran out crying, but Chu T'i called to him; when the boy turned his head, Chu T'i just raised his finger, whereupon the boy was suddenly enlightened. This story is found in *Wu Men Kuan*, case III.

### Notes to 5

1. See book III, section 5, The occupant of the first seat, the "head monk," acts as deputy, or assistant to the teacher.
2. "Taking up the whisk" means to assume the role of teacher. The whisk

is traditionally used to symbolize succession to the teaching, and also refers to acting as host to Dharma dialogue.

3. Usually known as Hui K'e, the Second Patriarch, who succeeded Bodhidharma.
4. Traditionally it is said that the robe of Bodhidharma was handed down through six generations of Patriarchs, symbolizing the person-to-person transmission of the so-called "Buccha Mind Seal."
5. Fen Yang Shan Chao (957-1024) was a great master of the Lin Chi sect in China.
6. Yao Shan Wei Yen (745-828) was a successor of Shih T'ou Hsi Ch'ien, and a direct ancestor of the Ts'ao Tung sect, which Dogen later transmitted to Japan.
7. See book II, section 26, and notes.
8. This is the last line of the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*, the famous work of Shih T'ou.
9. Ananda was the personal attendant of the Buddha; because he memorized the sutras and recited them at the first Buddhist council after the Buddha's death, thus leaving them for posterity, Dogen's statement has a wide application.
10. Tung Shan Shou Ch'u (tenth century) was a successor of Yun Men Wen Yen (founder of the Yun Men sect of Zen): once a student asked him "What is Buddha?" Tung Shan replied, "Three pounds of hemp." This story appears in the *Wu Men Kuan*, ex. XVIII, and the *Pi Yen Lu*, ex. XII.

### Note to 6

1. *Arhat* means "worthy (of offering)," representing the highest stage of attainment in the so-called "Lesser Vehicle," one who has attained nirvana. The *Vinaya* cites the situations in which the regulations of conduct came into being, each in respect to some fault among the monks. Dogen cites the degeneracy of some of the monks who later reformed as proof of the efficacy of discipline and practice.

### Note to 7

1. A monk once asked the National Teacher Hui Chung, "What is the mind of the Buddhas of Antiquity?" Hui Chung said, "Tiles and pebbles." The monk asked, "Can inanimate objects expound the Dharma?" Hui Chung said, "They are always expounding it." This is a famous

story, and Dogen quotes and discusses it several times in his classic *Shobogenzo*.

### Notes to 8

1. Sutras are the scriptures attributed to the Buddha; shastras are discourses of the Great Teachers and Patriarchs.
2. This honorific title was applied in Japan to such people as Dengyo Daishi, the founder of the Tendai school, and Kobo Daishi, the founder of the Shingon school; these are what Dogen frequently refers to as the Exoteric and Esoteric, Scholastic or Doctrinal schools, which were then the most powerful sects in Japan.
3. Compiled in the sixth century by Hui Chiao; it covers the period from the introduction of Buddhism to China in the first century A.D. until the year 519 and is a model for two later compilations of the T'ang and Sung dynasties. It is divided into various categories, such as translators, interpreters, disciplinarians, meditators, and so forth.

### Notes to 10

1. Chao was an ancient state in northern China, east of the state of Ch'in. The incidents recounted here took place during the so-called Warring States period, when the feudal states of the Chou dynasty set themselves up as independent kingdoms and were constantly engaged in warfare and political intrigue.
2. This incident took place in 283 B.C. The state of Ch'in was rising to dominance and in the next half-century was to unify China and proclaim the first empire.

### Notes to 12

1. This evidently refers to the *Jodo*, or Pure Land sects, which were also emerging strongly at that time; their idea was that contemporary humanity was so debased that no one could hope to attain enlightenment in this world, so the best thing to do would be to seek to be reborn in the Pure Land, where there are not so many obstacles to enlightenment.
2. This refers to the outward aspects of the conduct of the life of study.

*Note to 13*

1. Harmony of the threefold action of body, mouth, and mind; same discipline, same views, and same practice.

*Notes to 14*

1. Fang Hui (992-1049) was a great Chinese master of Zen, successor in the seventh generation of the Lin Chi sect and founder of what came to be known as the Yang Ch'i branch of that sect.
2. Chu Tun of Lung Ya (838-923) was a successor of Tung Shan Liang Chieh, the founder of the Ts'ao Tung sect.

*Note to 15*

1. This is according to the Choenji text: the *refubon* has it, "There is no end to the endowment of the White Hair; why contrive personal schemes for livelihood?" The White Hair refers to one of the Buddha's thirty-two auspicious marks, the curl of hair on his forehead; it is said that he left an infinitesimal portion of it to provide sustenance for all his disciples. This represents the offerings which since supported the Buddhist community.

*Notes to 16*

1. Ichijo Motoei (1132-1214).
2. If he had slain the warrior, it would probably have touched off a vendetta, endangering the family and partisans of Jimyoin.

## BOOK V

### [ 1 ]

One day he instructed,

When acting for the sake of the Buddhist Teaching, do not begrudge it your bodily life. Even laypeople give up their lives for the Way, fulfilling loyalty and maintaining integrity without thinking of their families and relatives. Such is called a loyal minister and a wise man.

In ancient times, when the Emperor Kao Tsu<sup>1</sup> of the Han dynasty went to war with a neighboring country, the mother of one of his retainers was living in the enemy nation. The military officials suspected that he might be of two minds, and Kao Tsu also worried that he might think of his mother and go over to the enemy territory, for if so, his army might be defeated.

At this point, his mother also thought that her son might come to her country because of her, so she admonished him, saying, "Do not relax your loyalty to your army because of me. As long as I am alive, you might be of two minds." So saying, she threw herself upon a sword and perished. Because her son had never been of two minds, it is said that his intent was strong to serve his army with loyalty and integrity.

How much the more so of the patchrobed ones, aspiring to the Way of Buddhahood; when they are of absolutely undivided mind, they should truly be in accord with the Way of Buddhas. In the Way of Buddhas there are people who are originally endowed with compassion and wisdom. And even people who lack them will attain them if they study. Just cast off both body and mind, offering them to the great ocean of the Buddhist Teaching; relying on the Buddhist Teaching, do not retain your personal prejudices.

Also in the time of Kao Tsu of Han, a certain wise minister said, "In the course of government, the rectification of disorder is like un-



tying a knotted rope. It must not be done hurriedly. One must examine the knot carefully, then undo it."

The Path of Buddhahood is also like this. Having thoroughly understood its principles, one should practice them. As for those who thoroughly understand the methods of teaching, it is always those who have a powerful aspiration who can understand well. No matter how intelligent or brilliant one may be, one without the mind for the Way, who cannot detach from his ego and cannot forsake name and profit, will not become one of the people of the Path, nor will he understand the true principle.

[ 2 ]

He instructed,

People who study the Way should not study the Buddhist Teaching for the sake of their own egos. The Buddhist Teaching should be studied only for its own sake. The basic reality of this is that one must cast off his own body and mind, retaining nothing, and give it over to the vast ocean of the Buddhist Teaching. After that, without being concerned with any right or wrong, without maintaining personal attitudes, even if it be something difficult to do or hard to bear, in the service of the Buddhist Teaching one should force oneself to do it. And even if it is something that one insistently wants to do, whatever would not accord with the principles of the Buddhist Teaching should be abandoned. Do not hope to obtain good results as a reward for the merits of the Buddhist Way. Once having gone over to the Way of Buddhahood, think no more of yourself, but just continue to act in accordance with the rules of the Buddhist Teaching, and do not harbor personal prejudices. All our predecessors were thus. When the heart seeks nothing, it is at peace.

Even among people of the world, those who do not mix with others and grow up only in their own houses, who act as their hearts desire, considering their own wishes foremost, who are heedless of the views of others and who do not take into account the feelings of others, they are always bad. Concentration on the study of the Way is also like this. Joining in the congregation, obeying the teacher without insisting upon your own views, if you continue to reform your minds, you will easily become people of the Path.

In the study of the Way, one must first learn poverty. Abandoning

fame, forsaking profit, free from all flattery, if you give up myriad concerns, you will not fail to become worthy men of the Way. In China, those who were known even to others as good monks were all poor people. Their clothes were tattered and their means were meager.

In former days the recorder<sup>1</sup> of the monastery on Mt. T'ien T'ung, a man called Senior Tao-ju, was the son of a prime minister. However, since he had left his family and relatives and had no lust for worldly gain, his clothing was so ragged that it was hard to look at; nevertheless, he was known as a man of virtue in the Way and even became the recorder of a great temple on a famous mountain.

Once I asked Senior Tao-ju, "As the son of an official, you are of a wealthy and high ranked family: why is everything about you so shabby and so poor?"

Senior Tao-ju replied, "Because I have become a monk."

### [ 3 ]

One day he instructed,

A layman has said, "A treasure is an enemy that can harm one's body. In the past this was so, and it is so now as well."

This refers to a man of olden times who had a beautiful woman. At the time a powerful man asked for her, but the man was reluctant to part with her. Eventually the other man raised some troops and surrounded the house. As she was about to be taken, her husband said, "I am losing my life because of you."

The woman said, "I shall also lose my life for my husband." So saying, she fell from the high tower to her death. Subsequently her husband was spared, and lived to tell the story later.

Also there was once a wise man, who, as a provincial official, carried out the government of a province. At the time he had a son; when this son took leave of his father to go on official business, his father gave him a bolt of fine silk.

His son said, "You are of high integrity; where did you get this silk?"

His father said, "It is left over from my salary."<sup>1</sup>

The son went to serve the emperor and reported this incident. The emperor was very much impressed by his wisdom. The son said, "My

father has concealed his name, whereas I have revealed it. Truly the wisdom of my father is greater."

The meaning of this seems to be that although a single bolt of silk is a small quantity, a wise man does not take it for his personal use. Also a truly wise man hides his name. Since it was his official salary, he said that he would make use of it.

Even lay people are like this; how much more should the patched-robed ones studying the Path refrain from thinking of personal ends. Also, if one is devoted to the true Way, he should conceal his reputation as a man of the Way.

Once there was a wizard.<sup>2</sup> Someone asked him, "How can I learn wizardry?"

The wizard said, "If you want to learn wizardry, you must be devoted to the way of wizards."

Thus if students want to attain the Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs, they should be devoted to the Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs.

[ 4 ]

He instructed,

Of old there was a king, who, after pacifying the nation, asked all his ministers, "I govern the country well; am I really wise?"

The ministers said, "You govern very well; you are very wise."

But at the time one minister said, "You are not wise."

The king said, "Why?"

That minister said, "After ordering the nation, you gave it to your younger brother instead of your son."

This did not suit the sovereign's idea, so he drove the minister out. Afterward he again asked another minister, "Am I benevolent?"

The minister said, "You are very benevolent."

The sovereign said, "Why?"

The minister said, "A benevolent ruler always has loyal ministers. Loyal ministers speak forthright words. That former minister was very forthright; he was a loyal servant. If you were not a benevolent ruler, you wouldn't have had one like him."

The king was impressed by this and recalled the former minister.

Also, in the time of the first emperor of Ch'in,<sup>1</sup> his crown prince said he was going to enlarge his flower park. A minister said, "Great! When the park is enlarged and many birds and beasts are gathered

there, can we use those birds and beasts to hold off the armies of the neighboring countries?"

Because of this, the project was abandoned.

Also he said he was going to build a palace and lacquer its pillars. The minister said, "So it should be. When the pillars are lacquered, will our enemies desist?"

Thus that project too was stopped. The essence of Confucian teaching was to use skillful words in this way to put a stop to what was bad and encourage what was good. The tact of a patchrobed one in teaching others should also embody this spirit.

[ 5 ]

One day a monk asked, "How does a wise one who lacks the mind of the Way compare to one without wisdom who has the mind of the Way?"

Dogen replied, "In many cases those without wisdom who have the mind of the Way eventually fall back. As for those who have wisdom, though they may be lacking in the mind of the Way, eventually they arouse the mind for the Way. Even in the present day there are many examples to prove this. Thus from the outset one should make the effort to study the Way without discussing whether or not he has the mind of the Way.

"If you study the Way, you ought to be poor. In reading the Inner and Outer writings, there were those who were poor, without place of abode; one drowned in the waters of Ts'ang Liang,<sup>1</sup> some hid on Mt. Shou Yang,<sup>2</sup> some sat on open ground under the trees or built huts in graveyards or deep in the mountains. Then again, there were also those who built palaces adorned with crimson lacquer and burnished gold and jewels. Both kinds are recorded in the classics. However, in exhorting those of later generations, they all consider poverty and lack of possessions to be fundamental. In admonishing wrong behavior, they criticize the rich as people of extravagance.

[ 6 ]

He instructed,

People who have left home should never rejoice upon receiving the offerings of others; yet do not refuse them either. The late high priest

Eisai said, "To rejoice in the offerings of others is contrary to the Buddhist precepts. Not to rejoice offends the feelings of the donor."

The appropriate way to consider this is that it is not offered to me myself, but it is offered to the Three Treasures. Therefore, in reply, one should say, "The Three Treasures shall surely accept this offering."

[ 7 ]

He instructed,

Of old it has been said that though a nobleman's power is greater than that of an ox, yet he does not contend with an ox.

Now you students, though you may think that our wisdom, talent, or learning may exceed others, do not indulge in disputation with other people. And do not chastise others with harsh words, or look at others with angry eyes.

Although people these days donate much wealth and offer support, due to displays of anger and slander by vicious words, there surely arise feelings of opposition.<sup>1</sup>

Once upon a time master Chen Ch'ing K'o Wen<sup>2</sup> said to his community, "In the old days, when I was friends with Hsueh Feng Tao Yuan in studying the Way, once Hsueh Feng was discussing the doctrine with a fellow student; in the dormitory they debated in loud voices, eventually coming to harsh words and argument. When the dispute had ended, Hsueh Feng said to me, 'You and I are fellow students of like mind; our bond is not shallow. Why did you not say anything when I was arguing with that other fellow?' At the time I only folded my hands, fearing to speak.

"Later, he became a teacher in one region, and I too am now an abbot. What I thought back then was that Hsueh Feng's discussion was after all useless. How much the more is it certainly wrong to argue. Since I thought it was useless to contend, I remained silent."

Students now should consider this well. If you are determined to work at studying the Way, you should value time to study the Way: what leisure time is there to engage in disputation? After all it is of no benefit to oneself or others.

This is so even for the Teaching; how much less should one engage in useless argument over worldly affairs! Although a nobleman's power exceeds that of even an ox, he does not contend with oxen.



Though you may think you understand the doctrine better than another you should not try to defeat him in argument.

If there is a truly genuine student of the Way who asks about the Teaching, do not begrudge it to him, but expound it for him. However, even in that case, you should reply once after being questioned three times. Do not talk a lot or speak idly.

Ever since I read these words of Chen Ch'ing, I realized that I certainly had this fault too, and that he was admonishing me; therefore, I have thenceforth never disputed about doctrines with anyone else.

[ 8 ]

He instructed,

Many of the Ancients said, "Do not pass the time in vain." They also said, "Do not spend time idly." Now people who are studying the Way should value even a moment of time. This dewlike life quickly vanishes, time passes swiftly: while you live for even a little while, do not be concerned with other matters—you should only study the Way.

