

The background of the entire image is a photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is a bright, glowing orb positioned just above the horizon, casting a long, shimmering reflection across the water. The sky is a gradient of colors, from a pale yellow near the sun to a soft blue at the top. The ocean in the foreground shows dark, rolling waves with white foam, reflecting the warm light of the setting sun.

# Treasury of the Eye of True Teaching

volume I

Thomas Cleary

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Volume I

Translated by Thomas Cleary

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## Translator's Introduction

*Treasury of the Eye of True Teaching* is a classic of Chan Buddhism, a massive compilation of speeches, stories, dialogues, poems, and commentaries extracted from Chan lore, representing teaching material used by the famous master Dahui (1089-1167).

Dahui was widely regarded as a major figure in the revitalization of Chan Buddhism during the Southern Song dynasty. After traveling around studying with a number of Chan masters, Dahui became a disciple and successor of Yuanwu, the author of the classic *Blue Cliff Record*. Dahui served as an attendant, assembly leader, secretary, and assistant teacher to Yuanwu, who impressed upon him the importance of using sayings and stories in the process of Chan meditation. Dahui became very famous, accorded imperial honors and installed as teaching master in a major monastery, where he attracted a following of more than seventeen hundred people. The record of his teachings was included in the Buddhist canon by imperial order a decade after his death.

## *Treasury of the Eye of True Teaching*

1. Master Langya asked Master Ju, "Where have you just come from?"

Master Ju said, "From the riverlands."

"Did you come by boat or by land?"

"By boat."

"Where's the boat?"

"Underfoot."

"How do you utter an expression of not being on the road?"

Ju rustled his seat cloth and said, "Incompetent elders are extremely commonplace." Then he walked out.

Langya asked an attendant, "Who was that?"

"Master Ju"

Langya then went down to the transients' hall and asked, "Aren't you senior Ju?"

Ju shouted and asked, "When did you go to Fenyang, Elder?"

Langya said he went there at such and such a time. Ju remarked, "I had already heard of you when I was still in the riverland; but it turns out that your perception is only like this—how could you be famous throughout the land?"

Langya then bowed and said, “Thanks.”

*Dahui commented,*

The guest is the guest from start to finish, the host is the host from start to finish. These two great masters took turns as host and guest in this impromptu encounter, directly bringing to light the heart and marrow of Linji. If you have not thoroughly realized the grip of transcendence and are not equipped with true perception beyond ordinary sense, you will inevitably construe this in terms of winning and losing.

Some say Ju responded truthfully to each question all along, but at the end he shouldn't have made a Buddhist rationale, and this was his 'incompetence.'

Some say Langya became doubtful and uncertain at heart when he was called an incompetent by Master Ju, so he immediately lay down his weapons, took off his armor, and actually importuned Master Ju to stay so he could question him about this matter, in what they call sitting inquiry.

When one dog barks at nothing, a thousand monkeys bite in actuality. Because religious leaders do not have clear insight, they originate sectarian doctrines, confusing and misleading people of later times. What they don't realize is that the two great masters'

stimulus and response were like the sun and moon shining in the sky.

Where dragons and elephants tread is not for lame donkeys and blind men—how could a frog in a well or a chicken in a pot know the vastness of the universe?

I once cited this story in an interview and asked the student, “Do you agree with what Langya said?”

“No,” he replied.

“Why don’t you agree?”

“One shouldn’t make a Buddhist rationale.”

I then cited the story of Yunmen asking Dongshan, “Where have you come from?” Dongshan said, “Chadu.” Yunmen asked, “Where did you spend the summer?” Dongshan said, “At Baoci in Hunan.” Yunmen asked, “When did you leave there?” Dongshan said, “August 25<sup>th</sup>.” Yunmen said, “I forgive you a beating of three score strokes.”

Do you agree with what Yunmen said, I asked the student.

“Yes,” the student replied.

“Why do you agree?”

“Yunmen had no ‘Buddhist’ rationale.”

I said, “The questions of the teachers were the same, and the answers of the students were the same—so why do you agree with one and not the other?”

The student stood there thinking. I drove him out with a caning. I then called the student to come back for a minute; when he turned his head, I said, “If you interpret it as a caning, you drag me down and you’re blind yourself.” The student thereupon bowed and said, “Today I’ve finally realized that the encounter of Langya and Master Ju cannot be fathomed by ordinary feelings.”

I said, “Look at this blind guy summing up arbitrarily,” and again I drove him off with blows and shouts.

While I was in exile in Hengyang, I closed my door and retired, taking no interest in external affairs. From time to time patchrobed mendicants would ask for help, so I couldn’t but answer them. The Chan men Zhongmi and Huiran took notes, which over time accumulated into a huge volume. They brought it to me and asked for a title, wishing to reveal it to later generations so that the treasury of the eye of true teaching of the Buddhas and Chan masters does not perish. So I entitled it Treasury of the Eye of True Teaching, and made the story of Langya the first chapter.



Thus there is no order of precedence in the adepts featured herein, nor division of sect; I have only taken their realizations of the handle of transcendence as capable of dissolving sticking points for people and untying bonds, just so they may have accurate perception.

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#### Note

Dahui was defrocked and exiled from 1141 to 1155 through the machinations of a political opponent of one of Dahui's lay successors. He was in Hengyang during the first ten years of this period.

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## 2. Chan Master Yantou instructed an assembly,

For the universal principle, the subject of the source, you need to distinguish expressions. If you do not distinguish expressions, then it is impossible to understand sayings.

What are expressions?

When you don't think of anything at all, this is called expression of the absolute. It is also called dwelling at the peak, or attaining stabilization, or clarity, or wakefulness, or directness, or the time before Buddha is born, or becoming grounded. It is also called the time of being as is, or *such* a time.

When being as such, you equally break through all affirmation and negation: as soon as it is as such, then it is not so, immediately changing, round and round. If you do not see through 'this,' as soon as someone sticks you in the eye you'll stare one-eyed, like a slaughtered sheep that hasn't yet died.

The ancients said that it is not good to sink into oblivion; you must be fluid to attain realization. You switch immediately on contact; as soon as it is so, then it's not so—affirmation and negation both shaved away, you naturally turn freely. What is before your eyes is naturally unveiled; sated and snoring, you don't know to reject, you don't know to bite.

Haven't you read the saying that detachment from things is superior, while pursuing things is inferior? The moment you arouse the slightest sentiment, you've already fallen on the ground.

If you are a boar-biting hound, eyes blazing red, if someone asks you what Chan is you tell him to shut his shit-hole—that's having a lot of spunk—and then you will know who is deep and who is shallow, with firm certainty.

You get to know this cat face; then you don't need to deliberately quantify it, you don't need to measure it.

There's a kind of person who doesn't know how to turn when he bumps into something, just keeping at it like someone with diarrhea running to the toilet. As for people like this, there would be no crime in beating ten thousand of them to death.

Someone who is genuine will rise to a stimulus immediately, biting people right away, like a prickly porcupine. If you preen yourself while undisturbed, but then you holler in a rage when someone provokes you, how can you approach?

If you have not yet attained such freedom, you are said to be practicing on the basis of a formula. Whatever exists must be equally refuted; then not a single thing remains, and you will know for sure—of what use are all the verbal formulas you have learned hitherto, crammed into your chest?

Haven't you read the saying, 'Set aside views, set aside formulas—don't let anything outside in, don't let anything inside out'? Cut off both, and you will be spontaneously illumined, not being a partner to anything at all. This is absorption in non-contention.

If you want to attain understanding easily, just clarify the fundamental. When you couldn't leave it even if you wanted to, then you should turn around and bite through in one snap; afterwards

don't pursue that which goes and stays—far or near, just go and be naturally unveiled.

Don't keep on thinking about it dully; as soon as you esteem something, it becomes a nest. This is what the ancients called clothing sticking to the body, an affliction most difficult to cure.

When I was traveling in the past, I called on the adepts in one or two places. They just taught sustained concentration day and night, sitting until you get calluses on your behind. Mouths drooling, from the outset they go to the pitch black darkness inside the belly of the primordial Buddha and say 'I am sitting in meditation to preserve it.' At such a time, there is still craving there.

Haven't you read the saying that Shakyamuni Buddha was so because he depended on nothing and craved nothing? An ancient said, 'Put poison in milk, and even ghee can kill.'

This is not something you can learn, not something you can abandon or retain. It is not in your physical matter; don't mistakenly accept the channels of sense, for they will cheat you on the last day of your life, when they will be in a state of punitive agitation, of no use at all.

Don't be contrived; just take care of your dressing, eating, and natural functions, and pass the time according to conditions, without

disrupting social order.

Those who falsely claim to be people of the Path have one garment, which they don't dare put out to bleach in the sun, for fear they'll lose the reputation of Wayfarer. Their minds are unbalanced this way because they are hoping for praise from others.

Also, you shouldn't trust the elders in chains who beat with stumps, coming out with a stream of crap to fool people, making a special hell to put you in.

If you truly know the ancient way, that is very good. Have you not read the saying, 'Being is nonbeing, nonbeing is being'? When you live this out, you will know the deep and the shallow. This is the ancient standard.

There is a type of fellow who speaks forth arbitrarily. What is there to record as a memorial? This type is only concerned with calling this the Chan way, only concerned with calling this The Word, but they are so weak they are ineffective. They may gather an audience of ten thousand, but what is the use?

Someone with sinews and bones does not need to make journeys to many places, but you have to have eyes before you can avoid being deceived by anyone. Have you not read the saying, 'If

you conceive interpretations of the teachings, you still fall into the realm of bedevilment’?

When expounding the teaching, it is imperative that everything flow from your own heart, expressed as a sign for others. Is there anyone like that now?

First of all, you need to discern left and right expressions; this is the point of emergence. Discern what leaves, discern what stays—these are expressions of both sides, also called right and left expressions, or affirmative and negative expressions. As soon as they occur, immediately bite through, and you will naturally be unaffected.

Do you understand when you are spoken to this way? Don’t spend the days fussing and bothering; there’s no end to that.

If you want to be able to understand easily, just know before sound and form; then you won’t be confused by myriad objects, naturally unveiled, naturally unaffected. Spend your life before sound and form, and you will be free. You will be like a mass of fire, which burns anything that touches it—then what more concern will you have?

Haven’t you read this saying?— ‘It’s not that objects don’t encroach, but simply that I pay no mind.’



3. Master Zhenjing said to an assembly,

It's hard to find people for Buddhism.

Some do not believe in the actuality of the Buddha in themselves, and merely rely on fixed formal doctrines and practices recognized by counterfeit wisdom imitating a bit of the shadows and echoes of the ancients.

When they act, they turn from awareness to matter, sticking to it, unable to get free.

If students come to them, they are like seals stamping clay, turning out a succession of imprints, not only fooling themselves but misleading others as well.

In this school there is no Buddhism to give people, just a sword that cuts down all comers, one by one, causing their lives to cease existing and their senses to disappear.

Then I meet them where their parents have not yet given birth to them. If I see them trying to approach, then I cut them down.

So even though the adamant sword is sharp, it does not cut anyone who is blameless.

Is there anyone who is blameless? You deserve a beating!

4. Master Foyan said to an assembly,



A thousand talks and myriad explanations are not as good as seeing once in person. It is clear of itself, even without explanation. The allegory of the king's precious sword, the allegory of the blind men groping the elephant, in Chan studies the phenomenon of awakening on being beckoned from across the river, the matter of the crags deep in the mountains where there are no people—these are all to be seen in person; they are not in verbal explanation.

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Notes

The allegories of the king's precious sword and the blind men groping the elephant come from the *Mahaparinirvana* scripture. They both refer to the observation that subjective descriptions are not objective realities.

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5. Master Yunmen held up a fly whisk and said, "If you find an entry here, you get rid of hokum. When Zen is preached in Japan, someone in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Heaven comes out and calls, 'Hum, hum! The stable boy is wearing stocks, giving evidence of his crime!'"

*Dahui commented,*

This old fellow is able to adapt to a quandary. Plowing a government field under an assumed name, he pays no more sprout tax.

6. Master Shiyan Guizong said to an assembly,

The ancient worthies since time immemorial were not without intellectual understanding, but those high minded people were not the same as mediocrities. Nowadays people are unable to fulfill themselves and stand on their own; they pass the time in vain.

Don't misuse your mind. No one can substitute for you, and there is nowhere to apply your mind; don't seek from others. Up till now you have just been understanding based on others; you get stuck on every saying. The reason your light does not penetrate through to freedom is that there are things in front of your eyes.

A monk asked, "What is the mystic message?"

The master said, "No one can understand."

The monk asked, "What about those who turn to it?"

The master said, "If you turn to it, that is turning away from it."

The monk asked, "What about one who does not turn to it?"

The master said, "Who seeks the mystic message?" He added, "Go away—there's nowhere for you to apply your mind."

The monk asked, "Are there no expedient methods to enable a student to gain access?"

The master said, "The power of Guanyin's wondrous wisdom can save the world from suffering."

The monk asked, "What is the power of Guanyin's wondrous wisdom?"

The master tapped the lid of a cauldron three times and said, "Do you hear?"

The monk said, "I hear."

The master said, "Why don't I hear?"

The monk had no reply. Guizong drove him out with a cane.

7. When Master Luoshan first became the resident master of a monastery, he went up in the hall to give a speech. As soon as he had gathered up his robe and was about to sit, he said, "Fare well," and immediately got down from the high seat.

After a while he came back and said, "Anyone who doesn't know, come forward."

When a monk came forward, as soon as he bowed Luoshan said, "Misery yet!"

When the monk rose from his bows, he said, "I ask the teacher..."

Luoshan thereupon shouted him out.

A monk asked, "What is the special word?"

Luoshan said, "What are you saying?"

After a long while Luoshan said, "If you are a superior individual, you will understand everything the moment your foot crosses the threshold. If you make a presentation on meeting, you are still a dullard babbling; this is worthless.

"Understand? It is not Chan, not Tao, not Buddha, not Dharma. What is it? The precious sword with the spiritual point is always openly present: it can kill, and it can also give life. If you can wield it, then you may wield it; but if you are going to take the field you have to be capable enough to manage it.

"Individual potentials complement each other, individual phenomena are rootless: they are guest and host to one another. Being as how this is so, studiously avoid fixed assumptions.

"If you cry like a fox, I roar like a lion; if I cry like a fox, then you roar like a lion. If you roar like a lion, I too roar like a lion. Set out and taken up according to the time, meaning and expression are mastered.

"Thus it is said, 'In meaning is expression, in expression is meaning; but expression is not kept in meaning, and meaning is not kept in expression.' If meaning and expression are not equivalent, how do you understand?

“The meaning can shave the expression, the expression can shave the meaning; the interaction of meaning and expression is awesome. If you don’t understand meaning *and* expression, if you don’t penetrate fact *and* theory, then you are just an iron hammerhead with no hole, what the ancients called a common vulgar cleric. Such people are as common as rice and flax, bamboo and reeds—what use are they?

“In this school you have to be an individual, with eyes alert, turning freely at a touch. How could this be sought in your terms of purity and pollution? How can ‘ordinary’ or ‘holy’ explain it?

“A meeting of such people, superior individuals, is like a spark struck from flint, fast as the wind, swift eloquence like thunder. If attention is focused immediately, one or a half a person will be moved by their words, more than millions. If you lower your head and ‘study Chan,’ you can never get it.

“It is said, ”Thus” is easy, “not thus” is hard,’ yet it is also said, ”Thus” is hard, “not thus” is easy.’ How about it? You must pay close attention.

“To go traveling you must be perceptive: don’t let anyone trap you by teaching you simply to blank out, or to focus on details all the

time. What a pain! Once you're locked in stocks, even though innocent, when will you ever get out?

“This is like a gourd floating on water—can anyone keep it down? It is ever-present, flowing ceaselessly, independent and free—there has never been any doctrine that could encompass it, never any doctrine that could be its equivalent. It immediately appears on stimulus, turns freely on contact, encompassing sound and form. In extension it flows everywhere, without inhibition, always manifest before the eyes.

“How could this be a state of immobility? Go out, and nothing is not it; go in, and everything returns to the source. Prior to voicing, utterly transcendent, how could it fall into being or nonbeing?

“So it is said that the unique expression prior to voicing cannot be communicated but by sages; if you haven't ever approached it, it's like being a universe away.

“Everyone knows the unique expression prior to voicing; how do you understand this? Ordinarily it is said, ‘Before voicing is a road that lets you understand clearly; if you don't come forth after expression, you're still missing a half. If there is anything, however slight, that you fail to penetrate, it is like being blocked off by an iron

wall.’ How do you ask questions and give answers in an extraordinary meeting?

“Generally speaking, in order to expound the teaching it is necessary to understand the present, killing and giving life with meaningful expressions of life and death. The sword that kills, the sword that gives life—these were the thrusts of the devices of high antiquity, and are also essential for the present time; you have to overcome bedevilment and break obsessions.

“To directly reveal truth, you have to know it is in yourself; the aim goes through the target. The great function lacks nothing; when complete pervasion is actualized, bewilderment cannot affect you. If you have not yet attained this, how should you manifest it in every aspect of conduct?

“Do you see its face? Here it is ordinarily said, ‘One thought in the senses is ever uninterrupted.’ But can you be like this or not?

“If you do not yet understand, then for now you must stand on your own, unveiled, not being neighbor to myriad things, so nothing at all can cover it. This is why an ancient said, ‘There are no things present; concepts are present. This is not present phenomena, not within reach of the senses.’

“Most important is to get fundamental insight to appear, so the scenery of the fundamental ground is always revealed, unconcealed. When you are independent and free, and can go out and in unhindered, only then may you differ from the times; even dragons and spirits find no path to strew flowers on, outsiders secretly spying cannot see any tracks.

“This is not obliteration of form and substance; you have to penetrate the heights and the depths before you attain it. Don’t just throw around a few sayings about the relative and the absolute, interjecting remarks wherever you go, pointing to the east delineating the west, citing ancients and quoting contemporaries. When it comes to people like this, what crime would it be to beat ten thousand of them to death? Tomorrow is the next day that they will entrap people’s sons and daughters. Some day they’ll make you ghost bone behinds.

“The depths of Chan take the measure of your heart. It’s easy to be satisfied with plain food; chew it well, and you’ll hardly feel hungry. Variance from the fundamental derives from your own error; you’ll labor all your life in vain. If you are gutless yet proud, whose fault is that?



“When you imbibe the words of others, distinguish what is so from what is not. If you only stick to your own strength, you’ll never be right.

“Stay well. Good bye.”

8. Master Langya Jiao went up in the hall. A monk came forward and drew a circle. Langya held up his staff. The monk hesitated; Langya then hit him and said, “Speak!”

The monk said, “I won’t speak.”

“Why not?”

The monk said, “The Buddhas of past, present, and future are not beyond *here*.”

Langya hit him again, and in the course of time drove him out. Then he said, “In the teachings it says that it’s an offense even to point at a monk with your hand. Today I’m going to hell like an arrow shot.”

9. By the side of Xuefeng mountain, a monk built a hut and lived there for many years, never shaving his head. He made himself a wooden dipper and used to go to a stream to scoop water to drink.

One day a monk asked him, “What is the meaning of the Chan founder’s coming from the West?”

The hermit replied, “The stream is deep, the handle of the dipper is long.”

The monk went back and reported this to Xuefeng. Xuefeng said, “How very unusual! Even so, I’ll have to test him myself.”

One day Xuefeng went with an attendant, bringing along a razor, to go visit the hermit.

As soon as they saw him, Xuefeng said, “If you can speak appropriately, I won’t shave your head.”

The hermit immediately got some water and washed his head; Xuefeng then shaved it for him.

10. Master Yunju Jian was asked by a monk, “When encountering a ferocious tiger on the road, what then?”

“A thousand people, ten thousand people, do not encounter it; only you encounter it.”

“What about when living alone on a solitary peak?”

“Closing down the seven-room communal hall, not providing lodging, who makes you live alone on a solitary peak?”

11. Master Huaitang said to an assembly,

When you know illusion, you become detached from it without employing expedients. When you detach from illusion, you wake up, without any gradual steps.

The thousand gates and myriad doors of old Shakyamuni Buddha open up all at once, at a single knock; spiritually sharp folks get right up and act on it as soon as they hear it brought up.

If you still hesitate, you are heading west while I am going east.

12. A monk asked Zhaozhou, “I have just entered the community—please instruct me.”

Zhaozhou said, “Have you eaten breakfast yet?”

“Yes, I have.”

Zhaozhou said, “Then wash your bowl.”

The monk was greatly enlightened at this.

Yunmen said, “Tell me, was there an instruction or not? If you say there was, then what did Zhaozhou tell him? If you say there wasn’t, then why did the monk become enlightened?”

Yunfeng Yue said, “Yunmen doesn’t know good and bad; such talk is like drawing legs on a snake. I disagree. This monk being

enlightened in this way goes to hell like an arrow shot!”

*Dahui commented,*

Old Yunmen is like a titan king shoving off the great citadel of all existence and the oceans of afflictions. Ha! Why talk in your sleep?

As for Yunfeng, though he skillfully reaches back and takes out a golden arrow, turns around and draws a horn bow, nevertheless he misses Yunmen.

13. Master Huanglong Nan said to an assembly,

Master Dazhu said, ‘Purity of conduct, speech, and mind is called Buddha appearing in the world. Impurity of conduct, speech, and mind is called Buddha becoming extinct.’ A good message—the ancient’s temporary expedient opens up an entryway for you.

Once you have found an entryway, you then must find a way of exit. When you climb a mountain, you should reach the peak; when you dive into an ocean, you should reach the bottom.

If you climb a mountain but don’t reach the peak, you won’t know how immense the universe is. If you dive into an ocean but don’t reach the bottom you won’t know how deep the abyss is.

Once you know immensity and depth, you kick over the four oceans with one kick, slap down the polar mountain with one slap, then go back home with your hands free, unrecognized by anyone: sparrows twitter, crows caw, among the cedar trees.

14. A monk asked Baofu, "What motto did Xuefeng have in everyday life that enabled him to be trackless?"

Baofu said, "It cannot be that I am unable to be Xuefeng's disciple."

15. Master Zhenjing said to an assembly,

Sansheng asked Xuefeng, "What does the golden fish that's passed through the net take for food?"

Xuefeng said, "I'll tell you when you get out of the net."

Sansheng said, "You're the teacher of fifteen hundred people, yet you don't even know a saying!"

How sharp! How lively! Just like a sparrow hawk! Don't be startled!

I am otherwise. "What does the gold fish that's passed through the net take for food?" "I'll tell you when you get out of the net." When he said, "You're teacher of fifteen hundred people, yet you

don't know a saying," I'd just haul out my staff and drive him off the premises.

Again, very lively, like a tiger—don't get shook up! But tell me, Chan worthies, how does my liveliness compare to Sansheng's liveliness? Isn't there a lively person here? Come forth and let's see.

Ha! Even if you grabbed him by the hand, you couldn't hold him back.

16. Layman Pang said, "Just aspire to empty all that is, don't solidify what is not."

17. Master Wujiu, seeing two elders arriving, immediately asked, "Where have you two Chan uncles just come from?"

One monk said, "From Jiangxi."

Wujiu immediately hit him.

The monk said, "Long have I heard the master had this key."

Wujiu said, "Since you don't understand, let the second one come forward."

That monk tried to say something. Wujiu hit him too and said, "There's no different dirt in the same pit."

18. One day when Zhaozhou was in the latrine he saw Wenyan go by. He called to him, “Wenyan!” When Wenyan responded, Zhaozhou said, “I can’t explain Buddhism to you in the latrine.”

19. Master Ciming said to an assembly,

The true nature of ignorance is the nature of buddhahood; the illusory empty body is itself embodiment of reality. If you can actually believe in this you will undeniably save effort.

You could say when Sudhana entered Maitreya’s tower [in the final book of the *Flower Ornament Scripture*] infinite teachings were thoroughly comprehended, and he attained total nonobstruction and realized that things are not born.

This is called acceptance of phenomena having no origination. Infinite realms, self and other, are undivided on a hairtip; the ten times, past and present, are never apart from the immediate moment of thought.

Now I ask you people, what is the immediate moment of thought?

The essence of your ignorance is actually the nature of subtle luminosity of your basic awareness: because you do not understand

the root source of birth and death, you cling to the false as true; according to the influence of falsehood, it makes you fall into repetitious routines and experience all sorts of misery.

If you can turn awareness around to illumine within, you will spontaneously realize the original true nature is unborn and undying.

That is why it is said that the true nature of ignorance is actually the nature of buddhahood, and the illusory empty body is actually an embodiment of reality.

The unclean physical body has no ultimate reality at all: it is like a dream, like an illusion, like a shadow, like an echo. Flowing in waves of birth and death for countless eons, restlessly compelled by craving, emerging here, submerging there, piles of bones big as mountains have piled up, oceans of pap have been consumed.

Why? Because of lack of insight, inability to understand that form, feeling, perception, habits, and consciousness are fundamentally empty, without any substantial reality. We take on birth in pursuit of falsehood, entrapped by greed, unable to get free.

This is why Buddha said, 'Of the causes of all miseries, greed is the root. If we eliminate greed, we won't be dependent on anything.'



If you can realize that the illusory body is not absolute but conditional, originally null, then views will not arise—it has no self, no person, no being, no liver of life. All things are thus, so it is said that the illusory empty body is none other than an embodiment of reality.

When you have awakened to the body of reality, there is not a single thing, only the great Way of ethereal profundity, the true source with no fixation, listening to the teaching and expounding the teaching. That is why it is said that the intrinsic nature that is the fundamental source is the Buddha of natural reality.

*He also said,*

The floating clouds of form, sensation, perception, habits, and consciousness go and come for naught; the bubbles of greed, hatred, and folly appear and disappear in vain. If you realize this, you cross over all miseries; boundless emotionally afflicted intellectual interpretations are all purified. This is the pure reality body.

If you reach this state, then you can emerge in one place and disappear in another, discard one embodiment and take on another. Free at will in all ways in hell or heaven, this world or another, floating and sinking, shedding light in response to people, setting

down teachings according to potentials. This is called the hundred thousand million projection bodies.

A speech like this could be called talking about a dream where there is no dream, mixing with mud and water, scattering crap and piss, not knowing good and bad.

Ha, ha, ha! If you turn to the Chan school, even ten myriad eight thousand is still not enough to dream of sensing the smell of Chan sweat.

Even so, we shouldn't be one-sided in this matter. We just use temporary terms to guide people. Ha!

20. Master Baoning Yong said to an assembly,  
*Every night I sleep embracing Buddha,  
Every morning we rise together again.  
Rising and sitting, always in company,  
Speaking and silent, living in the same abode,  
We're never apart in the slightest,  
Just like body and shadow.  
If you want to know where Buddha's gone,  
The very sound of these words is it.*

This verse by Mahasattva Fu has been known to everyone past and present; many have gotten a glimpse thereby, but not a few have misunderstood.

Master Xuansha said, “Even Mahasattva Fu only recognized luminous awareness.”

Master Dongshan Zong said, “Tell me, has a Chan monk ever slept in the daytime?”

These are sayings by two venerable adepts; who says there are no wizards in the world? You’d better believe there’s a separate sky inside the pot.

I too have a verse:

*When I want to sleep, I sleep;  
When I want to rise, I rise.  
With water I wash my face,  
So my skin glows;  
Sipping tea, I moisten my beak.  
Red dust rises in the immense ocean,  
Billowing waves rise on level ground.  
Ha, ha! Ah, ha, ha!  
La li li la li.*

A monk asked, “What is the realm of Baoning?”

Baoning said, “The master of the mountain ultimately stands out.”

“What is the person in the realm?”

“He hasn’t half his nostrils.”

“What is the manner of the house of Baoning?”

“Hard biscuits and cooked dumplings.”

“Suppose a guest comes—what do you serve?”

“Simple food is quite filling—chew thoroughly, and you’ll hardly hunger.”

21. Venerable Yanyang asked Zhaozhou, “What not a single thing is brought, then what?”

Zhaozhou said, “Put it down.”

Yanyang asked, “If not a single thing is brought, what is to be put down?”

Zhaozhou said, “If you can’t put it down, then carry it out.”

Master Huanglong Nan versified this:

*Not a single thing brought forth,*

*Both shoulders cannot bear it.*

*Had he realized his error at the words,*

*In his heart would be limitless joy.*

*Once poisonous viciousness is forgotten within,*

*Snakes and tigers become friends.*

*For how many hundreds of years*

*The clear breeze has not ceased.*

22. Master Fahua Ju said to an assembly,

Shakyamuni didn't appear in the world,  
Bodhidharma didn't come from the West.  
Buddhism is everywhere under the sun;  
To speak of the mystery, the mouth won't open.

*Dahui commented,*

The thief has a cowardly heart.

23. Master Dinghui Xin asked a monk, "How do the adepts of the South evaluate the National Teacher Zhong's saying about inanimate objects expounding the Dharma?"

The monk said, "Everyone says it refers to the interchange of functions of the six senses."

Xin said, "In the Teachings it says 'There are no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind'—what is there to interchange functions?"

The monk tried to think of something to say; Xin hit him right across the back.

Dharma master Sheng said, "Knock on space, and it makes a sound; knock on wood and there's no sound."

Yunmen knocked at the air with his staff and said, "Aye yay yay." He also knocked on a board and said, "Does it make a sound?"

A monk said, "It makes a sound."

Yunmen said, "You worldling!" He knocked the board again and said, "What do you call 'sound'?"

24. Master Xuansha asked a monk, "Where did you come from?"

The monk said, "From Ruiyuan."

Xuansha asked, "What sayings does Ruiyuan have?"

The monk said, "He calls 'Master!' all the time, then answers himself, 'Yes?' 'Be alert, and don't let anyone fool you anymore.'"

Xuansha said, "First class play with the spirit, but still only amounts to a little bit."

25. Master Huanglong Xin said to an assembly,

When a purifying crystal is dropped into turbid water, the water cannot but clear. When remembrance of Buddha is cast into the confused mind, the confused mind cannot but become Buddha. Buddha being unconfused, turbid water clears of itself. Once the turbid water has cleared, where is the merit attributed?

[After a long silence he said] How many times has the black wind overturned the ocean—yet I've never heard of a fishing boat capsizing.

26. Master Jianfu Gu said to an assembly,

Once Master Baizhang Heng went up in the hall, then as soon as the assembly had gathered he said, “Have tea,” and immediately exited. Another time when he went up in the hall, as soon as the crowd gathered he said, “Fare well,” and immediately got off the chair. Another time when he went up in the hall, as soon as the assembly gathered he said, “Rest,” and immediately got off the chair.

He used the story of these times over and over again, but the community couldn’t fathom it. Eventually he himself composed a verse on these three scenarios:

*Baizhang has three secrets:  
Have tea, fare well, rest.  
Even if you get them immediately,  
I dare say you aren’t done yet.*

Now then, when Master Baizhang Heng composed this verse, tell me, how was his insight? Can you tell attainment from failure? Do you want to understand?

Based on those three times he went up in the hall, he seems like a good man. When he composed this verse later, he seemed like he’d carved a couple of lines of characters on his face. If you

are an expert, an adept, you will know as soon as it's brought up; younger students, beginners, will find it hard to discern.

I will annotate it for you, starting from the beginning.

*Baizhang has three secrets*—The thief has been exposed.

*Have tea. Fare well. Rest.*—The loot is brought out.

*Even if you get them immediately, I dare say you're not done*  
—It's like he's clutching the loot while passing judgment on the affair.

Even so, benevolent ones, only if you have the eye to distinguish realities can you realize enlightenment; if you cannot distinguish the false from the true, you may be said to be presuming upon Buddha-nature. You need to ask further of the wise and the good. Beware of living in vain and dying a waste.

27. Master Guizong Bao's eulogy of Bodhidharma, Founder of Chan, along with preface:

It is futile to try to describe the real likeness of the master. It cannot be assigned to the realm of desire, form, or formlessness. If you want to place it somewhere, obviously you are greatly mistaken. It is useless effort to point it out; where can you grasp? Want to know the master's real likeness? The universe and space.