People these days say that their debt of gratitude to their parents is difficult to abandon, or they say that it is difficult to go against the will of their masters, or they say that it is difficult to leave their wives, children, and families, or that it would be difficult to assure the livelihood of their families, or they say that the people of the world would criticize them, or they say that they are poor and would be unable to get together the proper accoutrements, or they say that they are not of suitable capacity, incapable of studying the Way.

In this way they make emotional considerations, unable to leave their parents and masters, unable to abandon their wives, children, and dependents. As long as they go along with worldly feelings and covet property and wealth, they will pass their whole lives in vain and will surely regret it when they come to the end of their lives.

You should sit quietly and consider the truth and quickly determine to arouse the mind of the Way. Neither master nor parents can give one enlightenment; not wife, children, nor family can save one from suffering. Property and wealth cannot cut off one's revolving birth and death, nor can people of the world be of any help. If you claim you are not fit and do not practice, in what aeon will you attain

enlightenment? You should just cast off myriad concerns and single-mindedly study the Way. Do not think about any later time.

## [ 9 ]

He instructed,

In studying the Way, you must detach from your ego. Even if you have learned a thousand scriptures and ten thousand commentaries, if you do not get away from attachment to self, eventually you will fall into a pit of demons.

An Ancient said, "Without having the body and mind of the Buddhist Teaching, how can one become a Buddha or Patriarch?" What we call detachment from the self means to cast one's body and mind into the great ocean of the Buddhist Teaching, and to practice in accord with the Buddhist Teaching even though you may suffer painfully.

Though you may think that if you beg for food, people will think this is bad and unseemly; as long as you are thinking in this manner, you cannot by any means enter into the Buddhist Teaching. You should forget about all of the emotional views of society; just rely on the truth and study the Path. Considering the capacities of one's own body, to think that it would not be suitable for the Buddhist Teaching is also because one keeps clinging to self. To be concerned with the views of others and defer to people's feelings is the root of selfish clinging. Just study the Buddhist Teaching; do not follow worldly feelings.

## [ 10 ]

One day Ejo asked, "What is the course of activity of monastic study?"

Dogen said, "It is sole devotion to sitting. Whether upstairs or downstairs, cultivate stable concentration, without joining in the conversations of others; like a deaf and dumb man, you should always prefer to sit in solitude."

## [ 11 ]

One day after interviews, he instructed,

Ta Tao Ku Ch'uan said, "I sit in the wind and sleep in the sun; it is better than to wear brocade like people these days."

Although these are the words of one of the Ancients, I have a little doubt about them. Does "people these days" refer to worldly covetous people? If so, he is attacking the prettiest of enemies. How are they even worthy of mention?

On the other hand, does it refer to people studying the Way? If so, then why does he say what he does is better than wearing brocade? As I look into his state of mind, it seems as though he may still attach some feeling of importance to brocade.

A sage is otherwise: whether gold and jewels or tiles and pebbles, he does not cling to them just the same. Therefore the Shakyan Tathagata ate the cowmaid's milk boiled gruel<sup>1</sup> when he got it, and he also ate horse fodder<sup>2</sup> when he got it; he considered both equal.

There is no lesser or greater truth; there are the shallow and the deep among people. In the present age, give gold and jewels to some people and they will consider them valuable and will not take them; but something like wood or stone they would consider cheap and would accept and prize it. Gold and jewels originally come from the earth; wood and stone also originally are born of the earth: why avoid one because it is supposedly valuable and like the other because it is supposedly cheap? In considering this attitude, is it that there would be attachment in acquiring precious objects? If there is also a liking for what is cheap, the fault must be the same. This is something for students to be wary of.

[ 12 ]

He instructed,

When my late master Myozen was about to go to China,<sup>1</sup> his original master, Myoyu Acarya,<sup>2</sup> became gravely ill and was collapsed upon a sickbed, about to die.

At that time his master said to Myozen, "I am already old and sick, and my death is imminent; this time please put off going to China for a while, and help me in the sickness of old age: conduct me on the road of darkness,<sup>3</sup> and after I have died and gone, then you can fulfill your original intention."

Then my late master gathered Horui and his other disciples to discuss the matter with them. He said, "Since the time of my youth,<sup>4</sup> when I left my parents' home, I have received the support of this teacher and am now grown to maturity. My gratitude for his support and guidance is most profound. Even the fact that I learned the greater

and lesser, temporary and true verbal Teachings of the transmudane doctrine, understood cause and effect, knew right from wrong, surpassed my colleagues and attained reknown, and also the fact that, knowing the truth of the Buddhist Teaching, I now have become determined to go to China to seek the Way, is all due solely to the benevolence of this teacher.

"But now he is already very advanced in years, and is prostrate on the bed of mortal illness. It is hard to say whether he has much life left and a reunion is not to be expected. Therefore he is trying to make me stay. It is hard to go against my master's will. Even my going to China now, mindless of my bodily life, in order to seek the truth, is for the sake of the bodhisattva's great compassion in helping sentient beings. Is there reason to go against the command of my master and go to China, or not? Let each of you express what he thinks."

At that point, several disciples all said, "You should give up the trip to China for this year. Your master's final illness is already critical; it is certain that he will die. If you stay just for this year and go to China next year, you will neither go against your master's will, nor be heedless of your debt of gratitude. Now even if you get to China a year or six months later, how will that hinder you? You will not violate the ideal of the master-disciple relationship, and your original intent to go to China will be as you wish."

At that time, as the youngest, I said, "If your understanding of the Buddhist Teaching is now already as you think it should be, then you should stay."

My late master said, "So it is. My practice of the Buddhist Teaching ought to be up to this: if I always keep on this way, I think I should attain the way to release."

I said, "If that is the case, then you should stay."

Then when everyone had given their approval, the late master Myozen said, "In your judgment, each of you gives only reasons why I should stay. My thought is otherwise. Since Myoyu is sure to die, even if I stay this time, his pain and suffering will not end because I have stayed and nursed him in his illness. Also it is not true that he could be released from birth and death because I propitiate him at the very end.<sup>5</sup> It would just be a matter of following his command for the moment to ease my master's mind. This is utterly useless for his release and attainment of the Way. If I were to let him wrongly hinder

my aspiration to seek the truth, it would even be a cause of wrongdoing. However, fulfilling my aspiration to go to China to seek the truth, if I were to attain a degree of enlightenment, even though I go against one person's deluded feelings of attachment, yet I could become a factor in the realization of the Way for many people.<sup>6</sup> If the virtue of this accomplishment is more excellent, then it will have also requited my debt of gratitude to my teacher. Even if I were to die while crossing the sea and fail to fulfill my original intention, if I died with the aspiration to seek the truth, this desire would not come to an end life after life.<sup>7</sup> Think of the example of the Canonical Master Hsuan Tsang.<sup>8</sup> To vainly pass time, which is so easily lost, for the sake of one person, cannot be in accord with the will of the Buddhas. Therefore I have determined once and for all to go to China this time." And so he eventually went to China.

It was for such reasons that I thought my master had a truly genuine mind for the Way. Therefore you students now should not do anything useless and purposelessly waste time, whether supposedly for the sake of your parents, or for your teachers. Do not put off the Path of Buddhahood, which excels all other paths; do not pass the time in vain.

[At that time, Ejo said,]

"The reason why the conditional hindering factors of gratitude and affection for parents and teachers should be wholly abandoned for the sake of the search for real truth, is just as you say. However, even if one completely forsakes things like gratitude and love for parents and teachers, still when one considers the behavior of bodhisattvas, should one put aside one's own benefit and consider first the benefit of others? In this case, however, his old teacher's illness was serious, and with no one else to help him, luckily there was one person, Myozen, his protege, to take the responsibility. In that situation, if he thinks only of his own practice and does not help him, that seems to be contrary to the behavior of a bodhisattva. But one should not disdain the benevolence of a noble being. Should we consider the Buddhist Teaching according to circumstances, in actual situations? Going by such reasoning, should he have still stayed and helped? How could he only think of seeking the truth and not help his sick old teacher? What about this?"

[Dogen replied,] "Whether acting to help others or acting for one's own benefit, if one just gives up the lesser and takes the greater, this



would be the benevolent action of a noble being. To live a frugal life of filial piety in order to help the sickness of old age is only the temporary happiness of illusory affection and deluded feelings in this life. If one turns away from the contrivance of deluded emotions to study the Uncontrived Way, even if there be some lingering resentment, it would be a superior help to leaving the world. Consider this."

[ 13 ]

One day he instructed,

Worldly people often say, "Though I have heard the words of such-and-such a teacher, it does not agree with my thoughts."

These words are wrong. I do not know what is in their minds. Is it that the principle of the Sage's Teachings goes against their ideas, so they think it is wrong? This is total foolishness. Or is it that the teacher's words do not accord with their own ideas? If so, then, why ask a teacher anything to begin with? Or is it that this is said on the basis of habitual emotional views? If so, they are false ideas that have been held from beginningless past.

The attitude needed to study the Path is that even if they go against one's own ideas, if they are the words of one's teacher, or the stated principles of the Sage's Teachings, one should follow them completely, and abandon one's original personal opinions. This mind is the foremost requirement of the study of the Way.

In the past, there was one among my companions who went to his teacher clinging to his own views. Whatever did not agree with his ideas he claimed he didn't understand, and whatever conformed to his own views he held on to; thus he passed his whole life in vain and never understood the Buddhist Teaching.

Seeing him, I realized that the study of the Path should not be that way; so considering, I obeyed my master's words completely, and understood the principle thoroughly: after that, as I read the scriptures, one scripture said, "If you want to study the Buddhist Teaching, do not keep continuing the mind of past, present, and future."<sup>1</sup> I knew in truth that one must continue to reform step by step, without keeping in mind one's various past thoughts or former views. In a book it says, "True words offend the ear."<sup>2</sup> What this means is that words which would truly apply to oneself will always offend one's ears.

Even though they offend, if one willfully follows and practices them, after all, there should be benefit.

[ 14 ]

One day in the course of a talk on various subjects, he said,

There is fundamentally no good or bad in the human mind. Good and bad arise according to circumstances. For example, when someone's mind is aroused to enter into the mountain forests, he feels that the forest is good and human society is bad. Yet when he becomes bored and leaves the mountain forests, he feels that the forest is bad.

Thus it is that the mind definitely has no fixed characteristics; depending on circumstances, it may turn out any way at all. Therefore, when meeting good conditions the mind becomes good, and if it comes in the presence of bad conditions the mind becomes bad. Do not think that your mind is basically bad; you should just follow good conditions.

[ 15 ]

He also said,

It seems that people's minds surely go along with the words of others. In the *Ta Chih Tu Lun*<sup>1</sup> it says, "It is like a fool carrying a wishing jewel<sup>2</sup> in his hands. Someone sees him and says, 'You are really low down to be carrying something in your own hands.' Hearing this, he thinks, 'The jewel is precious, but reputation is a serious matter; I must be low down.' Worried about it, yet drawn only by reputation, he goes along with that other person's words; by deciding to put the jewel down to let someone else take it, in the end he loses the jewel."

Such is man's mind. Although one may think these words must surely be for one's own benefit, nevertheless, it may happen that he is hindered by his reputation and does not follow them. Then again, there are those who would go along with something for the sake of their reputation even while thinking it would certainly be bad for them.

When one goes along with what is good or bad, the heart is drawn by good and bad. Therefore, no matter how bad your heart may be originally, if you follow a good teacher and become familiar with good

people, your heart also will naturally become good. If you approach evil people, though in the beginning you may think they are bad, eventually you will go along with their ideas, and to the extent that you become familiar with them, you will gradually become truly evil without realizing it.

Also, though a person may think in his mind that he will absolutely not let another take something from him, if the other asks for it insistently, he will give it even though he feels resentful and ill used. Then again, though one may definitely want to give it, if there is no opportunity, or the appropriate time has passed by, it may happen that he gives up the idea.

Thus even if students do not have a mind for the Way, having come near a good man, and having encountered favorable conditions, they should see and hear the same thing time and time again. Do not think that once you have heard these words you needn't listen to them any more. Even for those who have once aroused a mind for the Way, though it be the same thing, every time they hear about it their hearts will be polished and they will progress more and more. Even those who have not the mind of the Way, though one or two times it will make no impression on them, if they hear about it time and time again, just like when walking through dew and mist one's clothes become damp without one realizing when they have gotten wet, if you hear the words of a good man many times, feelings of shame will arise naturally and the true mind of the Way will also appear.

Therefore, once having understood, you should read the Sage's Teachings many times. And having heard the words of the teacher, still you should listen to them again. The mind should grow deeper and deeper. As for things which would be hindrances to the study of the Way, do not go near them anymore. Even if it is painful and lonely, associate with worthy companions to practice the Way.

[ 16 ]

He instructed,

Once when the meditation master Ta Hui<sup>1</sup> had an abscess on his buttock, a doctor looked at it and said it was serious. Ta Hui said, "If it is serious, will I die or not?"

The doctor said, "It is quite dangerous."

Ta Hui said, "If I'm going to die, then all the more should I sit and

meditate." As he still forced himself to sit, the abscess burst and came to naught.

The minds of the Ancients were like this; when they suffered illness they sat and meditated even more. People now should not lighten up on sitting meditation when they are not sick.

It seems that illness changes along with the mind. Ordinarily when someone has the hiccups, if you make some false accusation that calls for an apology, he will worry about it, and while he is trying to say something in his own defense, having forgotten about his hiccups, they have stopped. When I was going to China, on the boat, I was afflicted with diarrhea; but when a violent wind arose and there was turmoil in the boat, I forgot about my sickness, and it ceased.

Considering these examples, it seems that if one studies the path diligently and forgets about other things, no illness should arise either.

[ 17 ]

He instructed,

A proverb says, "Unless you are deaf and dumb, you cannot be the master of the house."

What this means to say is that if one does not hear the slander of others and does not voice disapproval of others, he can succeed in his own task. Such a person is to be the master of the house.

Although this is a common proverb, you should take it and apply it to the conduct of a patchrobed monk. Without taking notice of the slander of others, without paying heed to the resentment of others, without expressing approval or disapproval of others, consider how you will travel the Path. Only those who have pierced the bone through the marrow can accomplish this.

[ 18 ]

He instructed,

The meditation master Ta Hui said, "The study of the Way should be done in the frame of mind of one who owes ten million strings of cash at the time when he is penniless but being pressed for payment. If you have such a mind, it is easy to find the Way."

The *Hsin Hsin Ming*<sup>1</sup> says, "The Supreme Way is without diffi-

culty; just avoid picking and choosing." If you just cast off your picking and choosing mind, you would immediately realize this. To cast off the picking and choosing mind means to be detached from self. Do not think of studying the Buddhist Teaching in order to gain some advantage as a reward for practicing the Buddha's Teaching; you should only practice the Buddhist Teaching for the sake of the Buddhist Teaching itself. Even if you have learned a thousand scriptures and ten thousand commentaries, and have sat upon your meditation seat till it has worn out, without this mind you cannot find the Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs. You should only abandon body and mind, entrusting them to the Buddhist Teaching; following along with the others, when you no longer maintain your former views, you will then attain realization.