*The master's features are sought by the world:  
The master's brows are cloud fronts on opposite sides,*



*The master's eyes are lightning flashing.  
The master's nose is the soaring polar mountain,  
The master's mouth has no teeth—  
Whose is the fault?  
He's going to cross the desert—  
Why doesn't he realize his own error?  
There are great men here and there—  
To whom to transmit the Teaching?  
He went on dwelling at Shaolin;  
Repentant, he returned West.  
When you meet a Chan monk,  
Best give him a sound beating.  
And yet, even so, if you don't understand,  
You cannot be a stickler.*

Seeing this eulogy, Master Langya Jiao wrote a verse:

*The master's eyes are deep,  
The master's nose is big.  
The master's ears are open,  
The master's tongue is quick.  
The master's body is black,  
The master's heart is respectful.  
With one shoe in hand,  
He went back across the desert;  
His stone monument at Mt. Bear Ear  
Is still there now.  
I'll just use this verse to test  
All the Chan monks in the land.*

*Dahui commented, “Respectful”—this word should not be shifted. If you're shifty, disaster strikes.”*

28. Maser Zhenjing instructed an assembly,

Sansheng said, “When I meet people, I go out, but going out does not help people.”

Xinghua said, “When I meet people, I do not go out; not going out is helping people.”

See how these two old awls have filched a bit of Linji’s livelihood; each one draws his own boundaries and stakes out his territory, with the mettle to soar into space, causing clear-eyed Channists simply to want to laugh.

Let the Chan masters say what is laughable. Do you get the point? If you do, you may tumble and fall over. If not, then for now chew on it in the complications of Sansheng and Xinghua.

29. When Master Zhaozhou went to Yunju, Yunju said, “You are so old, why don’t you look for a place to stay?”

Zhaozhou said, “What would my dwelling place be?”

Yunju said, “There is the foundation of an ancient temple in front of this mountain.”

Zhaozhou said, “You should live there yourself.”

Next Zhaozhou went to Zhuyu. He also said, “You’re so old, why don’t you look for a place to stay?”

Zhaozhou said, "Where is my dwelling place?"

Zhuyu said, "So old and you don't even know where to stay?"

Zhaozhou said, "I've been taming horses for thirty years, but today I've been kicked by an ass."

30. Dongshan said, "You must realize there is something beyond Buddha."

A monk asked, "What is beyond Buddha?"

Dongshan said, "Not Buddha."

Yunmen said, "It cannot be named or described; that is why he said *Not*."

31. A monk asked Master Ciming, "What is Buddha?"

He said, "Water emerging from a high source."

"How is it when traveling but not meeting anyone?"

"The fishing line presses the water."

32. Master Baoning Yong addressed an assembly,

I have hands and feet, but no back or front—even people with clear eyes can't see me. The sky revolves to the left, the earth

rotates to the right. [Slapping his knee] A gust of west wind comes, two or three leaves fall.

A monk asked, “What is the great meaning of Buddhism?”

The master said, “There’s no cool spot in a cauldron of boiling water.”

33. Master Dagui Zhenru cited a story about how Xuefeng once told Xuansha, “There’s an Elder Nanji who can answer any question.” One day Nanji came to Xuefeng, and Xuefeng had him call on Xuansha.

Xuansha asked him, “An ancient said, ‘Only I can know this thing’—  
what about you?”

Nanji replied, “You should realize there’s one who doesn’t seek knowledge.”

Xuansha said, “Why has the old fellow on the mountain taken so much trouble?”

Dagui said, “When I cite this, I can’t budge this saying of Xuansha’s. Why? It’s like beating a poison drum—far or near, all who hear it perish.”

34. Guishan asked Yangshan, "Where are you coming from?"

Yangshan said, "From the fields."

Guishan asked, "How many people are there in the fields?"

Yangshan stuck his hoe in the ground and stood there with his hands folded.

Guishan said, "Today on South Mountain there are many people cutting thatch."

Yangshan then left, dragging his hoe.

Xuedou said, "Everywhere everyone says the story of sticking the hoe in the ground is special, but that is like pursuing falsehood and chasing evil. In my view, when Yangshan was asked a question by Guishan, he only managed to bind himself with straw rope, altogether fatally."

*Dahui remarked,* "The benevolent seeing it call it benevolence, the wise seeing it call it wisdom. Ordinary people use it everyday without realizing it. The path of cultured people is brilliant!"

35. Master Huanglong Nan addressed an assembly,

A monk asked Jianfeng, "For the Blessed Ones of the ten directions there is one road, nirvana; where does the road begin?"

Jianfeng drew a line with his staff and said, "It's here."

The monk asked Yunmen for further instruction. Yunmen held up a fan and said, "This fan leaps up to the Thirty-Third Heaven and hits the Emperor of Gods in the nose; when the carp of the Eastern Sea is hit once with a cane, it rains buckets. Understand? Understand?"

Jianfeng pointed out the road for one occasion, indirectly helping beginners. Yunmen went all the way through the transformations, to cause later people not to weary.

You should fathom the intentions of the two elders without pursuing their words. When you grasp the intent, you return to the right road home. If you pursue words, you wander on misleading paths, further and further astray.

36. Dayu took leave of Guizong one day. Guizong asked him, "Where are you going?" Dayu said, "To study the five-flavor Chan all over." Guizong said, "They have five-flavor Chan all over; here I only have one flavor Chan."

Dayu then asked, "What is your one-flavor Chan?"

Guizong smacked him right away. All at once Dayu was greatly enlightened. He said, "Hah, I understand."

Guizong said, "Speak, speak!"

As Dayu was about to open his mouth, Guizong hit him again and chased him out.

When Guanxi first called on Linji, as soon as he entered the door Linji grabbed him by the chest and held him. Guanxi immediately said, “I get it, I get it.” Linji then pushed him away.

37. Master Zhenjing said to an assembly,

Buddhism does not go along with human sentiments. Elders everywhere talk big, all saying, ‘I know how to meditate, I know the Way!’ But tell me, do they understand or not? For no reason they sit in pits of crap fooling spirits and ghosts. When people are like this, what crime is there in killing them by the thousands and feeding them to the dogs?

There is also a kind of Chan follower who is charmed by those foxes, even with eyes open, not even realizing it themselves. They wouldn’t object even if they poured piss over their heads.

You are all individuals; why should you accept this kind of treatment? How should you be yourself?

38. A monk asked Master Muzhou, “What are words of exposition?”

Muzhou said, “Assessing capabilities to fill offices.”

“What are words of nonexposition?”

Muzhou said, “Lo, the imperial cook!”

39. Xuefeng went to Touzi. Touzi pointed to a rock in front of his cottage and said to Xuefeng, “All the Buddhas of past, present, and future are here.”

Xuefeng said, “What a dull ignoramus.”

Touzi and Xuefeng traveled to Longmin. There were two roads; Xuefeng asked, “Which one is the road to Longmin?”

Touzi pointed to it with his staff.

Xuefeng said, “To the east or to the west?”

Touzi said, “What a dull ignoramus.”

Xuefeng asked, “When finished at one stroke, how is that?”

Touzi said, “This is not a naturally swift person.”

Xuefeng said, “How about when not even a stroke is employed?”

Touzi said, “What a dull ignoramus.”

Xuefeng also asked, “Does anyone ever visit here?”

Touzi tossed a hoe in front of him.

Xuefeng said, “Then I’ll dig right here.”

Touzi said, “What a dull ignoramus.”



40. Master Langya Jiao instructed an assembly,

When host and guest interact, they settle the universe; when assessment and choice are examined together, who dares look up? The sage Shakyamuni manifested extinction under twin trees; the great teacher Bodhidharma really returned to Bear Ears Mountain. Are there any Channists with eyes in my school, any genuine followers of the Way? If not, medicine is given according to the illness, diagnosis is made for a specific time.

A monk asked, “There’s Deshan’s staff and Linji’s shout—I ask the teacher for a separate path apart from these two routes.”

Langya said, “A ten ton catapult is not shot at a mouse.”

The monk thereupon shouted.

Langya said, “An adept monk.”

The monk hesitated, trying to think of something to say.

Langya then hit him.

41. Master Daning Guan instructed an assembly,

There is nothing to Buddhism; it’s just that people stray from the source on their own. When Chan masters or Buddhas emerge, everyone is squared away; thus there are teachings circulating

everywhere, methods broadcast to the four quarters; all of them give up the inferior for the superior, investigating the fundamental essence. Once the fundamental essence is realized, everything is understood; taking up whatever comes to mind, you can put it to use in a thousand ways.

But tell me, does this talk accord with the concern of the Chan school?

[silence]

No use crying till blood flows;

Better pass the rest of spring in silence.

42. Li Bo, District Inspector of Jiang province, asked Guizong, “I don’t doubt the statement in the Teaching that a mountain contains a mustard seed, but isn’t it false to say a mustard seed contains a mountain?”

Guizong said, “People say you’ve read ten thousand books—is that true?”

Li said, “Yes.”

Guizong said, “From head to foot you’re about as big as a coconut—where do you put ten thousand books?”

Li just hung his head.

Another day Li asked, “What does the Teaching of the canon illumine?”

Guizong held up his fist and said, “Understand?”

Li said, “No.”

Guizong said, “You poor scholar, you’ve read ten thousand books for naught—you can’t even recognize a fist!”

43. A monk asked master Qingping, “What is the Great Vehicle?”

“A well rope.”

“What is the Small Vehicle?”

“A coin string.”

“What is contamination?”

“A bamboo skimmer.”

“What is noncontamination?”

“A wooden ladle.”

Master Fayun Yuantong said, “Great Vehicle, Small Vehicle—well rope, cash string. Contamination, noncontamination—bamboo skimmer, wooden ladle.”

44. Master Fashang Yu said, “I want someone who doesn’t ‘understand Chan’ to be the National Teacher.”

*Dahui said*, “Tell me, is this an expression of ghee, or an expression of poison?”

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Note

Ghee, clarified butter, as a potential within milk, is used as a symbol of the Buddha-nature inherent in all beings.

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45. Master Zhenjing instructed an assembly,  
“Heaven, earth, and I have the same root, myriad things and I are one body.” Toe and heel, three horizontal and four vertical; fire erupts on the northern continent, singeing the eyebrows of the emperor of gods. The dragon king of the eastern sea, unable to bear the pain, emits a blast of thunder draining ponds and overturning mountains, clouds darkening the endless sky. The crossroads empty, a bearded man awakens in the midst of intoxication. Waking up, he claps.

Ha, ha, ha! Recently there are few thieves in the city. [holding up his staff] Thief, thief!

46. Xuansha took some medicine mistakenly and developed an inflammation all over his body. A monk asked, “What is the

indestructible reality-body?”

Xuansha said, “Dripping with pus.”

Master Huai composed a verse on this:

*Drip, drip—the whole body is inflamed and suppurating.  
He shows his family style on the fishing boat;  
People of the time only look at the line,  
They don't see the reed flowers white against the smartweed's  
red.*

Master Duan said, “Once someone asked me, ‘What is the pure body of reality?’ I simply replied, ‘The smell of shit stinks up the air.’ I also said, ‘A child born by transformation on a lotus leaf.’ Now tell me, is this the same or different from the ancients?

“I too have a verse:

*The smell of shit stinking up the air is also coincidence;  
How dare I announce for you what is in the nose?  
If there is an opening through the sky,  
You may travel freely without wearing anything.*

47. Sushan instructed an assembly,

Before the Xiantong era, I understood the matter of the reality body. After the Xiantong era I understood the matter beyond the reality body.

Yunmen asked him, “I hear you understood the matter of the reality body before the Xiantong era, and understood the matter beyond the reality body after the Xiantong era. Is that so?”

Sushan said, "Yes."

Yunmen said, "What is the matter of the reality body?"

Sushan said, "A deadwood stake."

Yunmen said, "What is the matter beyond the reality body?"

Sushan said, "Not a deadwood stake."

Yunmen said, "Will you permit a student to explain the principle?"

Sushan said, "You may explain."

Yunmen said, "Doesn't 'a deadwood stake' illustrate the matter of the reality body, and doesn't 'not a deadwood stake' illustrate the matter beyond the reality body?"

Sushan said, "Right."

Yunmen said, "The reality body includes everything, doesn't it?"

Sushan said, "Reverend, don't understand at the water jug."

Yunmen thereupon bowed.

*Dahui remarked*, "Yunmen's bow was not good-hearted."

48. Master Wuzu Yan instructed an assembly,

The founding teacher said, "I originally came to this land to transmit means of rescuing the deluded. One flower will bloom in five petals; the resulting fruit will ripen naturally." This great teacher

Bodhidharma went where his feet took him, and said what came out of his mouth; descendants of later generations mostly made theories and arguments. Do you want to know where the flower blooms and the fruit forms? The pears of Zheng province, the dates of Qing province; in all things, nothing surpasses a good provenance.

A monk asked, "What is Buddha?"

"Nutrition enters via the mouth."

"Are the meaning of Chan and the meaning of the Teachings the same or different?"

"When people are poor, their knowledge is short; when horses are thin, their hair is long."

49. Master Ciming's song on the ox-herding boy:

The ox-herding boy is lively indeed;

Barefoot, wearing a straw cloak, he grasps both horns.

Snoozing on an ox's back, he sings to the sky.

People ask how it is; the ox isn't thirsty yet.

Turning his face, he gazes at the expanse of level fields.

Letting it go in the four directions, he stops impeding it;

Unfettered on eight sides, it roams at will.

If he wants to rein it, all it takes is a tug at the rope;

The calf is docile; stroking it, he grabs its horns.  
Its strength is not yet full—it can hardly lift him up;  
For now he lets it free on a flat hillock.  
Thinking to climb to a high peak, its four hooves run free.  
Now that the sun is high, he stops the grazing  
And grips the nose ring;  
Young and old, he leads them together  
Into the corral to sleep in the mud.  
Watching them lie down east and west,  
He laughs, ha, ha—isn't it fine!  
Then he takes out a sideways flute  
And plays it along with the wind,  
Shaking up the five lakes, mountains, seas and islands.  
Riding backward on an ox, he doffs his coat.  
Those who know don't look for him on the road.  
If you ask where the herding boy lives,  
The whip points east and west; nothing of value at all.

50. As Master Guizang was weeding, a lecturing monk came to call on him. Suddenly a snake slithered by; Guizong killed it with his hoe.



The monk said, “Long have I heard of Guizong, but after all you’re a roughneck monk.”

Holding the hoe, Guizong glared back at the monk and said, “Are you rough or am I rough?”

Later Xuefeng asked Deshan, “What was the ancient’s meaning when he killed the snake?”

Deshan immediately struck him; Xuefeng walked away. Deshan called to him, and Xuefeng turned his head. Deshan said, “Later he was enlightened; only then did he realize the old guy’s thoroughgoing kindness.”

51. Master Langya Jiao instructed an assembly,

Expressions of existence and expressions of nonexistence are like vines on a tree. When the tree falls, the vines wither; that’s just the time to get a beating. You tell me—where is the fault?

[silence]

If you don’t have an artist’s skill, don’t claim you can do the coloring.

52. Master Huanglong Nan instructed an assembly,

South of the river, the springs are cold and the autumns are warm. In recent days each drop of water is a drop of ice.

A monk asked, “How is it when each drop of water becomes a drop of ice?”

“This is not yet the business of a Chan monk.”

“What is the business of a Chan monk?”

“A drop of water, a drop of ice.”

53. Nanquan, Luzu, Shanshan, and Guizong all left Mazu’s place, each planning to live in a hermitage. As they were parting on the road, Nanquan stuck his staff in the ground and said, “If you can say it, you’re obstructed by this; if you can’t say it, you’re obstructed by this.”

Guizong pulled out the staff, hit Nanquan with it once, and said, “It’s just this—what obstruction or nonobstruction are you talking about?”

Luzu said, “This line will circulate widely throughout the world.”

54. Once master Dongshan Cong was carrying a load of firewood up the mountain by himself when he encountered a monk on the

way. The monk asked, “There’s firewood on the mountain—why carry it up?”

Cong put the load of firewood down on the ground and said, “Understand?”

The monk said, “No.”

Cong said, “I want to burn it.”

55. A monk asked the Venerable Yanyang, “What is Buddha?”

He replied, “A clod of earth.”

“What is Dharma?”

“The earth moving.”

“What is Sangha?”

“Eating gruel, eating rice.”

“What is the water of revival?”

“In the river right in front of you.”