## [ 19 ]

He instructed,<sup>1</sup>

In the *Spring and Autumn Annals*<sup>2</sup> it says, "The fact that stone is hard means that even if you break it, you cannot take away its hardness. The fact that cinnabar is red means that even if you rub it, you cannot take away its redness."

Once when a monk asked Hsuan Sha, "What is the enduring body of reality like?" Hsuan Sha said, "Dripping with pus."<sup>3</sup>

It seems that these basically have the same meaning.

## [ 20 ]

He instructed,

An Ancient said, "Take whatever goods and grain there are in store and entrust them to directors of affairs<sup>1</sup> who understand cause and effect; dividing the responsibility and distributing the authority, let them take charge of this."

What this means is that the master has nothing at all to do with matters great or small pertaining to the monastic institution.<sup>2</sup> That is because his only work is to sit, to exhort and encourage the community.

It is also said, "Even a thousand acres of clear fields is not as good as a meager skill that you can take around with you."



"Bestowal of favor does not hope for reward; having given to someone, do not regret it."

"If you keep your mouth as silent as your nose, you will avoid ten thousand calamities."

"When one's behavior is noble, people naturally esteem him; when one's ability is great, people naturally submit to him."<sup>3</sup>

"To plow deep but plant shallow is the way to a natural disaster. When you help yourself and harm others, how could there be no consequences?"

When students of the Way are looking at sayings, you must exert your power to the utmost and examine them very very closely.

[ 21 ]

He instructed,

An Ancient said, "Atop a hundred foot pole, you should still advance another step."<sup>1</sup>

What this means is that you should be like one who has climbed to the top of a hundred foot pole, yet lets go his hands and feet, thus throwing down his body and mind.

There are several stages to this task. People these days appear to flee society and leave their homes, but when you consider their behavior, it is still not the escape from society of a leaver of home. One who is to be called a leaver of home must first give up his self, honor, and gain. Unless you are detached from these, even if you practice the Way with the urgency of beating out flames on your head<sup>2</sup> and your zeal is such that you may cut off your hands and feet,<sup>3</sup> it will only be useless toil, not escape.

Even in China, although there are people who leave behind love and gratitude, which are so hard to part with, give up worldly wealth, which is hard to abandon, join the monastic communities and pass through the halls of the Patriarchal Teaching, there are also those who uselessly pass their whole lives in vain, without awakening to the Path or illumining their minds, just because they are acting without thorough knowledge of this basic truth.

The reason for this is that although in the beginning people's minds arouse an aspiration for the Way and they even become monks and follow a teacher, they do not think of becoming Buddhas or Patri-

archs, but want word of their high status and the greatness of their own temple to be known to donors and patrons, to have it spoken of to family and dependents, to be honored and supported by others: some go on to contrive a pretext to have it said or thought that all the monks are corrupt and no good, whereas, "I alone have the mind of the Way, I am a good man."

People like this are as worthless of mention as evil monks like the Five Incurribles.<sup>4</sup> Theirs is a mental disposition bound for hell. Unknowing laypeople think these are people with the mind of the Way, people worthy of esteem.

And there are those who go somewhat beyond this, who do not want donors or patrons, but join monastic communities and practice the Way; but those who are by nature basically lazy sluggards, because of the fact that they are actually being lazy, when the Great Elder or chief monk or someone is looking, make a show of practicing the Way; when they are not looking, there are those who laze around and idle away the time with anything handy. This is better than being so irresponsible in the householding life, but it is still not abandonment of selfish ego.

Also there are those who take no account of the ideas of their teachers, do not care whether the head monks or the brethren are looking or not; they always think, "The Way of Buddhahood is not for others; it is for myself alone. It is my body and mind that are to become a Buddha and a Patriarch." So they really work and strive. Although they seem as though they are more genuine people of the Path than those mentioned previously, still, because they practice for the betterment of their own selves, they are still not free from ego.

Even if you wish Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to rejoice over you and want to perfect enlightenment, the fruit of Buddhahood, it is because you have still not been able to give up your mind full of selfish desires for fame and profit. Up to this point, you have not left the hundred foot pole; you are clinging to it.

Only when one has cast body and mind into the Buddhist Teaching and practices it with no further hope of anything—even that he awaken to the Path and grasp the truth—such is called an Undeified Wayfarer. This is the meaning of the saying, "Do not stay where there is Buddha; run quickly by where there is no Buddha."

## [ 22 ]

He instructed,

Do not plan ahead what you will do for food and clothing. If you are completely out of food, then when it comes to that, you may beg for food. But if you plan to approach specific persons with your need, that is the same as storing something up, which is food obtained by improper means of livelihood.

As for the patchrobed ones, it is those who are like clouds, having no fixed abode, flowing onward like a stream, attached to nothing, who are called true monks.

Even if you do not have a single thing besides robe and bowl, if you depend upon a single patron, or rely upon your relatives, then yourself and others are bound fast; this is impure food. With a body and mind nourished and maintained by such impure food, even if you want to realize the pure and clean truth of all Buddhas, you will not be fit for it. Just as something died in indigo becomes blue and something died in yellow plum becomes yellow, so a body and mind stained by food obtained by improper livelihood is a body living wrongly. If you aspire to the Way of Buddhas with this body and mind, that would be like pressing sand to get oil.

You should just see to it that you may accord with this principle however you can as the occasion arises. Any forethought or provision beforehand is all wrong. You should consider this carefully.

## [ 23 ]

He instructed,

Each student should know that everyone has great faults; and pride is the greatest fault. Both Buddhist and other books alike admonish this.

A secular classic says, "Although there are those who are poor but not obsequious, there are none who are rich but not proud," still restraining the wealthy, hoping that they will not be proud. This is certainly an important matter; you should think carefully about it.

When someone whose own status is low does not want to be inferior to people of high nobility, but wants to be superior to others, this is a case of extreme arrogance. Nevertheless, it is easy to admonish.

But in the case of someone who has an ample share of worldly wealth of his own, his family surrounds him and others indulge him. Because he thinks this is right and is proud of it, downtrodden bystanders, seeing this, would become envious and bitter. How can someone who is himself rich and high class guard against the bitterness of others? A person like this is hard to admonish; he cannot restrain even his own person. And even if there is no pride in his heart, when he acts as he pleases, the downtrodden around him would be bitterly jealous. To restrain this is called restraining pride. To accept one's own wealth as a reward, without fearing the jealousy of the poor and downtrodden who see this, is called a proud heart.

A secular classic says, "Do not ride past a poor house in a chariot." Thus, even if it is appropriate to one's status to ride in a vermilion chariot, one should hesitate to do so in front of poor people.

The Buddhist classics are also like this. However, student monks now want to excel others by way of wisdom and learning. Under no circumstances should you be proud of these. To talk about the wrongs of one's inferiors, or knowing the wrongs of one's forebears or colleagues and slandering them, is extreme arrogance. An Ancient said, "Though you be defeated in the presence of the wise, do not excel in the presence of fools." Even if others have wrongly understood something which I myself know quite well, if I were to speak of their errors, that would also be my own error. Even if you talk about the Teachings, do not slander your predecessors or senior colleagues; and in situations where ignorant and unenlightened people might be resentful and jealous, consider this carefully.

When I was staying in Kennin Temple, many people asked about the Teaching. Among them were many wrong interpretations and mistakes; but thinking deeply of this proper conduct, I just spoke of the virtues of the Teaching as they are and did not discuss the wrongs of others and ended up without trouble. The depth of grasping views of the ignorant is such that they would surely have become angry, saying that I had mentioned the faults of their worthy predecessors. For a man endowed with wisdom to be truly genuine, once he just knows the principle of the Buddhist Teaching, then without anyone saying anything, he realizes and corrects his own mistakes and those of his worthy forebears. You should think on and understand such matters as this.

## [ 24 ]

He instructed,

In the study of the Way, the prime essential is sitting meditation. The attainment of the Way by many people in China is due in each case to the power of sitting meditation. Even ignorant people with no talent, who do not understand a single letter,<sup>1</sup> if they sit wholeheartedly in meditation, then by the accomplishment of meditative stability, they will surpass even brilliant people who have studied for a long time. Thus, students should only be concerned with the act of sitting; do not get involved with other things. The Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs is just sitting meditation; one should not follow other concerns.

[At that time Ejo asked,] "In practicing both sitting and reading, when looking at the recorded sayings and public cases,<sup>2</sup> it happens that one may understand somewhat one out of a hundred or a thousand. In the case of sitting meditation, there is no such particular experiential proof as this. Yet should we still be devoted to sitting meditation?"

[Dogen replied,] "When looking at the words of the public cases, though one seems to have some perception, that is a factor which causes estrangement from the Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs. If you spend your time sitting upright without attaining anything or understanding anything, then this would be the Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs. Although even the Ancients encouraged both reading and sole occupation with the act of sitting, they still encouraged sitting wholeheartedly. And though there have been people whose awakening was opened by words, they too were situations in which the opening of awakening was due to accomplishment in sitting. The true attainment is due to the sitting."

*Note to 1*

1. Kao Tsu (reigned 206–195 B.C.) was the founder of the Former Han dynasty (206 B.C.–8 A.D.).

*Note to 2*

1. The recorder (Japanese *shoki*) is in charge of writing all the official notices, letters, etc., in the course of temple affairs; according to ancient



standards, this important office is to be filled by an outstanding monk who is also accomplished in calligraphy and skilled in the use of language.

### Notes to 3

1. Silk and grain were standard media for taxes and official salaries in China and Japan.
2. *Sennin*: this refers to practitioners of Taoist occult arts. This term is sometimes translated as "Immortal," since the avowed aim of many of these occultists was immortality or longevity. However, the term includes people who practiced all sorts of magic and sorcery and developed supernormal powers.

### Note to 4

1. Ch'in Shih Huang Ti (r. 246–210 B.C.), first emperor of the Chinese empire.

### Notes to 5

1. This refers to Ch'u Yuan; see book II, section 23.
2. This refers to two brothers, Po I and Shou Ch'i, who were heirs to a feudal kingdom under the ancient Shang (Yin) dynasty in China (ca. eighteenth–thirteenth century B.C.). When King Wu of Chou overthrew the Shang in 1122 B.C., these two brothers condemned his clan as rebels and fled into Mt. Shou Yang, where they starved to death. They are classical exemplars of loyalty from the Confucian point of view.

### Notes to 7

1. Perhaps this refers to the intensifying sectarian dispute of the day, intimately connected as they were to the material and political fortunes of the various sects.
2. Chen Ch'ing K'o Wen (1025–1102) and Hsueh Feng Tao Yuan (n.d.) were both successors to the great master Huang Lung Hui Nan, the founder of the Huang Lung branch of Lin Chi Zen.

*Notes to 11*

1. In former days, the Buddha-to-be used to indulge in self-mortification and rigorous fasting to the point of emaciation; having at length resolved to abandon these extreme austerities as useless, the first food he was offered was rice boiled in the milk of cows fed on the milk of milk-fed cows: thus it represents very fine food, and is said to have immediately restored the Buddha's golden color.
2. This was one of the so-called "nine hardships" of the Buddha; once a brahmin king, Agnidatta, invited Buddha and five hundred of his disciples to Agnidatta's kingdom to pass the summer retreat. The king, however, had forgotten to provide food for them all; the master of the stables brought out half of the fodder of five hundred horses to offer to the congregation, and they lived on that for the summer.

*Notes to 12*

1. Myozen (1183-1225), leading disciple of Eisai, first taught Rinzaï (Lin Chi) Zen to Dogen; later, in 1223, he accompanied Dogen to China for further study, dying there two years later.
2. Acarya, Sanskrit for "teacher," was used in Japan as a title for masters of the Shingon and Tendai sects. Myoyu was of the Tendai sect, and thus so was Myozen originally, as were Eisai and Dogen, and many others who later entered into the new religious movements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
3. This refers to services to "transfer merit" to the dying and dead, to propitiate their well-being in future lives.
4. Myozen left his home and became Myoyu's protege when he was only eight years old; thus the extent of his debt to this teacher is hardly exaggerated.
5. This refers back to the death services; it is interesting to see that Myozen regarded these as ultimately useless. This is very much in the spirit of pristine Buddhism, which did not rely on ceremonies. Dogen also especially scorned those monks who worked as ceremonialists and chanters of charms for the rich and powerful.
6. In his capacity as an enlightened teacher.
7. This is illustrated by the fact that although Myozen did actually die in China, his disciple Dogen did succeed in becoming enlightened and brought the teaching back to Japan.
8. Hsuan Tsang (600-664) was probably the most famous of Chinese pil-

grims and translators; he journeyed to India by the overland route, setting out in either 627 or 629, reached India in 633, traveled and studied extensively there, returned to China in 645, and spent the rest of his life translating Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Chinese. He specialized in the teaching that there is only consciousness, and is the very model of an intrepid man.

### Notes to 13

1. Literally, "the mind of the three worlds (ages)": this can refer to time, as it has been rendered here, according to the context, and it also can refer to the realms of desire, form, and formlessness.
2. From *Kung-tzu Chia Yu*, "Household sayings of Confucious"; it also appears in the *Kuei Shan Ch'ing Ts'e*, "Admonitions of Kuei Shan," previously quoted by Dogen, and doubtless reappears in many books.

### Notes to 15

1. Mahaprajnaparamita Shastra, "Commentary on Perfection of Wisdom" ascribed to Nagarjuna (first-second century A.D.); translated by Kumara-jiva (fl. 397-415) into Chinese, there is no Sanskrit original known to exist.
2. Sanskrit *cintamani*, a wish-granting jewel, sometimes used as a metaphor for mind.

### Note to 16

1. Ta Hui Tsung Kao (1089-1163) was a successor to the Yang-ch'i branch of the Lin Chi sect; many people considered him a great teacher, and most of the teachers of Zen in Japan around Dogen's time were descended from Ta Hui. Sores are common with people who remain immobile for long periods of time; Bodhidharma, the First Patriarch of Zen in China, is popularly said to have lost his legs by not using them for nine years.

*Note to 18*

1. This famous poem is attributed to Seng Ts'an (d. 606), the Third Patriarch of Zen in China. The lines Dogen quotes are the opening of the poem.

*Notes to 19*

1. This section is added following the Choenji book.
2. This is not the classic attributed to Confucious, but rather the *Lu Shih Shun Ch'iu*, a compendium of dissertations on various subjects of history, philosophy, law, war, etc. compiled by Lu Pu Wei of the Ch'in dynasty.
3. This is taken from the *Ta Hui Cheng Fa Yen Tsang*, a compendium of Zen stories made by the master Ta Hui mentioned in sections 16 and 18 above; the preface to the part quoted is that Hsuan Sha once mistakenly took some medicine and his whole body became inflamed. Hsuan Sha Shih Pei (835-908) was a successor of Hsueh Feng I Tsun, who appears in book VI, section 5.

*Notes to 20*

1. There were usually six offices charged with business and administrative duties.
2. That is, the teaching master has nothing to do with the property or finances of the monastery.
3. The Choenji book has it, "A man whose action is firm is naturally admired; but a man of outstanding ability will naturally be brought down."

*Notes to 21*

1. Ching Ts'en of Ch'ang Sha, in Hunan, was a successor of Nan Ch'uan (see book I, section 6): once he composed the following verse:

The man immobile atop the hundred foot pole  
 Has attained Entry, but is not yet Real.  
 Atop the hundred foot pole, it is necessary to step forward;  
 The universe in the ten directions is his whole body.