56. As Baizhang Heng stood in attendance on Fayen, he asked for help with the story of the Hindu asking Buddha, “I do not ask about the spoken, I do not ask about the unspoken.” Before he could even finish the citation, Fayen said, “Wait, wait! You’re about to understand at the Buddha’s silence!”

At this Heng was greatly enlightened.

57. Master Yangqi held a memorial feast on the anniversary of Ciming's death. When the assembly had gathered, he went up to the statue of Ciming, clenched both fists and put them to his head, then drew a line with his seat cloth, described a circle, then lit incense, stepped back three paces, and curtseyed.

The senior monk said, "Don't act weird."

Yangqi said, "What about you?"

The senior monk said, "Master, stop acting weird."

Yangqi said, "A baby rabbit sucks ox teat."

The second to senior monk approached, drew a circle, then lit incense, and also retreated three steps and curtseyed. Yangqi drew near, making a gesture of listening. The second monk tried to think of something to say. Yangqi slapped him and said, "You ignoramus, you're acting crazily too!"

*Dahui remarked*, "Old Yangqi! It was as if he had sunk a whole boat of flax, then came sweeping the inside of the bailing bucket."

58. When Linji left Huangbo, Huangbo asked, "Where are you going?"

Linji said, “If not south of the river, then north of the river.”

Huangbo tried to hit him, but Linji caught and held his staff, then gave him a slap. Huangbo laughed and called an attendant, “Bring my late teacher’s meditation brace and whisk.”

Linji called to attendant, “Bring fire.”

Huangbo said, “Just take them and go—later on you’ll cut off the tongues of everyone on earth.”

59. When Xiangyan first opened a hall, Guishan had someone deliver a staff and a letter for him. Receiving them, Xiangyan said, “Alas, alas!” The monk asked him why he said this. Xiangyan said, “Just because of carrying out the order of spring in wintertime.”

60. Master Huanglong Nan instructed an assembly,

Green vines, clinging, climb right to the top of the cold pines;  
white clouds, pale and quiet, appear and disappear in the sky.  
Myriad things are originally peaceful; it’s just that people disturb themselves. What are you disturbed about? Tsk!

61. Master Tianyi Huai instructed an assembly,

“Green vines, clinging, climb right to the top of the cold pines; white clouds, pale and quiet, appear and disappear in the sky.” How can this compare to clouding up over the southern mountains and raining over the northern mountains? If you can understand, sweet melon is sweet to the stem; if you don’t understand, bitter gourd is bitter to the root.

62. Master Ciming gave a lecture to an assembly. Hitting the rope seat once with his staff, he said,

Everyone, do you understand? Have you not read the saying, “Forgetting objects of knowledge at one stroke, you do not need training or discipline any more. Everywhere those who arrive on the Way all say this is the highest potential.” This realization of Xiangyan is already realization of the Chan of those who arrive at being as is, but he still hasn’t dreamed of the Chan of the master teachers.

Now tell me, what is the strength of the Chan of the master teachers? If you take a rule from words, you will deceive and cheat people of later times. Even if you attain realization at a blow of the staff, you are turning against the sages of yore: “Myriad things are originally peaceful—it’s just that people disturb themselves.”

For this reason, when I lived at Fuyan I just saw the scenery of Fuyan, rising at leisure and going to sleep early, clouds sometimes rising on the blue ranges, moonlight descending into the cold pools. At the sound of voices birds fly, crying; the flowers before the stand of wisdom are fragrant. By the peak of the mountain, holding a skinny cane, I sit on a boulder, talking at times to monks from all over about the mysterious and subtle, ashes on my head and dirt on my face.

When I lived at Xinghua, I just saw the family style of Xinghua, greeting those who came and seeing off those who left. The monastery was next to a city, filled with carriages and horses, fishermen singing on the rivers, monkeys howling in the foothills; from time to time music and song could be heard. Again I discussed the Chan way with high-minded people from everywhere within the four seas, forgetful of the passing years.

Now tell me, between living deep in the mountains and living in the city, is one better than the other? Try to say.

[silence]

This place is the Merciful One: there is no gateway, and no seeker.

63. Master Jianfeng Gu instructed an assembly,

Even the gaze of the Buddhas of all times cannot reach it; even the Chan masters all over the land get tongue-tied. Those who know it exists should keep it up on their own. As for those who don't yet know it exists, if you don't quit now, when will you ever?

64. Jianfeng Gu also instructed an assembly,

The sword has already fallen overboard—it's useless to mark the boat. Take care.

65. Master Baoning Yong said,

One is one, two is two, three is three, four is four; the numerals are quite clear, higher and lower according to position. When remaining in place, what concern is there?

[drawing a "one" with his staff] Everyone has all at once disarrayed the system of time.

66. Master Xuansha said,

Is there any Buddhism deep in the mountains, on precipitous cliffs, where human footsteps have never reached in a million years?



If you say there is, what are you called Buddhism? If you say there isn't, then there is somewhere Buddhism doesn't reach.

67. Master Xuansha also instructed an assembly,

The old masters everywhere all speak of dealing with people to help the living; suppose three kinds of handicapped people come to you—how will you treat them? Those who suffer from blindness will not see if you hold up a mallet; those who suffer from deafness will not hear anything spoken; and those who suffer from muteness will not be able to speak even if you try to get them to say something. So how could you treat these people? If you can't deal with these people, then Buddhism is ineffective.

68. A monk asked Yunmen for help on Xuansha's story of the three handicapped people. Yunmen said, "Bow!" The monk bowed. Then Yunmen poked at him with his cane; the monk pulled back. Yunmen said, "You're not blind!" Then he told the monk to come closer. When the monk approached, Yunmen said, "You're not deaf!" Then he stood up his cane and said, "Understand?" The monk said, "No." Yunmen said, "You're not mute!" At this the monk had an insight.

Master Fenyang Zhao versified this:

*Temporarily creating blindness, deafness, muteness, palsy,  
He wants to show our school and test for mastery.*

*Diamond cuts steel, which breaks like clay;*

*As soon as the golden fish gone through stirs, he misses  
Xuansha.*

Master Foyan versified,

*Xuansha's three kinds of invalid—*

*The principle's not in raising your voice.*

*Drawing on old Xiangyan,*

*He's hung him up in a tree.*

69. Master Daning Kuan instructed an assembly,

The secret of Shaolin is the manner of the ancient Buddhas, functioning adaptively according to potential, folding and unfolding freely, like a fist making a flat hand, opening and closing at appropriate times, like water producing bubbles, which rise and vanish inconstantly. Action and stillness both reveal it, speech and silence show it all. Myriad functions are natural, not wearing out mental energy.

When you get here, this is called releasing the boat along with the current; this person can go! But tell me, when there's a counter wind and the oars are raised, who is the expert?

[silence]

To sport in the tide, you must be one who can sport in the tide.

70. A monk asked Master Dasui, "What is the concern of Dasui?"

He replied, "East, west, south, north."

*Dahui remarked*, "Tell me, did he answer this monk's question or not?"

71. National Teacher Zhong asked the imperial attendant Zilin, "Where do you come from?"

"He replied, "From Chengnan."

The National Teacher then asked a page boy, "What color is the grass in Chengnan?"

The boy said, "Yellow."

The National Teacher said, "Even this boy could be awarded a purple robe and talk of mysticism to the emperor too!"

72. The day Master Letan Ying opened a hall, a monk bowed, rose, let a corner of his vestment hang down, and said, "How is it when you take off your armor?"

He said, "Happily the beacon fires are extinguished, bow and spear are hung on the wall."

The monk then readjusted his vestment and said, "How about when you rearm?"

He said, "Until you've gotten to the banks of Raven River, I know you won't stop."

The monk thereupon shouted.

Ying said, "Startled me to death!"

The monk clapped.

Ying said, "And this is finding life in the midst of death."

The monk bowed.

Ying said, "I thought you had the ability to capture one state and destroy another; after all you're just a crook selling bootleg salt."

The monk asked, "What is Buddha?"

Ying said, "The eyebrows divided, the eyes like comets."

The monk asked, "What is the meaning of the Chan founder's coming from the West?"

Ying said, "Each stroke of the cane leaves a welt."

The monk said, "Let the entire assembly witness my apology."

Ying laughed.

The monk bowed, rose, and drew a circle with his left hand.

Ying stuck his whisk through it and moved it to the right. Then the monk drew a circle with his right hand. Ying stuck his whisk through

it and moved it to the left. Then the monk drew a circle with both hands and held it up to present it. Ying drew a line with his whisk and said, “These thirty years I’ve never yet met a descendant of the Gui-Yang sect; now instead I’ve encountered a fellow walking on tiles of unfired clay. Is there anyone else with any questions?” [a long silence] “There is no one.”

Finally he said, “Questions are endless, and answers are never finished. Questioning and answering back and forth gets further and further from the Way. Why? This matter is such that even if you get it on impact, you are no great man for that; even if you get it at a shout, that still doesn’t make you an adept. So how then could you take rules from words, running around seeking in sayings, so that your speech may be clever and new, and your wits may be swift? Those with views and interpretations like this are all burying the essence of Chan, besmirching the worthies of yore; when have they ever dreamed of seeing our Chan way?

“When our Buddha, the one who arrived at thusness, was about to pass away into ultimate extinction, he said, ‘I have the treasury of perception of truth, the subtle mind of nirvana, which I entrust to Kasyapa.’ Kasyapa entrusted it to Ananda, and then Shanavasa, Upagupta, and other great masters succeeded one

another. When it reached Bodhidharma, he came from the West [to China], pointing directly to the human mind to reveal its nature and make it enlightened, without establishing writings or sayings.

“Is this not the ancient sages’ path of expedient method? It’s just that when the individual concerned does not have faith, then he subjectively mistakes his reflection for his head and runs off following paths of insanity, which cause him to wander destitute in life and death.

“Chan worthies, if you can turn the light around for a moment and reverse your attention, critically examining your own standpoint, it may be said the gate will open wide, story upon story of the tower will appear manifest throughout the ten directions, and the oceanic congregations will become equally visible. Then the ordinary and the holy, the wise and the foolish, the mountains, rivers, and earth, will all be stamped with the seal of the oceanic reflection state of concentration, with no leakage whatsoever.

“When I preach like this, a real Chan monk hearing it would, I dare say, cover his ears and leave, laughing off that talk. But tell me, how do you utter an expression appropriate to real Chan monks?”

[a long silence]

“On the horizon, snow buries a thousand feet; how many pines are broken by the ice on the arches?”

73. Heshan instructed an assembly,

Cultivating learning is called “hearing,” transcending learning is called “proximity.” Beyond these two is called real transcendence.

A monk asked, “What is real transcendence?”

Heshan said, “Knowing how to beat the drum.”

“What is real truth?”

Heshan said, “Knowing how to beat the drum.”

“Mind itself is Buddha—I don’t question this. What is neither mind nor Buddha?”

Heshan said, “Knowing how to beat the drum.”

“When people who have gone beyond come, how do you deal with them?”

Heshan said, “Knowing how to beat the drum.”

74. Layman Pang asked Grand Master Ma, “Who is it that is not a companion of myriad things?”

Ma said, “When you drink up the water of West River in one sip, then I’ll tell you.”

A monk asked, "What is Buddha?"

Grand Master Ma said, "Mind itself is Buddha."

75. Master Dagui Zhenru addressed a crowd,

A la la! What cogitation is this? 'The moment the Oven Breaker's staff strikes, one knows one's turned away from self.'  
[striking the incense stand with his staff] Fallen, fallen!

A monk asked, "What is the meaning of Zhaozhou's 'cypress tree in the yard'?"

Zhenru said, "At night the weather's severe; the lone traveler's the first to feel cold."

The monk said, "What about the statement that he never said this?"

Zhenru said, "Only the traveler knows his pains."

The monk said, "Ten years walking in the red dust, today the body's revealed alone."

Zhenru said, "Frost on top of snow."

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Note

The story of the Oven Breaker is found in the *Blue Cliff Record*. The story of the cypress tree in the yard is found in the *Book of Serenity*

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76. Master Tianyi Huai addressed an assembly,

The universe is not absolute; what is wrong with distinctions? The sixth grand master of Chan said, ‘When leaves fall, they return to the root; when we came we had no mouth.’ If you understand this talk, you will enter directly into the room of Vimalakirti, abide in the glow of golden light, and see the four kinds of sages and six kinds of ordinary beings in the worlds of the ten directions, as if you were looking at a fruit in the palm of your hand.

You will also see a species of being who sleep through the long night of birth and death, oblivious, aslumber, unaware, unknowing. Wouldn’t it be a joy to make the cry of the golden rooster announcing the dawn, to wake them up? If you can do this, then you can use this profound mind to serve infinite lands. This is called requiting your debt to Buddha.

Even so, an ancient said, “Those who smile at me are many, those who laugh at me are few.”

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#### Note

The room of Vimalakirti refers to the main setting of the popular scripture *Vimalakirti’s Advice* and represents the emptiness of absolute reality in conditional phenomena.

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77. Master Fahua Ju said to an assembly,

Participatory study requires you to have the eye to distinguish things; you can't fudge it. If you attain precision and clarity of accurate perception, there is no inhibition at all.

Haven't you read the saying of the ancient, "Every statement must contain three mysteries; each mystery must contain three essentials." What was the ancient's meaning in speaking thus? "The king goose that can pick milk from water is not in the same class as the ducks."

A monk asked, "I don't ask about 'not a fleck of cloud for myriad miles'—what about the matter of the 'single frosty blade'?"

The master said, "Who dares set it in motion?"

The monk bowed.

The master said, "A small kindness prevents a great kindness," and hit him.

The monk asked, "How is it when at the place knowledge doesn't reach?"

The master said, "The triple gate has never opened."

The monk said, "Who is a knower?"

The master said, "The mouth is like the nose."

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Note

“The mouth is like the nose” means “silent.”

For the three mysteries and three essentials, see notes to selection 216.

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78. Master Longji said to an assembly,

Complete ordinariness is not known to ordinary people;  
complete sagehood is not understood by sages. If sages  
understood, they would be ordinary people; if ordinary people knew,  
they would be sages.

This saying has one principle and two meanings: if people can  
discern them, undeniably they have some penetration of Buddhism.  
If you can't discern, don't say you don't wonder.

*Dahui remarked*, “It is easier to turn stones into gold and jewels than  
to get people to set aside affirmation and negation.”

Longji also said,

Affirming the pillars, you don't see the pillars; negating the  
pillars, you don't see the pillars. After detachment from affirmation  
and negation, understand in the midst of affirmation and negation.

*Dahui remarked*, “Tsk! He's starting all over again!”

79. Master Lingyuan said to an assembly,

The Buddhas of all times do not know existence; a debt is not repaid twice. Cats and cows know existence; effort's expended wastefully. When you clarify the great function and awaken the great potential, your trail is inconceivable; go back unknown to anyone. Bursting open the blue sky, a thousand feet of pine; cutting through the red dust, a valley stream of water.

80. Master Dongshan Chu said to an assembly,

On the northern faces of the mountains of Chu, along the southern reaches of the Han River, they beat the drum of the teaching, assemble Chan groups, bring up the way of the school, and explain the intent of the founders.

If you take up 'raising the eyebrows and glaring,' holding up a fist or raising a finger, coughing or clearing the throat, or sayings like 'a dishcloth in the refectory,' 'what are you saying?' 'understand?' 'a mendicant's worn-out sandals' 'blind fellow!' 'ignoramus!' 'playing with the psyche,' 'all is thus,' 'all is not so,' and consider this to be bringing up the perennial concern, all of it is demonic activity, slandering the Great Vehicle, exterminating the Chan folk—it is totally irrelevant to you.

But tell me, what principle does a Chan practitioner rely on?  
Come forth and speak in front of the gathering.

Around a broken-legged kettle, if each puts forth a single hand  
in hopes of keeping the vehicle of the source going, this too  
represents a spiritual community. Is there anyone?

If not, I will unstintingly go on hinting.

The hint is right before your eyes—myriad forms, the universe,  
the earth, the hundreds and thousands of Buddhas, the sun, moon,  
stars, and planets, the hells, the three mires, arousal of mind and  
stirring of thoughts, the experiences of everyday life—these are all  
your self; why not focus here to seek? All at once you will manage  
to see independently and clearly, without going journeying for  
naught, attaining the state of peace on your own.

These words of mine are making medicine for a dead horse—  
if a clear-eyed Chan practitioner should stuff a straw sandal in my  
mouth, could I blame him?

Blaming is not blaming—you tell me why. Take it in your grip,  
find it out under your feet. The slightest deviation will break you in  
half; better not be coarse-minded.

A monk asked, “Looking for pearls in red water still refers to  
worldly valuables; what is sung out in concert with the clouds is

certainly not talk beyond convention. What do you use to direct people today?"

[The master said] "Hearing the ghost-propitiation drum at night, listening to the mooring songs in the morning."

"How is it when words transcend images and speech is uttered beyond the blue sky?"

"There's rhyme in the voice of the travelers on the shore; the fishermen in the boats harmonize unevenly."

"What about the matter of recondite mystery?"

"The hook is long, the line is short."

"I hear the master bringing out the meaning in the pond—what about the business of penetrating directly through the blue sky?"

"A *jia-si* year begins with *bing*."

"What is the business of today?"

"Very nice snow."

"What is Buddha?"

"Three pounds of flax."

"What is the mind of extinct Buddhas?"

"A nest knows the wind, a cave knows the rain."

"How was Niutou before meeting the Fourth Grand Master?"

"A rough-hewn staff."

“How about after meeting?”

“The cloth shirt of the Dou’s eighth son.”

“I don’t ask about Buddhism; what is the perennial concern?”

“Seeing someone play a wooden flute with your eyes.”

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Note

*Jia-si* and *bing* are terms used in the traditional calendry system. The reference here is to what is referred to in Chan as “ordinary reality,” in this dialogue implying return to the world after transcendence.

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81. Master Dasui said to an assembly,

The virtuous ones of antiquity all sought reality, not deceiving themselves. How could they be compared to flighty moths casting themselves into flames, injuring and destroying themselves? They clearly understood life and death, so repetitive cycles couldn’t hold them back.

That is why ‘cognition cannot conceive it, knowledge cannot know it.’ Haven’t you heard how Shakyamuni Buddha closed the door, and the enlightened layman Vimalakirti kept silent? The saint Subhuti explained without speaking, the gods Indra and Brahma heard without listening. This matter is very difficult, very difficult!



A monk asked, "On meeting an ancient Buddha on the road, then what?"

"Suppose you encounter a donkey, a camel, an elephant, or a horse—what do you call it?"

"Myriad things come from mind—where does mind come from?"

"A stone ox gallops along the river, sparks in the water burn the sky."

"What is the mark of a great man?"

"He doesn't stick a sign on his belly."

82. Master Ciming asked a monk, "Where have you just come from?"

He said, "Clouds cross the azure of a thousand mountains."

"Why are you in such a hurry?"

"The cries of the geese leaving the water are intense."

Ciming thereupon shouted. The monk shouted too. Ciming struck; the monk struck too. Ciming said, "Look at this blind fellow! Really I should drive you out, but considering you're a newcomer, for now sit and have tea."

He also asked the fund raiser, “I don’t ask you about preaching in town; how do you express entering the gate?”

The monk immediately shouted.

Ciming said, “Why do you shout at random?”

The monk shouted again; Ciming struck him.

Ciming asked another monk, “Where have you come from?”

He said, “Yangqi.”

Ciming asked, “Where did you spend summer retreat?”

He said, “At Xingjiao.”

Ciming asked, “And does the master of Xingjiao have nostrils?”

He said, “Yes.”

Ciming thereupon struck him.

83. Langya Jiao said to an assembly,

Eliminating bandits and getting rid of robbers still belongs to the realm of effort and achievement.

When the paths of ruler and subject harmonize, and the ocean is calm and the rivers clear, this is still in the realm of the absolute.

What is the basic concern of a Chan practitioner?

The golden fish that's passed through the net is still in the water; the stone horse on the way back gets out of the silken cage.

[Langya Jiao also composed a verse on the story of Three Pounds of Flax]

*Dongshan's three pounds of flax—  
Brass is not exchanged for gold.  
Buying five colors with a coin,  
He draws an angel on the wall.*

[Langya versified the story of the grand master tossing a needle in a bowl of water]

*Nagarjuna's water in a bowl,  
Kanadeva's needle on down:  
Everyone argues about winning and losing,  
Everybody talks about far and near.  
If you don't see the geese in the clouds,  
How can you know the sand bar's deep?  
A farmer moves a foundation stone,  
And under the stone he finds gold.*

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#### Note

The story of three pounds of flax is in the *Blue Cliff Record*. "What is Buddha?" "Three pounds of flax." The story of tossing a needle in a bowl is in *Transmission of Light*. The Indian patriarch Nagarjuna set out a bowl of water in front of Kanadeva, his successor; Kanadeva tossed a needle into the bowl.

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84. Master Zhenjing said to an assembly,

Xuefeng said, “There’s a turtle-nosed snake on South Mountain—watch out for it in your comings and goings.” Xuefeng had no marks of greatness; so the snake wouldn’t go without a head. As for Changqing, responding, “A lot of people lose their lives in this auditorium today,” he was like a new bride afraid of her mother-in-law. Yunmen stuck his cane in front of Xuefeng and made a gesture of fright, drawing legs on a snake. Xuansha said, “Why use ‘South Mountain’?” If one says one’s own perception is closest, one has not escaped just being in a cave. There was no one else with any natural spirit at all. Isn’t there anyone here with natural spirit? I dare not hope you will hang another sun of wisdom and individually activate the esoteric influence. Now if you turn to the smelly shirts of the ancients, you can hardly even get a sense of the breath of life.

85. A monk asked Nanyuan, “Are the meaning of Chan and the meaning of Buddhism the same or different?”

He said, “Chairman of the Board, Chief Executive Officer.”

The monk said, “I don’t understand.”

The master said, “Ox head south, horse head north.”

*Dahui remarked*, “The former answer hit the mark; the latter answer didn’t.”

86. Master Dayu Zhi said to an assembly,

I receive descendants of the Great Hero, the monks of the Chan world race; what gateway is there to race to? How can the striking arrow know the withered tree survives? The withered tree survives, in one year going through springtime twice. Two times spring—behind the curtains, pearls are spread out for people. Spread out for people—even to think is admiring Western Qin.

A monk asked Master Fenzhou, “What is a statement for beginners?” Fenzhou said, “You are a traveling monk.” “What is a statement to distinguish a Chan monk?” Fenzhou said, “The sun rises in the West in the morning.” “What is a statement of enforcement of the absolute imperative?” Fenzhou said, “Brought a thousand miles, presenting the same old face.” “What is an expression stabilizing heaven and earth?” “On the northern continent of Kuru, those who always eat nonglutinous rice have no greed and no anger.” I use these four sayings to test all Chan monks, but when you think about it carefully, with these four sayings I’ve been seen through all at once by all Chan monks.

*Dahui remarked*, “Do you want to know Dayu? ‘One who doesn’t change his father’s ways for three years can be called respectful.’”

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Note

Western Qin was a breakaway kingdom founded by a Turkic general in Chinese service who rebelled against his Chinese employer.

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87. Master Daning Kuan held up his staff to an assembly and said, “High without peril, full without overflowing, in ordinary people and impossible for ordinary people to abandon, in sages and impossible for sages to escape, the ten directions all in one perception, the whole earth without a mote of dust—tell me, what is this? Ha!”

88. Master Letan Jun held up his staff to an assembly and said, “A Chan monk’s acrobatic pole accompanies him wherever he goes; he performs wherever he may be. Holding it upside down, lifting it sideways, he’s naturally artistic. Thus in ancient times Master Yaoshan asked Yunyan, ‘I hear you know how to tame lions; is that so?’ Yunyan said, ‘It is.’ Yaoshan asked, ‘How many have you tamed?’ Yunyan said, ‘I’ve tamed six.’ Yaoshan said, ‘I too can tame lions.’ Yunyan asked, ‘How many have you tamed?’ Yaoshan said,

‘I have only tamed one.’ Yunyan said, ‘One is six, six are one.’

Yaoshan then stopped talking.

“Yaoshan and Yunyan take people for fools; both of them together couldn’t tame a single lion. If it were me, all I’d have to do is lead myself out, make head into tail and tail into head, revolve two golden eyes, bare some iron-hook claws, and let out a howl making all the wild beasts within a hundred miles disappear, and cause the birds to fall from the sky.

“I haven’t paraded my lion yet—pay close attention, and first watch me make a secure place.” [tossing down his staff, he said]

“How many people know what’s going on here?”

89. Master Fojian said to an assembly,

“The supreme Way is without difficulty; just avoid discrimination.” Peach blossoms are pink, apricot blossoms are white; who says they’re of a uniform color? Swallows twitter, nightingales sing—who says they sound the same? If you don’t pass through the barrier of this master teacher, you’ll vainly take mountains and rivers for eyes.

90. Master Fori Cai versified the story of the cypress tree:

*The cypress tree in Zhaozhou’s yard*

*Is mentioned to a Chan traveler;  
On the black lacquer screen,  
The pine and the vine are distinct.*

91. A monk asked Master Yuanzhao, “What is the white ox on open ground?”

He said, “When it’s released, there’s no place to look for it.”

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Note

The white ox on open ground, a symbol taken from the Lotus sutra, represents the Ekayana or One Vehicle, the complete teaching on opening up the knowledge and vision of Buddhas.

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92. A monk asked Master Datong, “What is the seamless monument?”

He said, “Fog and mist arise back and front; stars and moon circle the pillars holding up the eaves.”

“What is the person in the monument?”

“He doesn’t bother with the business of purifying society all day long; over the years he occupies a village in the white clouds.”

93. Master Zihu said,



All things are free—what binds, what restricts? You yourself create your own difficulty and ease therein.

The mind source is a single continuity, pervading the ten directions; to people of the finest faculties it is naturally clear.

Haven't you read Nanquan's statement, 'Innocents like this are after all rare in the world.' Clearly they exist; actually everyone is so, but they just lack a robust will—that's what makes them get so tired.

Do you want to understand easily? There has never ever been a single ordinary person or sage appearing before you, and not a single good word or bad word that applies to you.

Why? If you do good, good has no form; if you do evil, evil has no sign.

Since there is no self, what do you take for good or bad? What do you define as ordinary or holy?

Do you believe or not? Do you take responsibility? Where is there to escape? That would be like trying to flee your shadow in the sunlight—can you actually avoid it?

Buddha's teaching is profound and subtle; those who comprehend it motivate themselves, not letting minor circumstances interfere with major tasks. Have you not read the saying, 'Even if

you have to insist on the law all your life, who can forget conditions for even a day?’

Do you want to understand Chan? Let each of you go back to your place and look.

94. Master Xuedou Xian addressed an assembly,

“Form arises before it is substantial; terms are produced for the unnamed; once form and name have appeared, ambient energy is turbid and clear.” [raising his staff] Everyone, the staff is form and name brought up together; is there any error?

If there is, it’s the moon in the water; if not, yet form and name have appeared.

If you can find out, truly it can be said, “When the debt is great, it’s hard to repay.”

95. Gushan said to an assembly,

You all say you travel all around to study and learn. I wonder—study what? Learn what? Is there anything to learn? If there is, come forth and prove it to the assembly.

And do you study Chan, study the Way, study Buddha, study Dharma, study the master of the reality-body of Vairocana, study that

which is beyond buddhahood, or the state beyond nirvana?

If you really study these expressions, that can be considered great error; it is referred to as the mind looking upward never ceasing. This is none of your business.

A monk asked, "What is the great meaning of Buddhism?"

"Spit it out!"

"Whenever there is any expression, it invariably violates the way of Chan. What is the concern of Chan?"

"Shut up!"

96. Master Wuzu Yan said to an assembly,

Of old it has been said, "If one discovers reality and returns to the source, all space in the ten directions disappears." I do not concur. If one discovers reality and returns to the source, all space in the ten directions is bumped into everywhere.

97. Master Wuzu said to an assembly,

An ancient said, "If I tell you, it'll strip my tongue; if I don't tell you, it'll silence my mouth." Now tell me, is there any help for people in this? Sometimes I try to swallow for you, but it's blocked by my

own teeth; sometimes I try to spit out for you, but my throat is too small. So tell me, is there any help for people?

I've always been a purist.

98. Master Huanglong Xin eulogized a master teacher:

*The Sixth Grand Master was not a powerful man back then;  
Hiring another to write on the wall, he himself was confused.  
Quite clearly he had a verse saying there is no thing,  
Yet he accepted another's bowl.*

*Dahui remarked, "Now tell me, is the bowl a thing, or not a thing? If you say it's a thing, then old Huanglong isn't a powerful man either. If you say it's not a thing, how does that affect the bowl?"*

99. Master Yungai Zhi said to an assembly,

Tying on water-repelling shoes, walk over the lakes and rivers; taking hold of iron brambles, roust caves of dragons and tigers. Climbing a tree upside-down, for the final time see there is no creation or destruction. Laughing at old Gautama, in a finger-snap go beyond Maitreya.

100. Master Fadeng asked Yunji Ji, "Just now someone asked about the meaning of the Chan founder coming from the West. I told

him it is neither East nor West. What about you?”

Ji said, “Neither East nor West.”

Fadeng said, “How can you get it understanding this way?”

At the time Ji was confused and didn’t get the point. That evening he asked for help. Fadeng said, “He naturally has descendants.” At these words Ji suddenly attained awakening. He composed a verse saying,

*Dealing with people to benefit the living is most wonderful;  
Alienating life after all is not good.  
‘He naturally has descendants.’  
Now that you mention it,  
The application’s just right.*

101. The reply of the National Teacher of Qingliang to the Imperial Crown Prince’s inquiry about the essentials of mind:

The ultimate way is rooted in the mind; the reality of mind is rooted in nondwelling. The awareness of the nondwelling substance of mind is not obscured; essence and characteristics peaceful, it contains qualities and functions. Comprehending both inside and outside, it is deep and it is broad.

Neither existent nor void, it is not produced and does not pass away. It has no end and no beginning. When you seek it, you cannot get it; reject it, and it still doesn’t leave.

If you miss the immediate experience, then the pains of confusion are jumbled; if you realize true essence, then the light of openness is thoroughly clear.

Although mind itself is Buddha, only those who experience it actually know. But if there is 'realization' and 'knowledge,' then the sun of wisdom sets in the land of existence. Yet if there is no illumination and no awakening, then dark clouds cover the gate of emptiness.

If a thought is not produced, then before and after are cut off, and the luminous essence stands alone; others and self are one suchness.

Go directly to the source of mind, and there is no knowledge, no attainment; you neither grasp nor reject, so there is no opposition and no cultivation.

Nonetheless, confusion and enlightenment are interdependent; truth and illusion are relative.

If you seek reality trying to get rid of illusion, that is like wearing out your body to get rid of your shadow; if you realize how illusion is truth, that is like staying in the shade so your shadow disappears.

If you forget perception, not minding, then myriad cogitations disappear; if you spontaneously know dispassionately, here is where all practices come from.

Freed and allowed to go or stay, the quiet mind is aware of the source and stream. Not losing the mystic subtlety whether speaking or silent, action and repose never leave the realm of reality.

In terms of 'cessation,' it is silent knowing forgetting both; in terms of 'observation,' it is silent knowing perceiving both. Speaking of experience, it cannot be pointed out to another; speaking of principle, it cannot be understood without experience. Therefore when you realize silence, there is no silence; true knowledge has no knowledge.

With the unified mind in which knowing and silence are not two, harmonize with the centered course in which emptiness and existence merge together. Not dwelling, having no fixation, do not absorb, do not take in; affirmation and negation gone, subject and object are both obliterated.

When this obliteration also ceases, then insight appears.

Insight is not produced outside the mind; the nature of wisdom is originally inherent, but it is basically quiescent and cannot manifest itself. In actuality it depends on achievement of wisdom.

Insight and wisdom complete each other; the basic wisdom and the applied cultivation are really not two entities. When both disappear and you penetrate experientially, then subtle awareness is round and clear.

As beginning and end merge, cause and effect interpenetrate. Being a Buddha in every state of mind, no mind is not the mind of Buddha; realizing enlightenment in every place, there is not a single atom that is not a buddha-land.

So whether truth and falsehood or others and self, when you bring up one, the totality is included. Mind, Buddha, and living beings are as a whole ultimately equal; so we know that when they are deluded people follow things, and since things have myriad differences people are not the same; but when they are enlightened things follow people, everyone has one wisdom that clarifies myriad objects.