A monk asked him, "Just when one is at the top of a hundred foot pole, how can he step forward?"

The master said, "The mountains of Liang province; the rivers of Li province."

The monk said, "Please tell me."

The master said, "All within the four seas and five lakes is under the Imperial Sway." (*Ching Te Ch'uan Teng lu* 10)

2. This is a classic metaphor for paying utmost attention to one's task. It appears in the *Kashyapaparivarta*, II.
3. In this rendering, I follow the Choenji edition; it seems reasonable that this could refer to the Second Patriarch of Zen cutting off his arm in the middle of winter. The *rufobon* has it "Your zeal is such that you know the 'raising of the leg.'" This refers to a story of the Buddha's bodhisattvahood, when he spent seven days reciting extemporaneous verses of praise of an ancient Buddha, forgetfully keeping his foot raised in the interim. The story comes from the *Mahaprajnaparamita Shastra*.
4. The five sandhilas, lazy monks who would do nothing but make a show of meditating, whereby to obtain the offerings of the ignorant devout; they eventually all went to hell and were reborn as imperfect beings such as eunuchs and barren women.

### Notes to 24

1. According to Choenji book; the *rufubon* has it, "who cannot understand (or ask) a single question."
2. *Koan*; incidents in the lives and saying of Zen masters, later used as contemplation themes.



## BOOK VI

### [ 1 ]

He instructed,

If you must feel shame before people, you should feel shame before people who have enlightened eyes.

When I was in China, Master Ching of T'ien T'ung Monastery invited me to be his personal attendant. Saying, "Although Dogen is a foreigner, he is a man of capacity," thus, he invited me. I firmly declined. My reason was that although it would be an important thing, both for my reputation in Japan and for the purpose of study in learning the Way, yet as long as there were people among the congregations who possessed eyes, for a foreigner to be an attendant in a great monastery might be criticized for giving the appearance that there were no men in the great country of China. Thinking that I should exercise utmost deference, I expressed my idea in a letter. Master Ching heard it, and being impressed with esteem for the country and shame before others, he let me go and did not ask again.

### [ 2 ]

He instructed,

Someone said, "I am sick, not a fit vessel, incapable of studying the Way. Having heard the essentials of the Teaching, I want to live alone in retirement, spending my life taking care of my body and nursing my sickness."

This is very wrong. The former sages did not necessarily have golden bones. Could the Ancients have all had superior capacities? When we consider the time since Buddha's death, it has not been so long; and thinking back to when he was in the world, not everyone was a genius. There were good people as well as bad ones. There were also those among the congregation of monks whose behavior was in-

credibly bad; and there were those whose capacities were of the lowest sort. Nevertheless, there were none who demeaned themselves or said they would give up, thus failing to arouse the aspiration to the Way, none who failed to study the Way on the grounds that they were not fit vessels. If you do not study the Way and cultivate its practice in this life, in which life would you become a man of capacity, a man without illness, to study the Way? Just to arouse the mind and cultivate practice without worrying about your bodily life, this is the most essential thing in the study of the Way.

[ 3 ]

He instructed,

Students of the Way, do not covet food or clothing. Everyone has an allotment of food, an allotment of life; even if you seek food and livelihood that is not your own lot, you will not succeed in getting them. How much the more for those who study the Way of Buddha; there are the offerings of donors, food obtained from begging that will never run out, and then there are also permanent temple supplies. It is not a matter of private enterprise. Fruits, food obtained from begging, and donations from the faithful—these three kinds of food are all pure food. As for the other four kinds of food—from farming, commerce, war, and crafts—these are all impure, food from improper livelihood. They are not for the consumption of those who have left the householding life.

Long ago there was a monk who died and went to the Dark Road. Yama, the king of the dead, said, "This man's allotment of life is not yet exhausted; he should be sent back."

One of the ministers of darkness said, "Though his allotment of life is not yet exhausted, his allotment of food is already used up."

The king said, "Then let him eat lotus leaves."

Thenceforth, after that monk came back to life, he could not eat the food of humans, but maintained the life left to him eating only lotus leaves.

Thus, for leavers of home, due to the power of studying Buddhahood, their allotment of food should not be exhausted. The single feature of the White Hair<sup>1</sup> and the twenty years of grace<sup>2</sup> left by the Buddha, though they be used for aeons, would never be exhausted. It

just means that you should practice the Path single-mindedly and not seek food and clothing.

As long as the body, limbs, blood, and flesh are well kept, the mind, accordingly, will become well; we read this even in medical prescriptions. How much the more so for those who study the Way: if you maintain discipline and purity of behavior. Regulating the body in accordance with the behavior of Buddhas and Patriarchs, then your mind, also, will accordingly be in tune.

Students of the Way, whenever you are about to speak, you should reflect thrice as to whether it would be of benefit for self and others; if it would be beneficial, then say it. Words with no benefit should be left unsaid. Even something like this is difficult to attain all at once. Keeping it in mind, you should practice it gradually.

#### [ 4 ]

During a talk on various subjects, he said,

Students of the Way, do not worry about food and clothing. Although Japan is a small country in an outlying area, in the past as well as present there have been many people who attained fame in the Exoteric and Esoteric schools, and who were known even to people in later generations. Also there have been many people accomplished in the various fields of poetry, music, literary, and martial arts; among such people, I have never heard of even one who had abundant food and clothing. All of them endured poverty, forgot about other concerns, and devoted themselves wholeheartedly to their particular path; that is why they attained their fame.

How much the more does this apply to people studying the Way in the school of the Patriarchs; abandoning worldly occupation, they do not run after any fame or profit—how could they become rich? In the monasteries of the great country of China, although it is the Final Age [of Dharma], there are thousands and ten thousands of people studying the Way; among them are those who come from far away and those who come from the rural areas. In either case, most of them are poor. Nevertheless, they do not consider poverty an affliction. Troubled only by the fact that they have not yet awakened to the Way, they sit, whether upstairs or downstairs, and wholeheartedly practice the Buddha-Way, as though mourning their dead parents.<sup>1</sup>

I personally witnessed the case of a monk from Ssu Ch'uan who had nothing since he had come from afar.<sup>2</sup> All he had was two or three sticks of ink,<sup>3</sup> worth about two or three hundred Chinese coins or about twenty or thirty Japanese coins: buying some cheap grade, extremely flimsy Chinese paper, he made upper and lower garments out of it; when he wore these, they would make a tearing sound as he stood and sat, but he did not take notice of his shabbiness, nor was he troubled by it. Someone said, "You should return to your native village and get a proper outfit together." He replied, "My native village is far away; I fear I would waste time on the journey and lose time in studying the Way." He even studied the Way without being troubled by the cold. Thus it is that good people appear in China.

## [ 5 ]

He instructed,

I have heard that long ago when the monastery on Mt. Hsueh Feng<sup>1</sup> was founded, it was extremely poor; sometimes there was no food at all, and sometimes they steamed green beans with rice to eat, thus passing the days studying the Way; yet later there were never less than fifteen hundred monks there.

The people of old were like this; today they should also be like this. The deterioration of monkhood stems largely from wealth and honor. During Buddha's lifetime, Devadatta's jealousy<sup>2</sup> also arose from daily offerings of five hundred cartloads of provisions. He did not harm only himself, but also caused others to commit evil deeds. How could a genuine student of the Way become rich? Even if many offerings made in pure faith accumulate, you should think of your debt of gratitude and consider how you will repay it.

People in this country will even give out of consideration for their own benefit. To give generously to one who approaches with a smile is the established way of the world. But if you just do it so as to go along with the feelings of others, it would be a hindrance to the study of the Way. You should simply endure the hunger, endure the cold, and study the Way single-mindedly.

## [ 6 ]

One day he instructed,

An Ancient said, "One must hear, one must see, one must attain."<sup>1</sup> He also said, "If you haven't attained, you should see; if you haven't seen, you should hear."

What this means is that seeing is better than hearing, and attaining is better than seeing. If you haven't yet attained, you must see; if you haven't yet seen, you must hear.

## [ 7 ]

He also said,

The essential point in studying the Way is just to cast off your original attachments. If you first reform the comportment of your body, the mind also will reform along with it. If first you maintain the prescribed dignity and disciplined behavior, your mind too should accordingly reform.

In China, it is a popular custom for people to gather at their ancestral shrines and pretend to cry, as their offering of filial piety to their parents; while they are doing this, eventually they really do cry. People who study the Way too, though from the beginning they may not have the mind for the Way, if they would but insistently devote themselves to the study of the Way, eventually the true mind of the Way should arise.

Beginners in the study of the Way should just follow the community in practicing the Way. Do not think of learning and knowing such things as the essential points and ancient standards of practice right away. Things like those ancient standards and essential points are just something one should know thoroughly and correctly when about to enter the mountains alone or to conceal oneself within a city in order to practice. If you follow the congregation in your practice, you should attain the Way. For example, it is like riding in a boat; although you yourself may not know how to row, if you leave it to an able boatman to go along, whether you know anything or not, you will arrive at the other shore. If you follow a wise teacher and practice together with the community without any selfishness, you will naturally become a man of the Way.



Students of the Way, even if you attain enlightenment, do not think that this is now the ultimate and thus abandon your practice of the Way. The Way is endless. Even if you are enlightened, you should still practice the Way. Consider the ancient story of the lecturer Liang Sui calling upon Ma Yu.<sup>1</sup>

[ 8 ]

He instructed,

Students of the Way, do not think of waiting for a later day to practice the Way. Without letting this day and this moment pass by, just work from day to day, moment to moment.

A layman in these parts who had been sick for a long time made the following promise to me last spring: "If this present illness is cured I will definitely leave my wife and children, build a hut to live in near the temple, participate in the *uposatha* ceremony<sup>1</sup> twice a month, daily practice the Way, read and listen to discourse on the Teaching, and pass my life preserving disciplined behavior as best I can." Subsequently, since he took various curatives, his illness remitted somewhat, but he had a relapse, and passed days and months idly. Since January of this year, suddenly his condition became critical, and as his pain and suffering gradually overcame him, because he had not the time to bring the necessary equipment to build the hut he had been planning, therefore, he rented someone's room right off and stayed there, but within one or two months he had died and gone. In the meantime he had accepted the Bodhisattva Precepts and taken refuge in the Three Treasures, so he faced the end well; thus, it was better than to have stayed at home, hanging on to gratitude and love toward his wife and children, to die in mad confusion. Considering, however, that it would have been better had he left his home last year when the thought occurred to him, and approached the temple, become familiar with the monks, and ended his life practicing the Way, it seems to me that the cultivation of the Buddha-Way is something that should not wait for a later time.

The thought that because the body is sick one will cultivate practice after healing the sickness, is one entertained by those who lack the mind for the Way. With bodies made of the compounding of elements, who would have no sickness? The Ancients did not necessar-

ily have golden bones; it is just that once their determination was thoroughgoing, they forgot about other things in order to practice. When something critical comes up in life, one will inevitably forget about petty things. Since the Way of Buddhas is the One Great Concern, in hoping to complete it in one lifetime, you should determine not to waste the days and hours.

An Ancient said, "Do not pass the time in vain." While you are attempting to cure your illness, as long as it doesn't go away and the pain and suffering oppresses you more and more, you should determine to practice the Way when the pain has lightened a bit.<sup>2</sup> When you suffer severe pain, you should think to practice before it gets even worse. When it gets critical, you should think to practice before you die. In trying to cure disease, some get better and some get worse. And it also happens sometimes that it gets better even though you don't try to cure it, or it may get worse even though you try to cure it. You should consider this carefully.

People practicing the Way should not think they will practice the Way only after having prepared a dwelling place and gotten together their robes and bowls and such. While someone in the extreme of poverty is waiting to get together the robes, bowls, and implements which he lacks, what about the gradual approach of death? Therefore, if you wait for a place to stay and wish to practice the Way after having gotten together robes and bowl, you would pass your whole life in vain. Though you may not have robes and bowl, just think that even in the household life, the Buddha-Way may be carried out and so you should practice it. This is also because robes and bowl are merely the proper trappings of monkhood; a true traveler on the Way of Buddhahood does not depend upon them. You shall have them as they become available; do not purposely seek after them. Neither should you decide not to have what you should have. Also, when you have an illness that needs to be cured, if you neglect to treat it, thinking that you would sooner die, this too is the view of a heretic. For the sake of the Buddha-Way, do not be anxious for your life; yet do not be careless of it, either. If they are available, the use of moxa cautery or medicines wouldn't be a hindrance to the practice of the Way. But it is wrong to put off the study of the Way, thinking that curing the illness comes first, that only after that will you cultivate your practice.

[ 9 ]

He said,

In the sea there is a place known as the Dragon Gate,<sup>1</sup> where huge waves repeatedly rise. When fish have passed through this place, they always become dragons: therefore, it is called the Dragon Gate.

Now it seems to me that the waves there are no different from anyplace else and the water, too, is the same salt water. Nevertheless, it is an established miracle that when fish pass through there they always become dragons. The scales of the fish do not change and their bodies remain the same; yet suddenly they become dragons.

The form for the patchrobed ones is also like this. Though the place is not different from others, once they have entered the monastery, they will definitely become Buddhas and Patriarchs. They eat food and wear clothes like other people; though the relief from hunger and protection from the cold are the same, when they just shave off their hair, put on monk's garments, and eat gruel and vegetables for food, suddenly they become patchrobed ones. To become Buddhas and be Patriarchs is not a matter of seeking afar. The question of entering or not entering a monastery is the same as the difference between passing or not passing through that Dragon Gate.

Also there is a proverbial saying, "Though I sell gold, there is none to buy." The Way of Buddhas and Patriarchs is also like this; it is not that they begrudge the Way, but, although they are always offering it, people do not get it. Gaining the Way does not depend upon the sharpness or dullness of the faculties; everyone can awaken to the truth. Depending upon zeal or sloth, there is slowness or quickness in attaining the Way. The difference between zeal and sloth is whether one's determination is thoroughgoing or not. When one's determination is not thoroughgoing, it is because he does not contemplate impermanence. We die from moment to moment,<sup>2</sup> ultimately not abiding even for a while. As long as you are alive for the time being, do not pass the time in vain.

An ancient saying has it, "The rat in the storehouse hungers for food; the ox pulling the plow in the field hasn't his fill of grass." What this means is that one is hungry though in the midst of food, one lacks for grass while being in the middle of grass. People are also like this: though they are in the midst of the Buddha-Way, they do not merge with the Way. If the mind which seeks fame and profit does not come to rest, one will be ill at ease all his life long.

## [ 10 ]

He instructed,

The actions of a man of the Way, whether good or bad, all have some intent. They cannot be judged by ordinary people.

In olden times, the high priest Eshin<sup>1</sup> once had someone drive away a deer that was eating grass in the garden. At the time someone asked him, "The master seems to have no compassion: do you begrudge the grass, causing suffering to the animal?"

The high priest said, "No. If I didn't drive it away, this deer would eventually become used to human beings; should it encounter an evil man, it would surely be killed. Therefore I drive it away."

Although it seems merciless to drive away the deer, yet the profound reasoning of compassion within his inner heart was like this.