When words are exhausted and thought is ended, what is effect, what is cause? The essence is fundamentally silent—what is the same, what is different?

Just forget what's on your mind, be empty and clear, and your comings and goings will be peaceful and harmonious, like



moonbeams penetrating water, immaterial yet visible, unmindingly mirroring images, reflective yet always empty.

102. National Teacher Zhong asked an imperial attendant monk, “What does ‘Buddha’ mean?”

The imperial attendant said, “It means enlightened.”

The National Teacher said, “Was Buddha ever deluded?”

The imperial attendant said, “No.”

The National Teacher said, “Then what’s the need for enlightenment?”

The imperial attendant had no reply. Dahui said in his behalf, “If you don’t plunge into the water, how can you be promoted over others?”

103. In the process of burning a clearing in the mountains, Master Dasui saw a snake; tossing it into the fire with his staff, he clucked his tongue and said, “You still won’t give up this physical body on your own; for you to die here will be like finding a lamp in the dark.”

Then a monk asked, “Is there any sin at such a time?”

Dasui said, “When a stone tiger roars, the mountain valleys echo; where a wooden man yells, an iron ox is startled.”

Also, he asked a monk, "Where are you going?"

The monk said, "To the western mountains to live in a hut."

Dasui said, "If I call you in the eastern mountains, will you be able to get there?"

The monk said, "No."

Dasui said, "Then you are not yet able to live in a hut."

The monk asked, "What is the master's own way?"

Dasui said, "Painting a winnowing basket with red earth."

"What is the logic of this?"

Dasui said, "The winnowing basket has lips so the rice can't jump out."

104. When Master Huanglong Nan was dwelling at Tong-an, he addressed the assembly in these terms:

Today, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month, is our Buddha's birthday, when all the monasteries in the land 'bathe baby Buddha.' I remember when Cloth Robe Zun was the acting shrine keeper in the congregation at Yaoshan, in the course of the Buddha-bathing rite Yaoshan asked, "You've just managed to bathe this one; can you bathe that one?"

Zun said, "Bring that one."

Yaoshan let the matter rest.

The ancients spoke a word or half a phrase according to the time, and without artifice or mysteriousness. People today try their darnedest to deal with them, without ever reaching their realm.

Some people say “‘This one’ is the bronze statue, while ‘that one’ is the reality-body. The bronze statue has form and so can be washed, but how can you wash the body of reality? Yaoshan only knew the one, not the two; when Zun pushed back, he could only frown, overcome by shame.”

They also say, “When the ancients posed questions, they just wanted to test people. If they ask you about ‘that one’ and you then talk about ‘that one,’ this is actually chasing sound and form, gnawing their words, walking into their trap. Yaoshan stopped because he saw he didn’t understand.”

They also say, “This approach of Yaoshan is already creating an issue where there was none, gouging a wound in healthy flesh. Mr. Zun didn’t see the ailment coming up, and added more moxa on top of a cautery scar.”

Some say, “When the ancients had attained realization, they performed according to the venue, without any right or wrong, high

or low. Both knew what was, but after this people of later times insisted on making up discriminations.”

Interpretations like these are due to failure to meet enlightened people. Once they lose the source, they wander off, never to return. That is why they just go by the conscious mind’s thinking and comparison, taking this to be the vehicle to the source. What they don’t realize is that contrived thought comes from a specific mentality, so to use this thought to discern the sphere of enlightenment is like trying to burn the polar mountain with a firefly’s “fire”—it will never kindle, even in a million years.

Therefore high-minded people traveling on foot should look for themselves—what should be done about the perennial concern? What do you use to counter birth and death? Don’t let a little bit of flighty and crude conscious vision create an obstacle for you. Buddhism is not this way.

Today I have not avoided verbal activity in order to explain the interaction of these two venerable adepts, showing no winning or losing. Thirty years hence, don’t bring it up wrongly.

105. Master Yangqi said to an assembly,

Expressions of being and expressions of nonbeing are like vines clinging to a tree; Manjushri and Vimalakirti go home without doing anything about it. Even my speaking thus is also watching a hole being plugged. There is something yet to say—don't misquote. *Dahui remarked*, "Profit moves a gentleman."

106. When National Teacher Yan first called on Xuefeng, as soon as he entered the gate Xuefeng grabbed him and stopped him, saying, "What is it?" Released, Yan attained enlightenment. He raised his hand and waved it. Xuefeng said, "Are you rationalizing?" Yan said, "What rationale is there?" Xuefeng then gave him the seal of approval.

107. Master Zhenjing, in an address to an assembly, held up his staff and said,

"The heart of nirvana is easy to understand; the knowledge of differentiation is hard to clarify."

An ancient said, "If you have support, I give you support; if you have no support, I take your support away." I am not that way. If you have support, I take your support away. If you have no support, I give you support. Now tell me, which of us is right?

[tossing down his staff] What is this?

[silence]

This is the Naga girl attaining buddhahood all at once.

Otherwise, it is Sunakshatra, falling living into hell.

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#### Notes

The Naga girl is a figure from the Lotus sutra, a young girl who attained Buddhahood instantaneously.

Sunakshatra was a disciple of Buddha who thought he had reached nirvana when he entered the fourth stage of meditation, and became so conceited that he “fell living into hell.”

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108. Master Daowu Zhen addressed an assembly,

Dongshan said, “Clouds are steaming rice on Mt. Wutai, a dog is pissing skyward in front of the steps to the Buddha shrine.

Steaming buns atop a flagpole, three monkeys pitch pennies at night.” I do not concur. A three-faced badger treads on the moon; a two-headed ox grabs the mist. A blue rabbit wearing a crown stands on the cypress tree in the yard; a turtle without a shell flies to the sky.

You have seen through my complications; Dongshan’s are extremely unusual. Even so, he only managed to go three or four steps, and didn’t get past seven or eight leaps. Now tell me, where

is the riddle? Today I don't begrudge anything—I'm giving it all away at once.

[silence]

Being overly polite diminishes a lord's character; not speaking is truly effective. Even if the ocean changes, it can't be communicated to you.

109. Letan Ying said to an assembly,

The stone gate is steep, the iron pass is impregnable. When you look up, there's layer upon layer, a thousand fathoms high. An iron ox without horns bursts through, drumming up waves throughout the ocean of Vairocana.

Now tell me, people, how do you say an expression of not getting into the waves?

[silence]

The expression has no time for Asanga's question; even now he is still a monk who sleeps in the meadows.

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Note

Asanga was an Indian master, associated with the teaching of *vijnaptimatratā*, "consisting of representation," according to which the world as we conceive it is not objective reality per se but a representation, a mental construction interpreting the data of sense and perception.

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110. Master Baoning Yong said to an assembly,

People of today use what belonged to people of the past;  
people of the past made what people have today. Past and present  
have no back or front; present and past, how many know? Huh?  
Whoo, whee—when one nine and two nines meet, neither makes a  
move.

[he also said]

Seedless spiritual sprouts are planted in fire, iron flowers  
bloom in the trees. Suddenly a round fruit forms; when it's pointed  
out to people of the time, they can take care of it.

111. Master Huaitang said to an assembly,

The proposition of being and the proposition of nonbeing are  
like vines clinging to a tree—you people may nod your heads for the  
moment, but when the tree falls and the vines wither, you have no  
strategy to challenge the heavens, and no tactics to enter the earth.  
If a spiritually sharp individual can set an eye here, he will see freely  
in all ways.



[raising his whisk] Sunlight fills the eyes—there's not a cloud for myriad miles. If this is under an overturned bowl, how can you blame me?

112. Master Huanglong Xin said to an assembly,

Bodhidharma's school of mind has been transmitted up to the present without leaking a drop, without moving a hair. But if it does not move at all, how is it transmitted?

The precious seal stands for the subtlety of the teaching; layer upon layer of brocade, the stitching goes through.

113. Guishan asked Yangshan, "Now that you are called a teacher, how do you discern whether those who come from elsewhere know what is or do not know what is; or whether they have transmission from a teacher or not; or whether they are literalists or mystics. Try to tell me."

Yangshan said, "I have a test. Whenever I see monks coming from elsewhere, I stand up my whisk and ask if they expound this elsewhere or not. I also ask what else the elders do elsewhere, leaving this aside."

Guishan said in praise, "This is the tooth and nail of the school of the source since time immemorial."

114. Yangshan asked a monk, "Where have you come from?"

The monk said, "The South."

Yangshan held up his staff and asked, "Do they speak of *this* there?"

The monk said, "No."

Yangshan asked, "If they don't speak of *this*, do they speak of *that*?"

He said, "No."

Yangshan called, "Great Worthy, go join in the hall."

But the monk went right off. Yangshan called him again, "Great Worthy!" The monk responded; Yangshan said, "Come here." When the monk approached, Yangshan hit him.

Yunmen remarked, "Without the follow-up words, how could Yangshan have known the man?"

115. Master Yunju Ying said to an assembly,

Twenty years ago, when I was living in a hermitage on Three Peaks, elder Xinghua of Weifu came and asked, "How is it when

provisionally using a question for shadow-casting grass?” At that time my mind and thought were slow, and I couldn’t give him an answer. Because he had posed the question so remarkably, I dare not offend him. He said, “I think you can’t answer this question—it would be better to bow and withdraw.” Now as I think of that time, it was hardly worth saying “What’s the necessity?”

Later when a fund raiser went to Weifu, Xinghua asked him, “When the teacher on the mountain was living in a hermitage on Three Peaks, I asked him a question he couldn’t answer. Has he been able to answer it by now?”

The fund raiser then quoted the foregoing talk. Xinghua said, “In twenty years Yunju has only managed to say this ‘what’s the necessity’? I disagree. How does that compare to saying ‘not necessary’?”

Sansheng said, “What it took Yunju twenty years to say is only comparable to half a month’s journey for Xinghua.”

*Dahui remarked,* “‘What’s the necessity?’ ‘Not necessary’—very tight, very close, meeting the situation face to face. If anyone can continue the last word, I’ll admit you have met the two venerable adepts.”

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Note

Shadow casting grass is used to cast a shadow on water, blocking the reflection of sunlight, in order to see into the water and discern whether there are fish below the surface. Using a question as shadow casting grass therefore means using a question to probe someone's mind.

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116. Master Yunfeng Yue addressed an assembly at Cuiyan,

Is the Way far off?

Whatever you encounter is reality.

Is sagehood remote?

Embody it and you are spiritual.

Thus sound is used for Buddhist service in this world

Endurance, while fragrant rice is used for Buddhist service in the world Accumulation of Fragrance.

Here, I support and serve the countless Buddhas of past, present, and future in outgoing and incoming breaths, without missing a single one.

The countless Buddhas of past, present, and future are my attendants; not one of whom fails to show up.

Anyone who doesn't show up gets thirty blows of the cane.

But do you understand?

‘Serving countless lands with this profound mind is called requiring the kindness of Buddha.’

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Note

The world Accumulation of Fragrance and the use of fragrance to teach, comes from a scene in the scripture *Vimalakirti's Advice*, often cited in Chan literature, where it is emphasized that teaching and learning can take place through all the senses.

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117. A monk asked National Teacher Zhong, “An ancient worthy said, ‘The green bamboos are all the reality body; the clusters of yellow flowers are all transcendent wisdom.’ There are those who disagree, calling this a false teaching, while there are also those who believe it, calling it inconceivable. I don’t know what to make of it.”

The National Teacher said, “This is the realm of Samantabhadra and Manjusri, not something that ordinary and lesser people can believe or accept. It is entirely in accord with the sense of the scriptures of complete doctrine of the Great Vehicle.

“So the *Flower Ornament Scripture* says, ‘The body of Buddha pervades the cosmos, appearing everywhere, in front of all living beings, going everywhere in sensitive response to conditions, while always on this seat of enlightenment.’ Since green bamboo is not outside the cosmos, how could it not be the reality body?

“Also, the *Scripture on Transcendent Wisdom* says, ‘Because form is boundless, wisdom is also boundless.’ Since yellow flowers are not beyond form, how are they not wisdom?

“The meaning of words that are deep and far-reaching can hardly be construed by those who don’t understand them.”

Now the Chan traveler bowed and left.

Also, a lecturer on the *Flower Ornament Scripture* asked master Dazhu, “Why don’t you accept the saying that ‘the green bamboos are all the reality body, the clusters of yellow flowers are all transcendent wisdom’?”

Dazhu said, “The reality body has no form; it takes shape in the forms of the green bamboos. Transcendent wisdom has no knowledge; it displays characteristics in response to the yellow flowers. It is not that transcendent wisdom and the reality body are in the yellow flowers and green bamboos. Therefore scripture says, ‘The Buddhas’ true reality body is like space; it shows forms according to things, like the moon reflected in water.’ If yellow flowers were wisdom, wisdom would be the same as insentience. If green bamboos were the body of reality, then the green bamboos should be able to function adaptively. Do you understand?”

The lecturer said, “I don’t comprehend the meaning.”

Dazhu said, “If one has seen the essence, one may say ‘yes’ and one may also say ‘no.’ Speaking according to usefulness, one does not get stuck in affirmation or negation. As for people who have not seen the essence, if you mention green bamboo they get fixated on green bamboo; and if you mention yellow flowers they get fixated on yellow flowers. Mention the reality body, and they get hung up on the reality body; mention wisdom, and they don’t recognize wisdom. So it all becomes argumentation.”

The lecturer bowed, gave thanks, and left.

*Dahui remarked*, “People in the community, assessing this story, say that ‘As the two adepts cut and polished this way, one got the substance and one got the function. Those who get the function set it up on a concrete basis; those who get the substance sweep away by abstraction. As it is said, *the abstract ground of the limit of reality does not admit of a single particle, but nothing is rejected in the context of enlightened service*. Master of the truth oneself, one is independent of things; one may put down or lift up, without gain or loss.’ This sort of view is referred to as dwarfs watching a play. As for my own view, I want you all to know together. Haven’t you read the saying, ‘Over the back of a broken-down donkey, there are plenty of green flies hovering.’”

118. Master Daning Kuan, addressing an assembly, held up his staff and said,

The essential life of former Buddhas, the encompassing order of later Buddhas, are entirely herein. Put to use in the present, it makes clouds and rain, it makes auspicious atmospheres and events, it helps humans and angels, it goes out in life and in at death, appearing and disappearing in other worlds, folding and unfolding. Even if one's whole body were a mouth one could not explain it thoroughly; even if one's whole body were an eye one could not see it all. According with it is a moment of mindfulness, and an instant is an eternity.

119. Master Dongshan Chu, addressing an assembly, said,

Try to clarify the situation, and you blind yourself; try to stop thinking, and you miss the source. All things are in concert, but neither speech nor silence can express it.

This is not something subjective; don't create all sorts of attitudes. There is a separate discussion apart from the written statement.



But tell me, how do you discuss when detached? Are there any fine points for discussion? Clearly analyzing, clearly demonstrating, clearly expounding, clearly singing, so there is nothing concealed or covered, purely speaking dry-as-a-bone Chan. If you are a spiritually sharp Channist, as soon as you hear it mentioned you will astutely realize the point with your eyes closed. Is this not a matter of having your own perception?

Unfortunately, I rarely encounter such an individual. That is because here my words have no flavor, the food has no flavor, and the teaching has no flavor. Flavorless expression blocks off people's mouths.

Brethren, when you get here it is difficult to stay. If you can see clearly here, then you can tell clearly whether or not the honored abbots all over the land have arrived or not, whether they have penetrated or not.

Why? Because wisdom may be false or true, a path may be genuine or specious. Many just recognize what is in front of the gate or behind the house, using their ordinary mentality and consciousness, learning clichéd complications, piling up a load in their chests, claiming to understand Chan and the Way. Have they ever even dreamed yet of Chan or the Way? This is what is called

working without having met an adept, only to become a mere curio in old age. Some day if you should come upon the true heritage, you'll see through past activities and finally regret them, seeing your original birth star.

A monk asked, "Where knowledge does not fall into distinctions, please communicate without violation."

"Cake and candy."

"Before the mind is aroused, where are things?"

"When the lotus leaves in the pond move, you can be sure there are fish swimming."

"In the scripture *Vimalakirti's Advice*, all the people of higher goodness expounded the teaching of nonduality, but the layman Vimalakirti remained silent—what is the meaning?"