## [ 11 ]

One day he instructed,

If someone asks about the Teaching, or asks about the essentials of the method of practice, a patchrobed monk should always reply on the basis of the truth. In case you perceive that another has not the capacity, or else you consider that as a beginner who has not yet learned anything, he would not be able to understand, still you should not answer him in terms of expedients that are not really true.

The intent of the Bodhisattva Precepts is that even if one with capacity for the Lesser Vehicle should ask about the path of the Lesser Vehicle, one should only reply to him in terms of the Greater Vehicle. The manner of the Buddha's lifetime-Teaching was also like this: the expedient temporary teachings are in reality without benefit; only the final true Teaching is of genuine benefit. Thus you should not discuss whether another will attain or not; just reply to him with the truth.

If you see these people, you should see them in terms of their real virtues; don't see them in terms of their outward appearance or contrived virtue.

In ancient times, there was a certain man who came and submitted to Confucius. Confucius asked him, "Why do you come submit to me?"

He said, "As I look upon you, noble man, in our interview, you have majestic dignity; that is why I submit to you."

Then Confucius ordered his disciples to bring out all his chariots, vestments, gold, silver, and other property; giving it all to the man, he said, "It is not me that you are submitting to," and he handed it over to him.

Once, when the regent of Uji<sup>1</sup> went to his bathhouse boiler room and saw the place where the fires are lit, the worker there saw him and said, "Who is this fellow who comes to the regent's boiler room without any notice?" And he chased him out.

After being chased out, the regent changed out of the poor clothes he had been wearing at first: when he appeared magnificently costumed, the aforementioned worker, seeing him from a distance, got scared and fled. At that point the regent hung up his costume on a pole and bowed to it. Someone asked him what he was doing. He replied, "The fact that I am esteemed by others is not because of my own virtues; it is just because of this costume."

This is the way fools respect others. Respect for the written words of the scriptural teachings is also like this.

An ancient said,<sup>2</sup> "Though his words fill the land, he is without fault of tongue; though his activity extend through the land, there is no harm from enmity." This is because he says what is to be said and does what is to be done. These are the words and speech of the essential path of ultimate virtue. As for worldly words and speech, when they are planned and carried out by personal prejudice, I fear that there may be nothing but wrong. The precedents for the speech and behavior of patch-robed monks have been established; you should not retain selfish prejudices. This is the Way which has been practiced by Buddha and Patriarchs.

Students of the Way must each examine their own selves. To examine oneself means that one must reflect upon how one should bear his own body and mind. But the patchrobed monks are already sons of the Buddha; they should develop the style of comportment of the Buddha. For the conduct of the body, mouth, and mind, there are manners that have been practiced by former Buddhas; each of you should follow those standards.

Even an ordinary man has said, "One's clothes should conform to the law, one's speech should accord with the Way."<sup>3</sup> How much more is this true for patchrobed monks; they should not exercise any selfishness at all.



## [ 12 ]

He instructed,

When people studying the Way these days listen to the Teaching, since most of them primarily want it to be known that they have understood it well, and they want their replies to sound good, therefore the words they are hearing pass right by their ears. All this demonstrates is that they lack the mind of the Way, and retain their selfish egoism.

One must just first forget his own self, listen carefully to hear what others say; afterward, think about it calmly, and if there is some difficulty or question, pursue it and criticize. If you have understood, you should again present your understanding to the teacher. If you make the claim of having understood on the spot, you have not really listened closely to the teaching.

## [ 13 ]

He instructed,

During the reign of Emperor T'ai Tsung of T'ang, he was presented with a superlative steed by a foreign country. Having gotten this horse, the emperor said to himself without joy, "Even if I alone ride a thousand miles on a superb mount, without retainers to follow me, it would be pointless." Therefore he summoned Wei Ch'eng, and when he asked him about this, Ch'eng said, "I agree with the feelings of the emperor." Thus they loaded that horse with gold and cloth and sent it back.

Even a worldly sovereign did not keep something useless, but sent it back. How much the more does this apply to patchrobed monks; anything outside of robes and bowl is definitely useless. Why keep something useless? Even in the ordinary world, those who single-mindedly cultivate one path do not consider it necessary to possess such things as fields, gardens, or manors; they just consider all the people of the land to be their family and people.

Chiso, entitled "Bridge of Dharma," left his will to his son, saying, "You must only strive wholeheartedly on your path." How much the more should sons of Buddha abandon myriad concerns and cultivate one thing single-mindedly. This is the most important point to keep in mind.

## [ 14 ]

He instructed,

Students of the Way, when you go to the teacher to ask about the doctrine, be most thoroughgoing; having asked, ask again and be completely sure. If you go by without asking what you should ask or saying what you should say, it would surely be a loss to you.

The teacher always awaits the questions of the disciple to say anything himself. Even things you understand, you should ask about again and again to make sure. The teacher too should ask the disciple whether he has understood, and should instruct him.

## [ 15 ]

He instructed,

In the consideration of people of the Way, there is something different from that of ordinary people. When the late high priest of Keninji [Eisai] was in the world, it happened that the temple ran completely out of food. At that time a donor asked Eisai [to accept] an offering of a bolt of silk. Eisai rejoiced and personally carried it back to the temple, not even having someone else carry it for him. He gave it to a director of affairs and said, "Use this to get tomorrow's gruel and so forth."

However, there came a request from the home of a certain layman, saying, "An embarrassing matter has come up, so that I need two or three bolts of silk; if you have anything at all please let me have it."

Eisai immediately took back the aforementioned silk and gave it to the layman. At this time the monk who was director of affairs, as well as the rest of the monks, were all exceedingly confounded.

Later, Eisai said, "You are all probably thinking it was wrong: but my thought was that the community of monks has gathered because they aspire to the Buddha-Way. Even if one day you have no food and die of starvation, it shouldn't bother you. When you save people in the world from their affliction of lacking what is needed, the benefit to everyone would be greater."

Truly the consideration of a man of the Way is like this.

## [ 16 ]

He instructed,

The Buddhas and Patriarchs were all originally ordinary men. While they were ordinary men, they could not but have done bad things, had bad thoughts, been stupid, been foolish. Nevertheless, because they all changed, followed wise teachers, and cultivated practice, they all became Buddhas and Patriarchs.

You people now should be likewise. Do not demean yourselves, saying that you are stupid and dull. If you do not arouse your minds in this life, when will you ever practice the Way? If you now practice insistently, you should not fail to attain the Way.

## [ 17 ]

He instructed,

A proverb about the guideline for the way of sovereigns says, "If the breast is not empty, it will not admit loyal words." What this means is that the way of sovereignty is practiced by following the words of loyal ministers, according to what is right, without maintaining one's own views.

The guideline for the concentration of patchrobed monks should also be like this. If you retain your own views in the slightest, the words of the teacher do not get through to you. If the teacher's words do not get through to you, you do not grasp the teacher's doctrine. It is not just a matter of forgetting about different views of the doctrine; when you have forgotten about worldly concerns, and such matters as hunger and cold, and thoroughly purified your body-mind to listen, then you will really be able to hear. When you listen in this way, the principle, as well as your uncertainties, become clarified. As for what is called true attainment of the Way, if you cast off your previous state of body and mind and just straightforwardly follow the teacher, then you become a true man of the Way. This is the foremost of ancient verities.

### *Notes to 3*

1. See book IV, section 15, note 1.
2. This refers to the fact that Shakyamuni lived only eighty years out of an

idealized lifetime of one hundred; the remaining twenty years he donated to future beings. This represents the life of the Buddhist community.

### Notes to 4

1. Hsuan Sha Shih Pei once said, "If you have wisdom, you can gain release immediately, right now. If your faculties are slow and dull, then you must work hard, endure and forebear; day and night forgetting weariness and ignoring food, as though mourning your dead parents." (*Ching Te Chuan Teng lu*, 18)
2. Ssu Ch'uan is in western China, whereas Dogen studied for the most part in eastern China.
3. Chinese ink is made into sticks which can be ground in water for use.

### Notes to 5

1. Hsueh Feng was opened by the reknowned Zen master I Ts'un (822-908) during the 870s, a period of tremendous civil strife within China, just prior to the fall of the three-century-old T'ang Dynasty. In spite of this, monks came from all over to study under I Ts'un and it is said that his community numbered as many as seventeen hundred. I Ts'un had fifty-six enlightened disciples and was the Patriarch of both the Yun Men and Fa Yen sects of Zen.
2. Devadatta, cousin and one-time disciple of the Buddha, is typed as the archvillain of early Buddhist history, charged with the three grievous crimes of shedding Buddha's blood, killing an Arhat, and disrupting the harmonious community of disciples. He enlisted king Ajatashatru as his own patron and set himself up in opposition to the Buddha.

### Note to 6

1. The Choenji version has "experience" for "attain."

### Note to 7

1. According to *Ching Te Chuan Teng Lu*, 9, when Liang Sui (eighth-ninth century) went to Ma Yu (Pao Ch'e, a successor of Ma Tsu), the latter

called to him, "Liang Sui," whereat Liang Sui replied. Ma Yu called him thus three times and Liang Sui replied three times; finally Ma Yu said, "This stupid preacher!" Then Liang Sui was awakened. According to the later *Wu Teng Hui Yuan*, 4, when Ma Yu saw Liang Sui coming, he immediately took a hoe and went to work at hoeing up weeds. When Liang Sui came to where he was hoeing, Ma Yu paid no attention to him but immediately went back to his room and shut the door. The next day Liang Sui went to Ma Yu again, but again Ma Yu shut his door; when Liang Sui knocked, Ma Yu asked, "Who is it?" Liang Sui said, "It is Liang Sui." The moment he had called out his name, he suddenly attained enlightenment. He said to Ma Yu, "Master, do not fool Liang Sui; if I had not come to pay my respects to you, I would probably have been deceived by the sutras and shastras all my life." When he returned to his lecture hall, Liang Sui said to the congregation there, "Everything that you people know, I know; but what I know, you people do not know."

### Notes to 8

1. This consists of recital of the Buddhist precepts, during which the monks are supposed to reveal their own transgressions.
2. The Choenji text has it, "You will regret that you didn't practice the Way when the pain was less."

### Notes to 9

1. The Dragon Gate is actually not in the sea, but is a gorge through which the Yellow River passes at the border of Shensi and Shansi, in China. It is traditionally said to have been cut by the legendary King Yu (2206–2198 B.C.) to save China from the flooding of the Yellow River. According to legend, on the third day of the third month, when the peach blossoms are in bloom, if a fish can get past the Dragon Gate, he will become a dragon; those who cannot make it fall back and smash their heads. Hsueh Tou (980–1052) once composed this verse:

In the river country the spring wind doesn't blow;  
Deep within the flowers partridges are calling.



At the treble Dragon Gate when the waves are high, fish become  
dragons;  
Yet fools still drag through the evening gutter water.

(*Po Tse Sung Ku*, 7)

2. Or, thought after thought.

*Note to 10*

1. Better known as Genshin (942-1003), a master of Tendai Buddhism was one of the pioneers of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan with his work *Ojō-yōshū* ("Compendium of the Essentials of Salvation"), in which he traces Pure Land doctrine and practice in sutras and shastras already recognized as authoritative in Tendai Buddhism.

*Notes to 11*

1. Fujiwara Yorimichi (992-1074), regent for the emperor. A similar story is told of the fourteenth-century Zen monk Ikkyū, and the Sufi figure Mulla Nasrudin.
2. From the *Hsiao Ching*, "Classic of Filial Piety."
3. From the *Hsiao Ching*.

SLEEPLESS  
NIGHTS

*Verses for the Wakeful*



## INTRODUCTION

In the early decades of the thirteenth century, Genghis Khan led a confederacy of Mongol tribes out of the steppes of Central Asia to conquer northern China, Turkistan, Transoxania, and Afghanistan, further extending his raids into Persia and eastern Europe. Under the leadership of Genghis' sons and grandsons, the Mongol Empire swallowed the rest of China and established khanates in Turkistan, Persia, and Russia. Apart from those slain in combat, it has been estimated that as many as 30 million people died at the hands of the Mongol hordes.

This book of verses is translated from a huge collection of poetry written by a refugee who lived through this cataclysmic era. The author, whose name was Wen-siang, was born in China in 1210, just before Genghis Khan invaded north China to wrest it from the control of the Jurchen overlords, earlier usurpers. Nearly seventy when Genghis' grandson Kublai overthrew the Southern Sung dynasty, Wen-siang lived for at least another eight years, under the regime of the Mongol conquerors.

Wen-siang's poetry gives voice to the sufferings and the hopes of a people groaning under the weight of history, the conscripts, the peasants, the women, and the refugees. He was an independent Buddhist wayfarer, a pacifist, a feminist, a cosmopolitan rustic; once a political prisoner in his own homeland, he was thereafter a lifelong exile and wanderer. Here translated into English for the first time, his writings mock the folly of tyrants and celebrate the indomitability of life. Full of pathos and beauty, they are among the greatest masterpieces of secular Buddhist poetry.

One of the ironies of literary history is that the individuals known to the world as the greatest poets of China, a land where poetry was regarded as a high art, were in reality disciples and followers of even greater masters, Ch'an poets whose subtle artistry went through and

beyond the aesthetic into higher realms of experience hardly susceptible to expression in any other way. Even the most intelligent scholars and writers of China in its golden age could barely follow the wizardry of the Ch'an poets, and this is why, strange to say, the greatest poets and the greatest poetry of China are virtually unknown even in their homeland.

The art of translating Ch'an poetry has never been public knowledge, and is not taught in schools, present or past. Some university scholars today have even expressed the opinion that the symbolic language of Ch'an does not exist. The Ch'an reply would be that this is due to ignorance, confusion, and consequent insensitivity, resulting in an approach to the subject that is much like scratching your shoe to relieve an itching foot.

The selection of the poems presented here in translation for the first time reflects special meanings for the present day, as well as perennial themes for all seasons. To speak of these directly, outside the poetry itself, would be an affront to the delicacy of the issues, the sensitivities of the reader, and, of course, the subtleties of the work itself.



*Sleepless Nights*



## A LONG JOURNEY

Far, far, a journey of ten thousand miles;  
green, green, the riverbank grasses.  
The green green grasses fade and die out,  
but the long long journey never ends.

Once Ch'in had destroyed the six states of old,  
it drove the people to build the Great Wall.  
A great wall stretching thousands of miles  
against the warriors of the north.

The sand and water by the wall are so cold  
my horse cries sadly when I take it to drink.

The men who built the wall  
were exhausted by the toil;  
who did not miss his homeland?  
They thought of their care for their parents,  
and grieved for the families they left alone.

If they died on the site,  
their whitened bones  
stuck up in the void,  
their tallow and blood  
fertilized the meadows,  
and their souls wandered desolate.  
How miserable the builders of the wall;  
they raised their shovels with no joyous song.

If protected by humaneness,  
a country is naturally secure;  
but inhumanity spreads calamity.  
The ancestors did not know  
wanton violence to make people toil.  
The ghosts of the high luminaries  
look into their rooms.

The Way of Heaven always dislikes fullness:  
The Great Wall was uselessly made so high—  
it did not save Ch'in from collapse.

How can that compare to the rulers of antiquity  
 who presided over peace without effort?  
 Perfect virtue is eternal;  
 its grandeur cannot be named.