"If there are no eyes, you don't draw eyebrows."

"Illusion and non-illusion are not yet the ultimate paradigm for a student; what is talk entering into principle?"

"An eighty-year-old man's teeth don't wiggle."

120. Master Langya Jiao said,

Propositions of being and nonbeing are like vines clinging to a tree. When the tree falls the vines wither, a fine pile of rotten

firewood.

*Dahui remarked*, “Langya very much appears to be mistaking a thief for his son, but even so it’s hard to requite such a huge favor.”

121. Master Ciming said to an assembly,

When we beat the drum here, the four major continents gather in the same assembly. The staff held sideways, it straightens out the universe and the whole earth. The bowl overturned, it covers worlds as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges River. Now I ask you people; where do you settle yourself and live your life? If you know where to settle and live, you eat gruel and rice on the northern continent. If you don’t know, you eat gruel and rice on the long bench.

122. Master Wuzu Yan said to an assembly,

Those who can say a mouthful paradoxically don’t know existence; those who know existence cannot say it. Now tell me, where is the fault? If you want to build a nine-fathom mound, don’t begrudge a single basket of earth.

A monk asked Dongshan, “What is the eye of a guide?”  
Dongshan said, “A paper wick with no oil.” Old Dongshan is not

entirely lacking, but he sure is poor! If someone asked me what the eye of a guide is, I'd just tell him, "Blind." Why? For the moment I want to match:

*A paper wick with no oil—still quite extraordinary!  
It's not worth bringing up—who would know?  
Turning around, he remembers the road by which he came;  
Buoyant in the moonlight, he follows his feet back home.*

123. Master Zhenjing said to an assembly,

Once this day has gone, our lives too are less; like fish without enough water, what pleasure is there in this? In the meditation and concentration of the Two Vehicles of individual liberation, quiescent extinction is pleasure; this they regard as true bliss. For bodhisattvas cultivating insight, delight in truth and joy in meditation are pleasure; they regard this as true bliss. For the Buddhas of past, present, and future, the four infinite attitudes of kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity are pleasure; they are regarded as true bliss.

Shishuang said, "Cease, desist, be cool." This is called the pleasure of the quiescent extinction of the two vehicles of individual liberation. Yunmen said, "All knowledge penetrates unobstructed," then held up a fan and said, "Shakyamuni Buddha has arrived!" This

is called the pleasure of delight in truth and joy in meditation.

Deshan's staff and Linji's shout are the pleasure of kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity of the Buddhas of past, present, and future.

Anything apart from these three kinds of pleasure is not to be considered pleasant. But tell me, is the congregation here within these three kinds or outside them?

The head of the manor has made soup-rice and is giving out cash donations; let's retire to the communal hall and all have tea.  
Ha!

124. Master Shoushan Nian said to an assembly,

Elders, do not shout blindly, or shout at random. Here I always tell you the guest is the guest all along, and the host is the host all along. There is no guest besides the guest, and no host besides the host. If there were two hosts or two guests, they'd be a pair of blind folk.

Therefore when I stand you should sit, and when I sit you should stand. When sitting, I sit with you, and when standing I stand with you. Even so, here you have to set eyes on it quickly in order to get it. If the pupils of your eyes roll, then you're myriad miles off.

Why so? It's like looking through a window at a horse ridden by—a moment's hesitation and you've missed it.

This being so, when you set your mind on this you must be thoroughgoing—don't flail in vain, or some day it'll cheat you. It's up to you. If there is some issue, approach; if not, good bye.

A monk asked, "How is it when a bodhisattva has not yet become a Buddha?"

"An ordinary being."

"How about after becoming Buddha."

"An ordinary being. An ordinary being."

"Before the flower of enlightenment has bloomed, how can one distinguish truth?"

"If the winter isn't cold, wait and see after December."

"Isn't this it?"

"Wrong."

"How is it when the signal hasn't yet been sounded?"

"Looking skyward, you don't see the sky."

"How about after it is sounded?"

"Looking earthward, you don't see the ground."

"You are a great teacher; why did you return to Mt. Shou?"

“Not sitting on the summit of the solitary peak, I am always at leisure, accompanied by the white clouds.”

“The four groups surround you; what doctrine do you preach?”

“Beating the grass to scare the snakes.”

“How do you set about it?”

“Nearly could have perished just now.”

“Please speak immediately, without using your tongue.”

“When I come to this, I can’t say anything—let’s see you say something.”

“That’s still using your tongue—please speak otherwise.”

“Today Shoushan has lost the advantage.”

125. Master Shexian Sheng said to an assembly,

Bodhidharma’s coming from the West was to communicate to the East direct pointing to the human mind to see its essence and become enlightened, standing out alone in the midst of myriad forms, teaching outside of things. Those who realize it are not obstructed in the slightest. Those who miss it turn their backs on awareness and get mixed up in sense objects; these are people of mediocre and lesser potential. You must be thorough; don’t waste time. All of you have this; particularly when we use the meaning of

Chan, specially communicated without dogma, the Way is realized in a single saying, free in all directions, breaking through the skull, lifting off the top of the head—isn't this good?

A monk asked, "Please speak without falling into any relativities."

He said, "Fallen."

"What is the seamless memorial tower?"

"Hair uncombed, face unwashed."

"What is a home-leaver like?"

"Tightly turbaned."

"Then a householder is a home-leaver."

"Crude hempen sandals."

126. Master Cuiyan Zhu said to an assembly,

Ordinary people are obstructed by their interpretations; bodhisattvas are still not detached from awareness. [holding up his staff] The staff is an obstruction; what is awareness?

If you understand, obstruction by interpretation creates an obstacle and you are not free. If you do not "understand" but return to the source, essence has no duality but expedients include many methods.



127. Master Huaitang said to an assembly,

If you knock on space and make a sound, who can discern the note? If you knock on wood but it makes no sound, it's a waste of effort to lend an ear.

It is not the phenomena before your eyes; don't create all sorts of attitudes. Occurrence and disappearance do not know each other; herein there is no back or front.

Where the king of elephants strides, foxes and rabbits leave no tracks. When the moon reflected in the water appears, the wind and clouds are naturally distinct.

When you get here, the universe cannot contain you, heaven and earth do not know your name. A thousand sages stand down—who dares come forth and speak?

Good people, this requires that you sweep away your previous concept of life, your actions and doings, understanding and not understanding. Better you should go back to the mountains always whistling a single note deep in the mist.

128. Master Baofeng Ying said to an assembly,

A sage of the past said, “The moon over the river shines on the pines, the wind blows all night. On a clear night, what to do? The Buddha-nature, the pearls of the precepts, the seal of the Buddha-mind; fog and dew, clouds and mist, are clothing on the body.”

Chan worthies, though the sage of old spoke in this way, it can be said to be lacking in salt and lacking in vinegar. As for me, I’d say otherwise. The moon over the river shines on the pines, the wind blows all night. On a clear night, what to do? The note of the shepherd boy’s flute up on the range startles the crows, and they fly around the trees.

129. Master Wuzu Yan said to an assembly,

The Buddhas and Chan Masters are born enemies;  
awakening to the Way is messing with clay. Uncontrived,  
unconcerned people are as if blind and deaf to sound and form.

So tell me, what would be right?

‘Thus’ will not do, ‘not thus’ will not do either; so and not so will not do at all.

If someone were to suddenly come forth and say that ‘thus’ will do, ‘not thus’ will do, that so and not so will both work, I would simply say, ‘I realize you are making a living in a ghost cave.’

130. Master Baofeng Jun said to an assembly,

The Great Way is everywhere; whatever you encounter, there it is. When the clouds open up, the sun emerges; the waters are aquamarine, the mountains are bluish green. [suddenly he took his staff and stood it up] Great Master Yunmen is here. He says that Guanyin Bodhisattva takes a penny to buy a cracker, but when she puts it down it turns out to be a dumpling. People, Yunmen only sees the sharpness of the awl; he does not see the squareness of the chisel. I am otherwise. [he threw down his staff] Don't serve the king of emptiness midway along the road; make the effort to get home.

Yesterday someone came from Huainan, without news of the roads of Fukien; instead he said the great elephant of Jia province swallowed the iron ox of Xia prefecture.

Ha! What talk is this? It bowls over the land of the cloud-dwelling mountains with laughter.

131. Master Yungai Zhi said to an assembly,

'Always profoundly calm, right where you are—if you look for it, obviously you can't see it.'

Even though an ancient sage spoke thus, temporarily making a model, if you get hung up on it and can't get out, you just cling to what belonged to an ancient.

If, however, you can get out, then you will have some accord.

I am otherwise. Mounted on a swift horse, I circle the polar mountain; crossing the mountain, I look for ant tracks.

How many are there who know?

132. Master Panshan said, "It's like hurling a sword into the air; there's no question about whether it reaches or not. The sphere of the air has no scar, and the blade of the sword is undamaged. If you can be like this, you'll be free from concern in every state of mind." *Dahui remarked*, "Tsk, tsk, tsk! 'There's no such sword in my royal storehouse.'"

133. The day Master Dongshan Cong opened a teaching center, a monk asked, "A large crowd has gathered, the teacher has mounted the precious chair; please expound the essential vehicle of transcendence."

He said, "Even going downhill, unless you run it'll be hard to catch up."

“Whose song do you sing? From whom did you inherit the way of Chan?”

“With a bamboo cane I hold up the moon over a thousand realms; in my bowl I store the clouds of India’s five climes.”

“When Deshan struck people as soon as they came through the door, this was still building a model, drawing a likeness. When Linji shouted at people as soon as they came through the door, he still did not escape rubbing eyes producing optical illusions. Apart from these two courses, how do you help people?”

“The sky is clear, it hasn’t rained for a long time, but some clouds have sprung up in recent days.”

“Later on, if people ask me Dongshan’s message, how would you have me quote it?”

“The vegetables in the garden are extremely dry; fetch some water to sprinkle on the spinach.”

“Where is a rootless tree to be planted?”

“A thousand years’ estate is lost in one day.”

“Why would a great sage from one state appear in public in another state?”

“If a gentleman wants something, he finds the proper way to obtain it.”

“How is it when the ancient mirror is as yet unpolished?”

“It’s not far from here to Hanyang.”

“How about after polishing?”

“In front of Yellow Crane Pavilion, Parrot Island.”

When he sent out a fund raiser, he addressed the assembly in these terms:

The path of leadership belabors the eminent people of the ten directions. ‘While the ground of reality does not admit of a single particle, in the methods of Buddhist work not a single thing is abandoned.’ It is for the sake of the pure community that they forgot their fatigue.

So if the whole earth is a single cracker, everyone in the world gets to eat. The only one who does get to eat is the spirit of the desert, who angrily strikes a blow with a cane, such that tiles crumble and ice melts.

134. Master Mingzhao led a group to Yao Hermitage, where he held up a sash and said “It’s become too frazzled.”

The hermit said, “Don’t mistakenly acknowledge the zero point of the scale.”

Mingzhao said, “Just right.”

135. Master Nanyue Rang said to his group, “All phenomena arise from mind. If you reach the ground of mind, your activities will be uninhibited.”

A monk asked, “Suppose a mirror molds an image—after the image forms, where has the shine gone?”

He said, “It’s like your appearance before you were ordained, Reverend—where’s that gone?”

The monk asked, “After formation of the image, why doesn’t it reflect?”

He said, “Even if it doesn’t reflect, you still can’t deceive it at all.”

136. Master Huayao Ying said to an assembly,

Seventeen, eighteen—say it and you’re blind. Nineteen, twenty—people won’t believe. I’d wait ‘till a dead tree blooms and a cracker produces soup.

137. Luopu was Linji’s assistant for a long time. Linji used to praise him, saying “Who dares to stand up to the point of the lone arrow of Linji’s school?”

One day he took leave of Linji. Linji asked, "Where are you going?" Luopu said, "South." Linji drew a line with his staff and said, "If you can cross this, then go." Luopu immediately shouted; Linji struck him once. Luopu bowed.

The next day Linji went up in the hall and said, "There's a red-finned carp who shakes his head, flips his tail, and heads south; I don't know whose pickling jar he'll wind up in."

138. Master Yangqi said to an assembly,

The spring wind is like a knife, the spring rain is like a balm. When order is working correctly, all beings are moved. You tell me, how do you express a statement of being truly grounded in reality? Come forth and try to speak where you surge up in the east and sink away in the west. Even if you say it, it's a verse of Liangshan.

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Note

Liangshan was a master of the Cao-Dong lineage; according to *Transmission of Light*, "Liangshan often spoke of inner being in his teaching."

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139. When Master Fashang Yu received an invitation while at Twin Ridge, in taking leave of the two assembly leaders Ying and Sheng



he said, "We've been together for three years; there's nothing you don't know, but on examination, you're not free from leakage."

Drawing a line with his staff, he said, "Leaving this aside for the moment, what about the task of the school of the source?"

Ying said, "The polar mountain rests on the nose."

Fashang said, "If so, you are standing on the edge of a cliff looking at the shoreline, a particularly sad scene."

Ying said, "A celestial spirit glares."

Fashang said, "Nevertheless, though there is no different road for sages and ordinary people, expedient means include many approaches."

Ying said, "An iron snake cannot bore in."

Fashang said, "How can one converse with someone like this?"

Ying said, "It's just because the strength of the roots is slight—don't resent the sunny spring." Then he drew a line too and said, "Leaving aside the work of the school of the source for the moment, what about this matter?"

Fashang slapped him.

Ying said, "This fellow from Zhang province is not unable to behave."

Fashang said, “Given a view like this one of yours, if I didn’t strike, what better time could I expect?” And he hit him again.

Ying said, “I called it on myself.”

Ying and Sheng went together to the mountains to call on Fashang. Ying said, “You always liked to test the teachers all over; now why have you come to make a living in an ancient shrine?”

Fashang said, “Beating the bush is just to scare the snakes.”

Ying said, “Better not make people blockheads.”

Fashang said, “Why are you sticking your own head in a bowl of glue?”

Ying said, “An ancient said he lived in the mountains because he saw two clay bulls fighting go into the ocean; I wonder, what did *you* see?”

Fashang said, “Some day when you have a bundle of thatch over your head and someone comes and asks you, how will you respond?”

Ying said, “The top of the mountain is not as good as the tail of the range.”

Fashang said, “Then you tell me—are you up to the task of living on a mountain?”

Ying said, “Using a hoe does not mean pulling a plow.”

Fashang said, "Have you ever even dreamed of the ancients?"

Ying said, "How about you?"

Fashang spread his hands.

Ying said, "A prawn can't leap out of a basket."

Fashang said, "Don't try to compare a three-inch candle to the light of the sun."

Ying said, "And yet the open issue is still there—what about that?"

Fashang said, "Chan followers who try to keep control arbitrarily are very numerous."

Fashang also asked both men, "I wanted to come here to build a teaching hall. Tell me, what approach can be made in that direction?"

Ying said, "The thief is a small man."

Fashang said, "The warrior craps in his pants as soon as he's shaken up."

Ying said, "He's been through the pains of frost and snow."

Fashang said, "Since a bright pearl is naturally valued at a thousand pieces of gold, who would be bagging baby sparrows by the edge of the forest?"

Ying said, “It’s like when you’re holding your bowl you can’t claim not to be hungry.”

Fashang then pointed to Sheng and said, “You tell me now—what approach should be made?”

Sheng said, “Originally there is no order of precedence—don’t force an arrangement.”

Fashang said, “Where will I put you, you ass?”

Sheng said, “Go ahead and knock bricks and hit tiles all you want.”

Fashang said, “You too are just an incompetent supervisor.”

Ying said, “If there’s a treasure worth a thousand pieces of gold, what’s the need to bag baby sparrows?”

Fashang said, “When someone of the house to the east dies, the house to the west helps the mourning.”

Ying said, “If you see inequality on the road....”

140. Yunmen said, “The reality body eats food, so the illusory empty body is itself the reality body. Where do the universe and the earth exist? Nothing can be grasped. Emptiness consumes emptiness—if you count on an examination, you’d think there should be such talk.”

*Dahui remarked*, “To start off like a dragon but wind up like a snake earns people’s dislike. The reality body eats food, emptiness consumes emptiness—can you call it nothing? My speaking like this, moreover, is making medicine for a dead horse.”