*The Great Wall of China was built by the Ch'in dynasty (246–206 B.C.E.), the first imperial dynasty of the Chinese empire, set up by the militarized state of Ch'in after it had destroyed the other major states of ancient feudal China. The short-lived Ch'in dynasty is notorious as a reign of terror, during which countless people died from war, execution, and forced labor on government projects.*

### SONG OF THE WIFE OF A SOLDIER AT WAR

Parted as a newlywed,  
 like a heroine of yore,  
 she wonders if it wouldn't be better  
 had she not married him before.  
 Her husband's away at the northern wars  
 for a long time now;  
 the geese come south, but no word is heard.

The empty bedroom lonely,  
 the cold nights are long.  
 The ravaged road goes on and on,  
 her distant dreams alone.

They say the Taoists  
 can shrink the earth;  
 her foolish heart  
 would seek that magic charm.

### FEELINGS ON A JOURNEY

Suffering for lack of resources to live in the mountains,  
 I've become a traveler thousands of miles away.  
 I'm unable to meet my brothers, both parents are going gray.

No letters come from my old gardens,  
 threads of sadness gather day and night.  
 Then the roots of dry grasses filling the yard  
 suddenly change again to new green.

## COMPOSED IN A DREAM

Why grieve at being abandoned?  
 Poverty and lowliness are not afflictions.  
 Walking by the mountains and rivers  
 quite suits the hermit's feelings.  
 No cars come to my cottage door;  
 green moss fills the long pathway.  
 Suddenly hearing the fisherfolk's song,  
 I'm moved with the happiness of rivers and lakes.

## SLEEPING EARLY

In cold weather I always go to sleep early,  
 not waiting for the sunlight to withdraw.  
 I never shut my cottage door,  
 lest it keep the mountain monkeys out.  
 Falling leaves strike the window;  
 at my pillow it seems like raindrops.  
 Rising, I gaze at the western peaks;  
 the moon has set, the stars are twinkling.

## AUTUMN SCENE

Autumn's already half gone;  
 the wind grips colder each day.  
 The ducks come back to visit;  
 no trace left of the summer birds.  
 At this time the traveler  
 is sensitive and thinks of home;  
 Even if he can return in dreams,  
 the road back is hard to skip over.

## THE SKY

The sky is filled with ultimate truth;  
 other and self are both forgotten.  
 Having a mind like iron,  
 why care that my hair's grey as frost?  
 A clear spring follows the valley far,  
 an old cottage lies deep in the clouds.



This is where I'm at peace,  
blissful delight without end.

### FEELING SPRING

Suddenly sensing spring about to leave,  
I amble about taking in the garden grove.  
A light breeze scatters remaining red,  
a fine rain enriches luxuriant green.  
The richness of the green  
is like happiness and prosperity,  
the scattering of the red  
is like dishonor and disgrace:  
through them I understand the human world,  
how easily all things overturn.  
The lowly may rise to the azure clouds,  
aristocrats may be slaughtered in crowds.  
Calamity and fortune have no fixed borders;  
time and again they alternate.  
How can we know today's song  
will not be tomorrow's lament?  
It is written, as a guide for the world,  
the successful shouldn't indulge their desires;  
be careful as if walking on thin ice,  
remember things change as you labor.  
If you can learn these principles,  
you can follow the footsteps of sages.

### NIGHT AIR

The night air  
has just reached deepest darkness,  
but the free man  
has already awakened from dreams.  
The sound of the north wind snaps,  
the lamp in the cottage  
is green in the rain.  
In the mirror of awareness,  
all states of mind are quiet;  
forgetting objects,

the body's at rest.  
 This is beyond the ambitious  
 who ride on horseback  
 under cold starlight.

### MY MIND

My mind is inclined to quiet;  
 outside of things,  
 I lodge in the brush.  
 The sense of the mountains is best  
 when you reach their depths;  
 the source of the valley stream, distant,  
 is naturally purified.  
 For the rest of my life,  
 all that's missing is death;  
 all thoughts and worries  
 are settled already.  
 Recluses should leave no tracks;  
 people stop asking their names.

### A LONE TRAVELER

While everyone else  
 is so busy striving,  
 the lone traveler  
 is at ease by himself.  
 He's been living outside of convention  
 for a long time now;  
 in his pouch there is nothing at all.  
 When he walks,  
 he takes a cane for a companion;  
 when he talks,  
 he has the rocks for an audience.  
 If you ask him what his religion is,  
 when hungry it's a bowl of rice.

### GAZING AT THE MOON

Lighting incense in a quiet room,  
 I lean against the stone railing,

humming now and then.  
 Suddenly,  
 from the green jade river  
 valley through the mountains  
 wells forth  
 a bright silver bowl.  
 The constellations disappear  
 in the clear light  
 shining through me, cold.  
 Unable to sleep all night,  
 I gaze on it  
 twenty-four times.

### A MOUNTAIN NIGHT

The mountain air  
 is quiet in the night.  
 The spring flows  
 through the shadow  
 of the stone ravine.  
 All movements cease  
 in the emptiness.  
 A single lamp burns  
 deep in the cold hall.  
 The pure white visage  
 of the crescent moon  
 clarifies the heart  
 of a traveler in the open.  
 Perking up,  
 he sings an ancient tune;  
 the wind sways  
 the old pine woods.

### A SOLITARY TRAVELER

The chirping insects  
 in the dark  
 cry unceasingly;  
 a solitary traveler  
 without pleasure

rises in the night.  
 At a vast distance  
 the River of Stars  
 flows due West;  
 the thousand peaks  
 are soaked in moonlight  
 clear as water.

## GRIEF

A million men gallop afar  
 into the dust of battle;  
 how many can keep the body  
 they had when they set out?  
 Who knows the number of generals  
 gone to war since ancient times?  
 All of them have become the spring  
 in the green green grass of the borders.

## THINKING OF HOME

My home's in a hidden valley  
 thousands of miles away.  
 Since I left,  
 the spring breeze  
 has come again  
 forty-nine times.  
 With no fields to plant,  
 I don't go back;  
 my dreams  
 fall into the scenery  
 of the mountains and rivers.

## ELEGY OF A SOLDIER'S WIFE

Separation hurts the heart  
 most of all;  
 three times since he left  
 she's sent him new clothes.  
 Even worse,  
 her spring dreams

have nothing to go on;  
 in her dreams  
 he says he'll come back,  
 and yet  
 he doesn't return.

#### BACK FROM A DREAM

Back from a dream,  
 I hear no human voices.  
 The tall trees  
 whisper sadly;  
 it seems there is a breeze.  
 Arising alone,  
 I circle the pond  
 over and over again.  
 The myriad mountains  
 lift up the snow  
 into the light of the moon.

#### MOON ON THE BORDER MOUNTAINS

The moon rises from the eastern sea  
 shining coolly  
 on the pass to the West.  
 Men on the march  
 far from home  
 dream of return in the moonlight.  
 And there are dreams in the bedrooms  
 of traveling the way to the West;  
 but they're not aware of each other  
 going along the road.  
 Deep their longings,  
 each have weakened and aged.  
 Foreign pipes play,  
 so bitterly sad;  
 what can be done  
 about this moon  
 on the border mountains?  
 Through the night



tears well forth,  
tears like golden waves.

### SLEEPING IN THE CLOUDS

A wayfarer hidden in the mountains,  
My nature is lazy and crude.  
Should the sky overturn  
and the earth somersault  
I would not mind at all.  
Sitting on hay, clothed in hemp,  
I live in a mountain fastness.  
This one room reed house  
is always filled with clouds.  
I like the trail of the clouds,  
even as they quietly disperse.  
Here I pledge  
to be a companion of the clouds.  
All day long I lie in the clouds,  
forgetting about the time.  
Returning from dreams  
I find the sun shining warm  
on my bed of clouds.  
Mindless of this and that,  
my body is relaxed;  
so I go along with ever more  
affection for the clouds.  
Another year I'll pass away  
and the clouds alone will remain;  
and the clouds will be sorry  
my life was so short.

### ENJOYMENT

Seventy-seven years old,  
I'm an old man  
hidden in the mountains.  
Seeing and hearing exhausted,  
I'm as though blind and deaf.  
Just dwelling by the mountains and rivers,

I've understood the vanity  
of ego and personality.  
With an iron mind  
and a stone gut,  
I rest peacefully in the eventide,  
no worse off  
than men of authority.  
This is really hard to tell  
to people of the time;  
only the moon  
in the high sky alone  
clearly understands.

### THE THIRD NIGHT'S MOON

The new moon's like a moth eyebrow;  
its distant beauty lasts but a while.  
Though lacking in the shining light,  
the outline of the disc remains.  
On the fifteenth it will be full,  
but how can we know  
from day to day?  
Human life is also like this;  
destitution and success  
are truly hard to predict.

### A WANDERING WIZARD

I dislike the narrowness  
of the human world;  
I long to be a comrade  
of the ancient wizards.  
In silence I merge  
with the open void,  
communing on familiar terms.  
Of a morning I often travel  
into the purest heaven;  
at night I always rest  
in the grove and garden.  
Already outside

of heaven and earth,  
 In a whirl I float  
 lightly aloft.

### FEELINGS ON A JOURNEY

The north wind blows  
 in a desolate wood  
 noisily rousing  
 a frigid sound.  
 The traveler  
 hearing it in his ears  
 suffers yet more  
 from loneliness.  
 Relatives and friends  
 nowhere in sight,  
 strangers' homelands  
 just beget burdens.  
 Even foxes, when they die,  
 lay their heads on their mounds;  
 but what can be done  
 on a journey  
 that lasts throughout a lifetime?

### MY SIXTIETH YEAR

Already sixty,  
 so much I've been through.  
 Wealth and rank  
 are like floating clouds;  
 changing and disappearing,  
 unworthy of regard.  
 My body's like a pine  
 on a winter ridge,  
 standing alone  
 through the cold.  
 My mind is like the water  
 in an ancient well,  
 thoroughly unruffled  
 all the way to the depths.

My path is the ancient way,  
 especially hard  
 in the present day.  
 Not easily discerned  
 are right and wrong;  
 I sigh and sigh,  
 sigh and sigh.

### CONCEALING MY TRACKS

Disdaining the wind and waves  
 on the rivers and lakes,  
 I work on deep concealment  
 in the mountains and valleys.  
 At my rustic gate  
 no comings and goings at all;  
 by myself I view  
 the morning and evening lights.  
 When the sun comes out  
 the mist and fog dissolve;  
 when the birds fly off  
 the pine and bamboo are quiet.  
 In a moment, the sun  
 declines to the west;  
 The remaining glow  
 lingers on the high ridge.  
 This short life too  
 is like a stopover;  
 who in the world  
 can take note of that?  
 I would learn from those  
 who finally left the realm of dust.

### ROAMING FREE

The fun of roaming free  
 is endless, hard to exhaust.  
 When tired I sit on a mossy bank,  
 unaware of the cold sun falling  
 in my love for the cool

of the breeze in the pines.  
 Deer descend  
 to drink of the valley streams;  
 monkeys arrive  
 to pick of the mountain fruits.  
 What I originally valued  
 were freedom and quietude;  
 why should I require  
 that people know of me?

#### ON AWAKENING FROM A DREAM

A hundred years  
 are like a long dream;  
 and while in the dream,  
 such rushing around!  
 After awakening we realize  
 that it had been a dream,  
 but never has it been known  
 in the dream's own time.  
 My life now awakened,  
 I don't remember the dream time.  
 There is no end of people  
 still living in dreams,  
 in the dim and the darkness,  
 pitiful, sad indeed.

#### MY MIND

My mind is quiet, chaste,  
 an endowment from heaven:  
 To drive it into the cage of the world  
 would violate its nature.  
 The people I meet  
 are not of my kind;  
 when I want to talk to them  
 my mouth keeps silent.  
 Worldly ways have many traps;  
 every step is full of worry.  
 Now I've come back to the forest;



lying down at night, I finally rest in peace.  
 Mountain herbs can be eaten,  
 and clear springs are good drinking.  
 Plain cloth clothes fit me best;  
 I don't want ornate brocade.  
 this strategy bodes well;  
 the rest of my life needs no plan.

#### ADMONITION ON NEGLECTING MIND

If you nurture the body  
 but neglect the mind,  
 you are like a tree full of termites,  
 having the outward appearance  
 but empty inside.  
 Those who know  
 are fearful of this.  
 An emaciated body  
 may be fattened,  
 but a ravaged mind  
 cannot be enlivened.  
 People of yore had a proverb:  
 Don't let the root go first.

#### NURSING SICKNESS

All alone,  
 without companions,  
 my house is also empty.  
 Worn out,  
 like a dead stump,  
 I rest to nurse my health.  
 When morning comes  
 I open the door;  
 fallen leaves  
 fill the mossy pathway—  
 so swiftly  
 does time flow by.  
 How can a vulnerable body  
 keep pace in a race?

Whistling in the hollows  
 rises in the tall forest,  
 helping me  
 with my drawn-out song.

## MY LIFE

My life,  
 in youth and full bloom,  
 was spent on the scriptural teachings  
 with all of my might.  
 One mind merges myriad objects,  
 and I got it to work well enough.  
 In old age,  
 I'm more easygoing,  
 following my pleasure  
 in mountains and waters.  
 Now it's become a spontaneous game  
 with no further contest,  
 winning and losing no more.

## HOW LONG CAN A HUMAN LIFE GO ON?

How long can a human life last?  
 A hundred years,  
 thirty thousand days.  
 Half is spent in sleep,  
 and the rest  
 is hardly assured.  
 The regalia of social ceremony  
 are prison articles, all.  
 Greedy men liking them  
 clearly have no way out.  
 Rich socialites  
 suffer constant stress,  
 the poor and humble  
 are always free.  
 That is why ancient sages  
 were not constrained  
 by emperors and kings.

## ROASTING MY BACK

The old body  
can't take the cold;  
the heart just likes  
winter sun.  
Roasting my back  
at the reed door,  
the warmth pervades  
the flesh and bone.  
I think to myself,  
in the human world  
this pleasure ranks  
as number one.  
Though they may say  
that fur is warm,  
the effect can't compare  
with this.  
No one comes  
to my mountain abode;  
sitting alone,  
I snatch a flea.

## LYING IN THE FOREST

Lying in the forest  
long years and months  
my free heart  
is quite alone and clear.  
In the quiet  
I watch all creation,  
and through it  
I sense premonitions.  
Wood is cut  
for its lumber,  
tallow is burned  
for its light.  
Beasts are penned  
for cleverness and nimbleness,

birds are caged  
 for the music of their song.  
 People who boast  
 of being knowing thinkers  
 fetter themselves  
 hurting spirit and body too.  
 Even if their achievements are honored,  
 they may be boiled in the pot.  
 It has always been thus  
 now and of old,  
 but when you remember  
 it's still a shock.  
 Worldly exploitation  
 always brings trouble;  
 when abandoned by your time,  
 then you can live to the full.  
 That is why ancient purists  
 finally spent their evenings  
 in a state of serenity.  
 Luckily I'm an oaf and a dunce;  
 maybe there's hope  
 of living the rest of my years.

### SITTING AT DAWN

Dream broken,  
 can't get back to sleep;  
 so I sit in my hut  
 in the clear early dawn.  
 On another mountain  
 the bell has tolled;  
 on a lone tree  
 the first singing birds.  
 All of my limbs  
 are tuned and limber,  
 and all of my states  
 are deeply profound.  
 Before I've finished writing a letter,  
 morning light shoots

through the forest branches.  
Trusting my nature,  
there's nothing outside I seek.  
Once quiet,  
ten thousand entanglements end;  
why work for people in the dust,  
a hundred years of useless unrest?

## MY BODY

Man of the east and west,  
south and north,  
in deepest silence  
I live in the crags and ravines.  
As I decline with the years,  
my sideburns congeal with frost.  
Long on a journey,  
I've lost the strings of my sleeves.  
Why need think of fine meat  
when no one can fill up again  
on plants in the wild.  
But I still worry  
about having my body;  
only when the body dies  
is there no trouble at all.  
Changing fashions  
is not a fine walk;  
with every step  
I take to the hills.  
No dust or dirt  
in the realm of my eye,  
No right or wrong  
in the root of my ear.  
I fill my gut  
with seeds and fruit,  
cover my body  
with clothing of cloud and mist.  
Why should I think of my poverty?  
My wishes are all satisfied.



## LIVING IN THE MOUNTAINS

Since becoming a mountain dweller  
 I'm at peace and relaxed,  
 even in dreams and asleep.  
 I would say the turtle's withdrawal  
 of head, tail, and four limbs  
 is one hundred percent more effective  
 than the rabbit's triple burrows.  
 Within essence, just one reality;  
 outside the body, no extra thing.  
 Physical death will signal the end;  
 who can I ask to bury the bones?

## TRACKLESSNESS

Trackless in the crags and peaks  
 nurturing the real elemental,  
 at night I eat chrysanthemum flowers  
 from the bamboo fence;  
 in the morning I drink dew  
 from magnolia trees.  
 The mystic road  
 is really worth taking;  
 how is temporal glory  
 a good enough aspiration?  
 Throughout all time,  
 men of repute  
 just pile up  
 down in the graves.

## AGING AND ILLNESS

Aging and illness  
 are painful, no fun;  
 I spend all day long  
 flat on my back.  
 A little walk in the eastern garden  
 saddens my heart even more:  
 The orchids

are totally gone,  
 the wild grasses  
 are shooting up.  
 I have no strength to weed;  
 heaving a sigh,  
 I go back  
 into my lowly shack.

### CINNAMON FEELINGS

The cinnamon's not of a kind  
 with the peach or with the plum;  
 only when the dew is cold  
 do its flowers finally burst open.  
 Its fragrant branches can be taken  
 to give an appreciated guest;  
 but the road is far  
 and no one can come—  
 I go back and forth  
 all day and all night.  
 When the sadness of separating  
 is felt through things,  
 a thousand miles  
 isn't really apart.

### REMOTE DWELLING

I.

Dwelling remotely in empty freedom  
 quite suits someone of tranquil nature.  
 Outside the gate,  
 no dust of passersby;  
 fallen leaves  
 fill the untended path.  
 As the glow of the sun  
 droops to the West,  
 the last reflections linger  
 on the eastern ridge.  
 Lighting some incense, I read

Buddhist scripture,  
only letting mountain ghosts listen.

2.

Glory doesn't enter my dreams,  
and so I take leave  
of worry and blame.  
Living remotely  
these thirty years,  
I've made the acquaintance  
of all the monkeys and birds.  
The bright sun  
has long known my heart;  
the solitary cloud  
never had any tracks.  
The ten-foot room  
is always silent;  
burning incense  
I pass the night.

## NIGHT BIRDS CALLING

The roof and trees  
of the house to the east  
are level with the clouds;  
every night some birds  
come to roost in there.  
They sadden to death  
the soldier's wife  
in the window there;  
the government people  
have sent the men  
to fight up in the north—  
for three years  
he hasn't come back;  
she's been keeping  
an empty bedroom.  
The birds cry, unceasing,  
the woman weeps even more.

The trails of her tears  
are like rain  
wetting her blouse and skirt.

### SONG OF SILKGROWING WOMEN

For the folk of Wu  
the end of the spring  
is just when the silkworms  
are hungry after three sleeps.  
When the houses are poor,  
no money for mulberry  
to feed to the worms,  
nothing can be done  
when the starving grubs  
cannot make their thread.  
Wives and mothers-in-law  
talk to each other,  
baskets in hand:  
"Who knows the pain  
in our hearts?"  
When mother-in-law was twenty,  
she had no wedding dress;  
the men in office raising taxes  
were roaring like tigers.  
When there is no one  
on whom to rely,  
rely on mother-in-law  
and you may yet relax;  
but if you have no thread to pay taxes,  
if will wreck your home.  
Neighbors gone bankrupt  
have already drifted away;  
the broken fences  
and abandoned wells  
are sad to a passerby.

### LISTENING TO WHAT AN OLD PEASANT SAYS

A decrepit old man lay unwell  
in a curl of a mountain

when elder Shen from the village east  
 came along, passing by.  
 First he spoke of hunger this year,  
 with nothing to stave off the pangs.  
 Next he told of the complexity  
 and the cruelty  
 of the government of the day.  
 Of the many things he mentioned,  
 every one hit home,  
 complete with the roots  
 and their ramifications;  
 none of it was false.  
 For generations the farmers  
 have worked in the fields;  
 how could they know anything else?  
 The more the way of the world changes  
 the more superficial the customs;  
 there is no more idea of mutual refinement.  
 They used all their cash to raise silkworms  
 without getting any cocoons;  
 they've worn themselves out  
 at the plow and the hoe  
 but the fields are empty of grain.  
 A thousand open sores,  
 a hundred holes in their clothes,  
 truly hard to mend.  
 Next month men will come  
 collecting taxes:  
 The poor lack cash  
 to prepare a reception,  
 so they sell the goose  
 and the gander they've raised.  
 Yesterday the county official  
 was chasing the people down again;  
 they're just like sparrows  
 run afoul of a net.  
 Children and women crying  
 are not paid any mind;  
 their hearts are like tangled threads,



with many a loose end.  
 The neighbor to the west,  
 the widow woman,  
 is even more worrisome yet;  
 she is like a rotting tree,  
 without a single branch left.  
 Burnt by their hunger and cold,  
 they have no sense of life;  
 mothers and children are drawn  
 to drown themselves in the river.  
 Every statement emerged  
 from a hurting gut;  
 when he had finished talking,  
 snivel and tears both flowed.  
 This is how full of hardship  
 the life of the people can be.

### RACING HORSES

Government agents with fast horses  
 wearing gold threaded clothes  
 eat the people's tallow and blood,  
 growing fat as pots.  
 The men in the fields  
 work at the plow  
 but yet they starve to death;  
 and here you drunkards and gluttons are,  
 forgetting the famine this year.  
 Nature looks on all the people  
 as on a single child;  
 how can it be unfair as this?  
 If human groups overwhelm Nature,  
 still don't be surprised;  
 if Nature should determine the time,  
 it would level itself.

### GOING HOME IN A DREAM

So many years so far from home;  
 does the life of toil have an end?

Living as a guest, never comfortable,  
 my sideburns are already grey.  
 The river wind  
 sweeping the leaves  
 blows hard;  
 the mountain moon  
 seeping in  
 starts its decline.  
 I think of returning,  
 still haven't got back;  
 but a clear dream takes me  
 into the haze and the mist.

### BORDERLAND THOUGHTS

The youths on distant campaigns  
 already have thinning hair.  
 Who rewards their achievements  
 in a hundred battles?  
 No news arrives  
 from the empty bedrooms;  
 their homelands have become  
 realms of dreams for them.  
 The moon on the border  
 is the go-between of sorrow;  
 as they hear the song of foreign pipes,  
 the cold sound is even sadder.

### NIGHT ON A JOURNEY

I.  
 The autumn nights  
 seem longest of the year,  
 the inns more desolate  
 and colder.  
 The lamp dim,  
 a rat comes from its hole;  
 the weather cold,  
 bugs huddle in the bed.

My journey has gone on  
 for months and years on end;  
 it's easy to sorrow and grieve  
 over advancing age.  
 Lucky to have a rustic hearth,  
 why did I leave my home?

2.

For a separated man  
 the night is too long;  
 rising alone,  
 he sits  
 on the empty bed.  
 Bitter the rain  
 that delays news of home;  
 autumn clouds  
 cut off the old village.  
 The candle, dying,  
 flames up once more;  
 the cinnamons, wet,  
 make no aroma.  
 If he could succeed  
 in his hopes to return,  
 he'd live at peace  
 in the upper room.

## DISTANT WANDERING

Stopping over in the woods,  
 I find no shack not tumbledown;  
 traveling by boat,  
 I avoid the dangerous shores.  
 Love have I been a traveler,  
 guest of different lands;  
 manners ephemeral as they are,  
 steady relations are hard.  
 With the grasses growing long,  
 the sadness of spring goes on;  
 when the frost creeps in,

dreams at dawn are gone.  
 When suddenly I hear a stirring  
 in the corners of the town,  
 how can my thoughts of returning  
 ever be pacified?

### RAINY NIGHT

My body's like the plants on the water,  
 even more vulnerable now that I'm old.  
 I'm off so far away,  
 who will ever come here?  
 Dreaming on an empty bed,  
 I wake in solitude.  
 The flashing clouds grow violet  
 with a pair of thunderbolts;  
 The lone lamp's green in the rain  
 on a moonless night.  
 With a sigh of lament  
 a long song bursts forth;  
 the sound of the singing  
 goes into the dark.

### TRAVEL CONDITIONS

When the sun goes down,  
 I take refuge in a village inn,  
 feeling the misery  
 of being on the road.  
 The land is wasted here,  
 gangs of brigands have shown up;  
 the citadel is so far away  
 you cannot hear the bells.  
 Not many days  
 are left in the year;  
 I think of my village,  
 how far the way there.  
 Listening to the cock crow  
 I bundle up in my clothes;  
 a frosty moon accompanies  
 my early morning march.

## FREE PEOPLE

The universe has free people  
 whom nothing whatever concerns.  
 Controlling their thoughts,  
 they stop all illusions  
 to find one whole reality.  
 Having forgotten all about glory,  
 how could they worry about disgrace?  
 Since they have no riches at all,  
 how could they dislike poverty?  
 Although you may say  
 the green mountains are fine,  
 Still know they are objects outside.

## WEST WIND

The west wind's in the falling leaves,  
 a lone traveler has extra leisure.  
 The cold waters all  
 have returned to their holes;  
 the autumn clouds  
 haven't left the hills.  
 A crown bird takes off,  
 overturning dry grasses;  
 a raven comes back,  
 wearing the evening sun.  
 Who shares this  
 uncanny enjoyment?  
 the brushwood gate  
 just closes itself.

SITTING IN THE CLARITY THE REST OF THE  
NIGHT

Before the night is even through,  
 I rise and sit,  
 watching fireflies.  
 The night air clear as water,  
 the meditating mind



is light as a reed.  
 The moon outlines  
 trees on the western ridge;  
 a bell arouses  
 homes up above.  
 There may be those in the dark  
 who know just how fine  
 is what I have found.

## TRUE PLEASURE

1.

Everyone has his pleasure,  
 but only my pleasure is real.  
 Once quiet,  
 myriad thoughts disappear;  
 not a mote of dust  
 in the empty house.  
 Snow cleans the apricots' bones,  
 mist feeds the bamboo's spirit.  
 Let bridle and rope  
 reach far as they may,  
 they cannot tie up  
 this untrammelled body.

2.

Another year about to end  
 in my empty mountain abode:  
 rivers and clouds,  
 their trails indistinct;  
 pines and cedars,  
 their natures the same.  
 I arise from my nap  
 to find the taro roots done,  
 as the incense fades out,  
 I finish a scripture.  
 Who knows that real pleasure  
 lies within stillness and silence.

## A RECONDITE PLACE

In this recondite place  
 there is no bother or clamor.  
 White clouds always at the gate,  
 a loud song stirs the canyon.  
 The realm of this space  
 is beyond the universe.  
 I wash my eyes in sweet-flag water,  
 lighten my body with the root  
 of the matrimony vine.  
 In freedom there is supreme delight  
 that's hard to tell of to worldlings.

## STAYING IN THE COUNTRY

Staying in a country place,  
 the days are full of leisure;  
 leaning on my briar cane,  
 I go where my legs take me.  
 On the wild plain  
 a line of winter ducks;  
 in hidden villages  
 the sounds of chickens at noon.  
 Everywhere are mysterious things;  
 free people don't linger on feelings.  
 By the time I get back,  
 the new moon is up,  
 shining on me  
 going into my hut.

## FARMERS

The farmers have had a good year;  
 village to village they laugh with joy.  
 Barley and wheat  
 spread the fields with yellow,  
 mulberry and hemp  
 shade the gates with green.  
 The nets are catching

catfish and carp;  
 the pens are full  
 of chickens and pigs.  
 At the ancient shrines  
 under tall trees  
 drums and flutes play  
 to welcome the spirits.

### THE ROAD OF THE WORLD

The road of the world  
 has always been hard;  
 being remote  
 stops problems galore.  
 The Way is won  
 by means of no desire;  
 mountains don't mind  
 if people gaze.  
 The cold flow is shallow  
 along the stony bank;  
 the burning still goes on  
 far off in the new fields.  
 I don't mind a lack of liveliness;  
 the old fellow knows in himself  
 how to be at peace.

### THE SPAN OF HUMAN LIFE

A human life  
 may last a hundred years,  
 or thirty thousand days;  
 but who has ever lived the full  
 hundred years to date?  
 Go lightly along with the flow,  
 and there's some enjoyment in that;  
 those in continuous toil  
 are all so pitiful.  
 Riches and rank only add  
 burdens outside the body;  
 the stinking drunk will overturn

the cups in the palms of their hands.  
 In the end all alike die;  
 before they're yet dead  
 they sure cause some laughs.

#### WARNING ON EXTRAVAGANCE

To the sagely kings of high antiquity  
 all that was of value  
 was their simplicity.  
 After those times passed away,  
 the immoderate came to hold sway.  
 Once the source had been opened,  
 it went on persistently;  
 from Ch'in and Han  
 through Ch'en and Sui  
 fewer and fewer knew.  
 They depleted resources  
 and ravaged the people;  
 many could not flourish long.  
 So we know that indulgence  
 is hated by Nature and Man.  
 Gold and jade cannot clothe us,  
 Brocade and embroidery cannot feed us:  
 the value's in farming and textiles,  
 while fancy luxury crafts  
 are parasites of the people.

*The Ch'in dynasty (246–206 B.C.E.) unified and expanded China by force; it soon fell to internal rebellion. The Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–219 C.E.) expanded the empire and constructed an elaborate educational system to rationalize despotism. Later the Han empire contracted and eventually dissolved, through conflict with native peoples of colonized areas as well as corruption and discontent in the homelands. Between Han and Ch'en there were numerous kingdoms and dynasties ruling various parts of the old Han Chinese empire. The Ch'en dynasty (557–588) were the last of a series of short dynasties set up by warlords in southern China in the fifth and sixth centuries; it was conquered by the Sui dynasty (589–618),*

*which then reunified north and south China with victories over the powerful Turanian and Tungusic peoples domineering the north.*

### NOT SLEEPING ON A QUIET NIGHT

It's a quiet night,  
 but I'm not getting to sleep.  
 The autumn air is specially clear:  
 frost and dew paint wild growth in the yard,  
 falling leaves bring down twigs and sticks.  
 The west wind is noisier yet;  
 myriad openings hit the same note.  
 Even the crickets feel sad,  
 chirping under the floor.  
 I go out and take in the view;  
 the blue sky is sewn with stars:  
 constellations crisscross the sky,  
 the Pole Star is now at an angle.  
 A swan in flight comes from the north  
 far far away, fatigued by the long expedition.  
 On the way it lost its mate;  
 how lonely its solitary reflection!  
 Moved by creatures, I remember someone afar;  
 I wander back and forth, uneasy in mind.  
 My heartbreak cannot be told;  
 Silently, useless anguish fills me.

### AN ABANDONED TOMB

Wild grasses engulf  
 the tumbledown fence;  
 I wonder whose tomb this is?  
 Cattle and sheep  
 graze its high mound,  
 foxes and rabbits  
 inhabit its empty spaces.  
 For a traveler,  
 this is a heartbreaking sight;  
 where are the children  
 and the children's children?



The sighing autumn wind  
 arouses a breeze of sadness,  
 a lonely stirring  
 in the white willow trees.

### NIGHT ON A JOURNEY

How still and silent  
 the travelers' inn.  
 The bright moon  
 is at every window and door.  
 The clear sky is draped  
 with arrays of stars;  
 cool dew wets  
 the bush around the lodge.  
 With feelings in my chest  
 I can't fall asleep:  
 I get up and sit  
 listening  
 to the clock tick.  
 I listen, then stop,  
 then listen again.  
 I listen all the way through  
 the third, fourth,  
 fifth watch.

### WAKING FROM A DREAM

How white the frosty moon,  
 the cold wind every intenser.  
 The weather moves tiny insects,  
 who cry so sadly all night.  
 How could a wandering child  
 not think of home at this time?  
 Thoughts long continued  
 turned into a dream  
 gone far away  
 west of Huang-t'ang.  
 This dream was tiring indeed,  
 crossing mountains and valleys

again and again.  
 Clearly I saw my close friends,  
 laughing and talking  
 and calling me' back.  
 Waking up, I find  
 I'm still on a journey,  
 homeland distant,  
 people estranged.  
 Evanescent life is like a dream;  
 no need to compare how long it may last.

### ELEGY OF A SOLDIER'S WIFE

Lichen spreads over cedar and pine;  
 they're always found together.  
 When she tied up her hair to be his bride,  
 they pledged to grow old together.  
 Now he's defending the border forts,  
 the poor wife with no means of coming alone.  
 On the march, he's further away each day;  
 when, if ever, is he to return?  
 The only hope is in honorable service  
 brought to the notice of rulers above;  
 that he was loyal and always constant,  
 and the heart of his wife never changed.

### ANCIENT IDEAS

#### I.

It's hard to talk about anything  
 with the average person today;  
 the ancient mind is worrying  
 and troubled constantly.  
 The ancient Way was to value  
 the ordinary and easy;  
 people of today esteem  
 the mechanically clever.  
 Liking the old  
 but living today,

at every meal  
 I can't eat my fill.  
 Coming and going  
 with distaste and doubt,  
 all I know  
 is I love the sanderlings.

2.

The rushing water flows toward the east,  
 the white sun shifting sets in the west.  
 Through the vast reaches of sky and earth,  
 how fleeting the poles of the cycle.  
 They press urgently on the living,  
 turning their dark hair to white.  
 The ignorant don't know themselves,  
 yet are uneasy all the way long.  
 When desire for gain sinks this body,  
 the basis is already crippled.  
 What compares to repairing true nature  
 to strengthen one's spiritual bones?

3.

How high the apricot tree,  
 flowering only in snowtime;  
 it keeps its own wintry nature,  
 won't follow the flowers of spring.  
 A recluse who happened to see it  
 transplanted it on the shore  
 of the river through the valley.  
 Its skinny form has no positive beauty,  
 its clear fragrance is void of lasciviousness.  
 It is free and serene like the recluse,  
 a joy to the recluse heart;  
 no woodcutters or herders invade  
 to leave the recluse regret.

4.

The ancient Way of true immortals  
 is peaceful aloofness, uncontrived;

by this they strengthen the spiritual root  
 so they might make the longest journey.  
 The August Emperor of Ch'in  
 and the Martial Lord of Han  
 indulged in desires  
 unmindful of fatigue;  
 once they had taken command of China,  
 they wanted to dominate other peoples too.  
 Their natures were callous, perverse;  
 neither were the stuff of immortals.  
 The mirror of heaven is always clear;  
 how can it be fooled by brazen liars?  
 Those who don't look into their own hearts  
 wrongly wish for undeserved gain.  
 Their hopes end up unfulfilled,  
 just a laughingstock for posterity.

*The First Emperor of Ch'in and the Martial Emperor of Han were imperialists of China who ruled more than 2,000 years ago. Both of them were interested in the possibility that the myth of immortality might be true, and patronized certain forms of Taoism in pursuit of this interest. They were notoriously unsuccessful in their quest, and Taoist writers heap scorn on them for being greedy and possessive in their attitude toward everything, even the Tao.*

## SONG OF NATURAL HAPPINESS

The happiness of birds is in remote forests;  
 the happiness of fish is in remote ponds.  
 The happiness of humans is in remote living;  
 not being remote always brings trouble.  
 My abode is now remote,  
 a shack in the grasses and trees.  
 Happiness comes of itself,  
 a happiness hard to tell.  
 If you ask me what my happiness is,  
 all of it's gotten from nature.  
 Supreme happiness is nature's to grant;  
 though we don't know why, it is so.

Happy in the mornings,  
 happy in the evenings,  
 this happiness truly complete,  
 I sing the song  
 of natural happiness;  
 let the audience not make noise.

### FEELING THE SEASON

The rich earth produces  
 mulberry and grain  
 for silk to clothe the people  
 and cereal to feed them.  
 In ancient times one ninth was tax,  
 suiting both public and private:  
 nowadays is not like of old,  
 with cruel campaigns  
 ever multiplying.  
 Multiplying on and on,  
 conscription calls come  
 regardless of season.  
 Governments are made  
 to take care of the people;  
 why instead do they hurt them?  
 The reason the people are ailing  
 and no one can give support  
 is all because of the rulers' demands  
 that they must try to meet.  
 Those who weave are always cold,  
 those who plow are hungry.  
 No chickens or dogs remain  
 in the empty villages;  
 many are the ruined houses  
 abandoned by refugees.  
 A greybeard spoke to me,  
 and what he said was like this.  
 An old man makes it a song of sadness;  
 let those who hear it think.

### NIGHT THOUGHTS

Quiet I sit,  
 no neighbors around,



watching the mountains,  
 awaiting the moon.  
 The heat wave's gone by the pond,  
 a cool breeze starts in the bamboo.  
 A bat flies at the window,  
 a lone firefly disappears into the grass.  
 My mind has an inspiration,  
 but only a recluse would know.

#### WALKING IN THE MOONLIGHT ON A HOT NIGHT

Dreading the heat,  
 I sleep no more;  
 on the empty stairs  
 I walk the cool moonlight.  
 The icy disk is flawless,  
 so bright you can see a hair;  
 late night clears the liver and lungs  
 like drinking most pristine snow.  
 It's like I'm about to change  
 to a flying mountain immortal  
 mounted on a phoenix soaring  
 into the silent void.

#### FEELINGS ON AN AUTUMN NIGHT

In the autumn mountains  
 there are no people at night;  
 the insects are chirping  
 at the roots of the grasses.  
 The bright moon shines  
 on the tall forest;  
 through the empty window  
 wind and dew come in.  
 I'm over forty now,  
 and gotten nothing done;  
 at a crossroads  
 east to west  
 I'm busy working  
 all year long.  
 Both parents are dead

since years ago,  
their graves long capped and finished.  
My brothers care also impoverished  
and cannot afford to give.  
Turning my head I think  
of the old garden;  
clouds of sadness fill  
the plains and marshes.  
Of all the friends I've known,  
hundreds, or a thousand,  
not even then of them  
still remain alive.  
I notice my withered form;  
what can be done  
for the rush  
of this short scenario?  
All night long  
I cannot sleep.  
Rising and sitting,  
I think a thousand thoughts.  
Perfected people can forget  
even their emotions;  
I try to emulate them,  
but how can I succeed?  
Only by observing  
the state where there is no birth  
can I remove these teardrops  
from the wet sleeves of my robe.

### FEELING UPLIFT

Solitary, I'm always poor,  
ever traveling far and wide.  
The road of my journey is endless,  
aging lessens my strength.  
A no-account  
abandoned by most,  
my face is changed  
by wind and frost.

Returning to the travelers' inn  
 I lean on my staff and sigh;  
 a single word cannot be cooked,  
 ten thousand scrolls  
 are a useless collection;  
 better to be an old peasant  
 who eats from the fruits of his labor.  
 Individual and society  
 are like ants turning a millstone;  
 time goes by like a young horse  
 galloping past a crack in the door.  
 What have I done in all my life?  
 My hair has gone white for naught.  
 Heaven and earth are vast,  
 hard to rely upon;  
 but when it comes to immortal wings,  
 how could they actually fit?  
 I wish to live remote,  
 my nest a single branch,  
 hoping thereby to avoid  
 the range of bullet shot.

### FEELING UPLIFTED ON THE ROAD

Far, far, I walk a long road;  
 the western sun lights up the wheat.  
 Turning my head I gaze  
 on the mountains of the border pass;  
 I wonder where my homeland lies?  
 As autumn wind blows in the oak wood,  
 I cannot restrain my anxious thoughts.  
 Unable to see those dear to me,  
 I'm pensive at dusk, but in vain.  
 Just when I felt pride  
 in my handsome youth,  
 I'd suddenly become  
 an ugly old man.  
 How long can a life last,  
 especially if not always guarded?

Those who remain grow less day by day,  
 while those who have gone are everyday more.  
 Even if you prosper in glory,  
 there is no relying on that;  
 the song of the dew on the grass  
 is the evanescence of life.

#### THOUGHTS ON A JOURNEY AT YEAR'S END

Endless are the branching byways,  
 while the years and months slip away.  
 The north wind wields its frigid force  
 on the traveler who has no quilt.  
 This life is pathetic indeed,  
 half spent in empty sorrow.  
 Sympathizers all passed away,  
 there's nowhere to hide in the moonlight.  
 Separated  
 from family and friends,  
 the grief of parting  
 wells up day and night.

#### THE WAY OF THE WORLD

The way of the world  
 is full of wind and waves;  
 the life of the everyday  
 has a final end.  
 East and west I drift  
 in bitterness and pain;  
 the color of my hair  
 is not as it was before.  
 The dancing bird longs  
 for a safe haven;  
 the aging horse wishes  
 for its old stable.  
 All kinds of beings  
 may not be the same,  
 but for each there is

a suitable fit.  
 Riches and rank  
 are but happenstance;  
 why should we keep them  
 in our craw?

## EXHILARATION FROM A STROLL

Sitting still,  
 my thoughts are cramped;  
 after a while  
 I get up again  
 to take a stroll.  
 Hiking up my pants,  
 I cross a shallow current;  
 following the clouds,  
 I climb a high hill.  
 It's now the midsummer month:  
 magnificent trees luxurious green,  
 myriad birds sing in concert,  
 warbling together ceaselessly.  
 This feels more like  
 what I inwardly wish;  
 soon I forget  
 a hundred worries.  
 Loosening my belt  
 I sit on a boulder;  
 washing my feet  
 I gaze at the flow  
 in its endless stream.  
 Mind empty,  
 not grasping at all,  
 body at ease,  
 now I am free.  
 Here is a message for those  
 who seek to nurture life;  
 this is the point to which  
 all alike return.



## UNCRAMPED

Cramp yourself  
 and you'll be constrained;  
 cramp your will  
 and you'll be inhumane.  
 Constraint is shame for the self,  
 inhumanity blocks the Way.  
 Unshamed in yourself and your will,  
 near to pure virtue you draw;  
 follow your nature this way,  
 and you are one who is free  
 everywhere in the universe.

## DAWN

The air is clearest at dawn,  
 and the view also reaches afar.  
 When the sun starts to rise  
 on the Eastern Deep,  
 it is the high peaks  
 that catch the first glow.  
 Feeling the harmony,  
 I start to sing:  
 my voice is not great,  
 but no need hitting the notes;  
 for this is itself  
 the mountains' own tune.

THE SUN ON THE FOREST AT DAWN MELTS THE  
 FROST ON THE LEAVES, WHICH DRIPS LIKE  
 FALLING TEARS

Dry leaves  
 are especially pitiful:  
 the cold wind  
 blows hard on you,  
 and the sky  
 rains chilling frost.  
 I am afraid

you cannot sustain yourselves;  
 Falling, you return  
 to the thickets of grass.  
 Noticing how late it is,  
 I'm overtaken with sighs.  
 Morning sun brings signs  
 of nature's process,  
 increasing the weeping  
 for you.

### HAPPINESS IN THE MORNING

Happy in the morning,  
 I open my cottage door;  
 A clear breeze blowing  
 comes straight in.  
 The first sun  
 lights the leafy trees;  
 the shadows it casts  
 are crystal clear.  
 Serene,  
 in accord with my heart,  
 Everything merges  
 in one harmony.  
 Gain and loss  
 are not my concern;  
 this way is enough  
 to the end of my days.

### SITTING ALONE AT THE EDGE OF THE CLOUDS

I sit on a boulder  
 at the edge of the clouds:  
 far into the distance  
 the rain falls, mindless.  
 The waves stilled,  
 white seagulls alight;  
 the mountains cold,  
 yellow leaves deepen.  
 Where does the hermit live?

The noon bell  
brings a clear sound.  
As the sun sets,  
I find I cannot leave;  
the clustered peaks are casting  
shadows of the night.

## HUMAN LIFE

Human life,  
a hundred years,  
is nothing but  
a stop on a journey.  
Youth and vigor  
cannot be kept;  
gradually you realize  
decline and age encroach.  
Even if you succeed  
in accomplishing great works,  
who can escape  
enslavement to form?  
With a drawn-out song  
I head on back  
to boil white stones  
in the heart of the mountains.

## RETURNING AT NIGHT

I .

The weather unusually clear and mild,  
I've hiked a lot in the mountains.  
Following the streams  
picking aromatic parsley,  
piercing the clouds  
to get fragrant late tea,  
my hidden feelings  
relax day by day,  
while clamor and dust  
go right away.

Riding the moon  
I return to my hut,  
not even washing these tired feet.

2.

All my life I've eaten the food  
of pure livelihood alone.  
With a begging bowl I head  
into the human realm.  
In the dark of the night  
I return to my hut;  
the moon risen,  
the mountains grow quiet:  
everywhere I hear  
the sound of springs;  
with every step I walk  
on the shadows of pines.  
Washing my feet,  
I meditate in peace;  
steeped in the clouds,  
the stone bench is cold.

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**THOMAS CLEARY** holds a Ph.D. in East Asian Languages and Civilizations from Harvard University. He is the translator of over fifty volumes of Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian, and Islamic texts from Sanskrit, Chinese, Japanese, Pali, and Arabic.

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