141. Master Huanglong Xin said to an assembly,

Xuefeng said that the Buddhas of all times turn the wheel of universal teaching in the flames of fire. Yunmen said that the flames of fire expound the teaching while the Buddhas of all times stand there listening. Xuefeng and Yunmen try to outshine each other; but when the fuel is exhausted and the fire goes out, where do the Buddhas listen?

Don’t sit clinging to the depths of the white clouds; don’t burn people to death with cold ashes.

142. Master Dagui Zhen said to an assembly,

On the first night of the lunar cycle, the earth is boundless—who is cramped? On the second night, east west north south there is no handle. On the third night, Sudhana deliberately heads south to learn.

This is why it is said, when you let go, “thus” spreads its light; when you hold still “sitting nearby” hides its radiance. Now tell me, is it right to let go, or is it right to hold still?

[a long silence]

When the three dots of the Sanskrit letter *i* are written vertically, all things are spontaneously renewed.

A monk asked, “What is the Buddha in the city?”

He replied, “One does not stick a sign post in the midst of a crowd of ten thousand people.”

“What is the Buddha in the village?”

“A muddy pig, a mangy dog.”

“What is the Buddha in the mountains?”

“No people coming and going.”

“What is an expression of the special communication outside of doctrine?”

“Can’t be translated.”

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#### Notes

Sudhana is the name of the central character of the pilgrimage story in the final book of the *Flower Ornament* scripture.

The three dots of the Sanskrit letter *i* symbolize the so-called three truths of emptiness, the conditional, and the middle way, a Tiantai Buddhist construct often used in Chan teaching.

Verticality means simultaneity.

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143. As Master Changsha Cen was gazing at the moon with Yangshan, Yangshan said, “Everyone has this; it’s just that they can’t use it.”

Changsha said, “I’ll have to employ you to use it.”

Yangshan said, “How would you use it?”

Changsha kicked him in the chest.

Yangshan said, “Ha! You’re just like a tiger!”

144. Zhimen Zuo said to an assembly,

It’s been raining a lot for several days now, but tell me—where does the rain come from? If you say it falls from the sky, what is the sky? If you say it comes from the earth, what do you call earth? If you still don’t understand, this is the reason an ancient said, “The course of heaven and earth cannot be forcibly altered by any people of the time.” If you conceive interpretations here, that’s putting an awl in your eye.

[he also said]

In the blazing sun, self and others; in the clouds and fog,  
kindness and compassion; in the frost and snow, borrowing a clock;

in the hail, hiding the body. But can you hide your body? If you can't hide, you'll get your skull broken by the hailstones.

A monk asked, "When the National Teacher called his attendant three times, what did he mean?"

"Feeling sorry for the child, he wasn't aware of unseemliness."

"What does it mean to say that the National Teacher disappointed the attendant?"

"Rich food is not for a sated man to dine on."

"What does it mean to say that the attendant disappointed the National Teacher?"

"Efforts enough to powder the bones and pulverize the body would still be insufficient repayment."

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Note

See below, selection 163, for the story of the National Teacher calling his attendant.

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145. Master Baoning Yong said,

Shakyamuni Buddha taught for forty-nine years without ever saying a word; Upagupta filled a cave with tallies of initiates without ever initiating a single person. Bodhidharma didn't live on Few Houses Mountain, the Sixth Grand Master didn't dwell in the Cao



Valley. Who are the later generations, who are the enlightened predecessors?

This being so, “They are inherently unflawed—do not injure them.”

[slapping his knee, he looked at the crowd]

Now we’re fortunate to have peace in the land.

146. Master Baoning Yong composed a verse on the story of the wind and the flag:

*Broad and peaceful, the government highway  
Never prevents people from travel, day or night.  
It’s not that the lot of them don’t step forward,  
But brambles still spring up right at the start.*

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Note

The sixth grand master, or sixth patriarch of Chan, heard two monks arguing about a flag flapping in the wind. One said the flag was moving, the other said the wind was moving. The master said it wasn’t the wind or the flag, but their minds that were moving.

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147. Master Yunfeng Yue said,

Deshan used to cane students the moment they walked through the door; Linji used to shout at them the moment they

entered the gate. See how these two old fellows suffered the same failure.

But things do not occur in isolation; occurrence must have a cause. I'm not taking it easy; I exert the utmost effort for the community. If you people bite the dust on level ground, whose fault is that?

[silence]

"If you don't settle what should be settled, instead you'll find it in chaos."

[suddenly he picked up his staff and chased the audience out]

A monk asked, "Please speak immediately without vagueness."

The master said, "The Polar Mountain."

The monk hesitated, trying to think of something to say. The master hit him.

A monk asked, "What is the first essential?"

The master said, "A snake goes into a rat hole."

"What is the second essential?"

"A monkey climbs a tree."

"What is the third essential?"

"A villager's sandals."

"What is the substance of wisdom?"

“An arrow piercing a willow leaf.”

“What is the function of wisdom?”

“The general loses his post.”

“What is the matter under the Chan robe?”

“Bone inside skin.”

148. Master Dongshan Chu said,

When there is a statement in a saying, this is called the dead word; when there is no statement in a saying, this is called the living word.

What is the living word? When it comes to this point, it's really hard to find people. If it's a matter of saying 'There's no way to set about answering' immediately upon seeing something, without stirring a single particle, without eliminating a single object, who knows how many there are, east, west, north, or south?

If you want to find anyone beyond the mud and water, with the eye to enliven people, expound the way of Chan and bring out the great matter, I don't say that there are none, but still they are few, simply because of failure to arrive at the source and consequently falling into the delusive objectifications of the storage consciousness.

Perceiving what has no name and no concreteness, no right and no wrong, but is everywhere in everything, they say they have attained a state of peace, and seek no more. If they are ever questioned, they knock on their chairs, hold up their fly whisks, and go on ad lib, acting out immediately, bobbing in a pit of foul water, playing with a tailless monkey, until the last day of their lives, when the drum has been beaten to pieces and the monkey has run off—in frantic confusion, they are helpless.

What can regret do then? If you are real Chan practitioners, you would prefer to freeze or starve to death than to ever put on stinking shirts like that.

149. The great master of Tiantai, The Wise One, recited the *Lotus of Truth* scripture on Nanyue. Coming to the place in the chapter on the Medicine Master where it says *This is true diligence, this is called serving the Buddha with real truth*, he realized the *samadhi* of the Lotus of Truth, attained independent mastery, and saw the whole assembly on Spiritual Mountain, still there.

*Dahui commented*, “How about those who have not as yet attained independent mastery? Do they see the assembly on Spiritual Mountain? If so, what’s the proof? If not, just reciting *this is true*

*diligence, this is called serving the Buddha with real truth becomes an extraneous matter.”*

150. As soon as the Buddha was born, he pointed to the sky with one hand, pointed to the earth with one hand, walked seven steps in a circle, looked all around the four directions, and said, “In the heavens above and on earth below, I alone am honored.”

Yunmen said, “Had I seen him at that moment, I’d have beaten him to death and fed him to the dogs, in hopes that there might be peace on earth.”

Yunfeng Yue said, “Although Yunmen has a plan to settle a disturbance, he still has no way of positive self-expression.”

Baoning Yong said in a verse,

*When primordial chaos is as yet undifferentiated,  
People are not yet awake.  
As soon as heaven and earth split,  
Phenomena subtly appear.  
Natural-born skills can sure be extraordinary,  
But in the end they lose out to the other’s play.*

151. Master Zhaozhou said,

This matter is clearly evident—even immeasurably great people can’t get out of here.

When I went to Guishan, I saw a monk ask, "What is the meaning of the Chan founder's coming from the West?" Guishan said, "Bring me a chair." If one is a real Chan master one has to deal with people on the basis of one's own state.

At that time a certain monk asked, "What is the meaning of the Chan founder's coming from the West?"

Zhaozhou said, "The cypress tree in the yard."

The monk said, "Don't use objects to teach people."

Zhaozhou said, "I'm not using objects to teach people."

"So what is the meaning of the Chan founder's coming from the West?"

"The cypress tree in the yard."

Later Fayan asked Master Guangxiao Jiao, "Where have you come from most recently?"

Jiao said, "Zhaozhou."

Fayan said, "I hear Zhaozhou has a saying, *the cypress tree in the yard*. Is this so?"

Jiao said, "No."

Fayan said, "Everyone who passes through here says a monk asked Zhaozhou what the meaning of the Chan founder's coming

from the West is, and Zhaozhou said, *The cypress tree in the yard.*

How can you deny this?

Jiao said, “The late teacher really said no such thing. Please don’t slander the late teacher.”

152. Master Wuzu Yan said,

Yaoshan asked Shitou, “I have a rough knowledge of the twelve-part teachings of the three vehicles. I hear that in the South you point directly to people’s minds to show them their nature so they become enlightened. I do not understand this; please be so kind and compassionate as to instruct me.”

Shitou said, “This way will not do, not this way will not do; this way and not this way will not do at all.”

When I was a student, I heard brothers discussing this, saying, “Even ‘mind itself is Buddha’ will not do; denial of ‘mind itself is buddha’ won’t do either.” If you talk like this, how dare you call yourselves Channists? Why? You still don’t realize that old Shitou was equipped both culturally and martially; he was perfectly able both to hide and to plan.

As for my perception, I want everyone to know in common. If you only see the swelling of the waves, you do not see the dragon

palaces in the ocean.

153. Master Tangming Hao said,

Manjusri, with his sword, travels freely on Mt. Wutai. On the one road of Tangming I stop the deceits of apparitions. Before the Buddhas of past, present, and future put forth teachings and vehicles, the swimming fish in the bottom of the net cannot cross the dragon gate. Fishing in the four oceans is just to hook fierce dragons; mystic talk outside convention is for seeking those who know.

If you bring up the message of Chan, even the Polar Mountain would shatter; if you explain buddhahood and Chan mastery, the oceans would evaporate. When the jewel sword is brandished, the light from the hair between the eyes shines ten thousand miles.

I have set out a line of comprehensive explanation for you, choking you; how will you breathe?

A monk asked, “Those of dull faculties take to lesser teachings, not believing they can become Buddhas. How is it after becoming a Buddha?”

“You grab a unicorn in the water.”



“Then one ascends to the high seat at once?”

“You ride an ox up to the 33<sup>rd</sup> heaven.”

“When the ancients held up a gavel or stood up a fly whisk,  
what did they mean?”

“Riding an ass without shoes on.”

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Note

The supernal bodhisattva Manjusri represents wisdom; his sword symbolizes cutting through confusion. In China he is associated with the sacred mountain Wutai.

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154. Master Ciming said,

‘All saints and sages apply the unconstructed truth, yet there are differences.’ Before us is Mount An, behind is Mount Zhu—what is the unconstructed truth?

[silence]

The following passage is long—I’ll put it off till tomorrow.

155. Mazu said,

You should each believe your own mind is Buddha. This mind itself is Buddha. The great teacher Bodhidharma came to China from South India, transmitting the supreme vehicle’s teaching of one mind, to get you to wake up. He also cited the *Lankavatara Sutra* to

seal people's mind ground, lest in your confusion you fail to believe for yourself that each of you has the reality of one mind.

So the *Lankavatara sutra* has Buddha's talks on mind as its source; the method of denial is the method of teaching. Those who seek the teaching should not be seeking anything—there is no separate Buddha outside of mind, no separate mind apart from Buddha. One does not grasp the good or reject the bad; one does not stick to either extreme of purity or defilement. Realizing the intrinsic emptiness of sin, thought after thought cannot be grasped, having no intrinsic essence.

So the world is only mind; myriad forms are stamped by a single truth. Whatever form you see, you are seeing mind. Mind is not mind of itself; it is there because of form. Just speak in accord with the time, in fact and in principle, and there will be no hindrance at all.

Enlightenment, the result of the path, is also like this. Whatever is produced in the mind is called form; since you realize form is empty, therefore production is unproduced. If you comprehend the meaning of this, then you can dress and eat according to the season, developing the embryo of sagehood,

spending the time according to events. What further concern is there?

If you accept my teaching, listen to my verse:

*The mind ground is explained according to the time  
And enlightenment too is simply peace;  
Free from obstruction, concrete or abstract,  
Creation itself does not create.*

A monk asked, "How does one cultivate the Way?"

The master said, "The Way is not in the province of cultivation. If you speak of attainment by cultivation, whatever is developed by cultivation also decays. Thus you are the same as a disciple. But if you say that means no cultivation, you are the same as an ordinary man."

The monk also asked, "By what understanding can one attain the Way?"

The master said, "Your own nature is originally complete; just do not linger over good and bad things, and you can be called a practitioner of the path. To grasp good and reject bad, contemplate emptiness and enter concentration, is all in the province of contrived effort. If you then seek outwardly, you will become further estranged, increasingly remote.

“Just end mental calculation of the world. A single moment of thought is the root of birth and death in the world. Just don’t have a thought, and you remove the root of birth and death. Then you gain the supreme treasure of a sovereign of truth.

“For countless eons, people’s illusions, doubts and distortions, falsehoods, egoism, and pride have combined into one mass. Therefore scripture says this body consists of a conglomeration of elements. When it comes into being, it is only elements becoming active; when it passes away, it is only elements becoming quiescent.

“When these elements become active, they don’t say, ‘We are active,’ and when they become quiescent, they don’t say, ‘We become quiescent.’ When preceding thought, succeeding thought, and intervening thought do not await each other, passing away into quiescence moment to moment, this is called oceanic concentration. It takes in all things, just as a hundred thousand different streams return alike to the ocean, all to become ocean water.

“Maintaining a single flavor while containing all flavors, dwelling in the ocean you merge myriad streams, like someone bathing in the ocean, using all the waters.

“Therefore disciples understand confusion, while ordinary people confuse understanding. Disciples do not know that the mind

of sages basically has no stages or ranks, cause or result, or conceptions of gradation; cultivating causes to realize results on the basis of false ideas, they dwell in empty concentration for tens of thousands of eons. Even though they are already awakened, having awakened they revert to confusion. The enlightening beings look upon this as like the pains of hell, failing to see buddha-nature because of sinking into voidness and stagnating in quiescence.

“People of superior faculties awaken as soon as they hear a real teacher’s guidance, suddenly realizing the fundamental essence without going through steps, stages, or ranks. Therefore it is said, ‘Ordinary people have changeable minds, whereas listeners do not.’

“Enlightenment is spoken of in contrast to delusion; since there is fundamentally no delusion, enlightenment does not stand either. Everyone has been absorbed in the nature of things for countless eons, never leaving absorption in the nature of things as they dress, eat, converse—the functions of the six sense organs, and all activities, are all the nature of things.

“If you do not know how to return to the source, but pursue labels and descriptions, delusive sentiments arise at random, and you initiate all sorts of actions. If you can reflect back for a moment, the whole being is the enlightened mind.

“You should individually realize your own mind—don’t memorize my words. Even if you can explain countless principles, the mind is still not more; and even if you cannot explain at all, the mind is still not less. What can explain is your mind, and what can’t explain is your mind as well.

“Even if you can project duplicates of your body, radiate light, and manifest eighteen transformations, that is not as good as going back to the dead ashes of self. Having drenched the dead ashes so they have no energy is a metaphor for disciples’ mistaken cultivation of cause and realization of result. Not having drenched the dead ashes, so they have some energy, is a metaphor for enlightening beings’ work on the way maturing unadulterated so that evils do not influence them.

“If you talk about the three treasuries of the Buddha’s provisional teachings, you could talk for countless eons without exhausting them—like links in a chain, they never end. But if you realize the enlightened mind, there is nothing else.”

*Dahui remarked*, “During the Jianyan (1127-1131), when I was leading the assembly at Bowl Peak, in the assembly leaders’ dormitory there were two collections made by Chan Master Dongshan Cong, *Essentials of Chan* and *Halls of the Masters*. At

the end of *Essentials* words of the two masters Shitou and Mazu are cited as exemplars. An extract from a lecture of Mazu said, 'Therefore the *Lankavatara sutra* has Buddha's talks on mind for its source; the methodology is the method of negation.' So we know there can be no doubt that later people mistakenly changed it to 'the Lankavatara says "Buddha said, 'Mind is the source.'"'

"Chan master Yongming Shou, in his *Source Mirror Collection*, and Chan master Tianyi Huai, in his *Communication of Enlightenment* collection, followed the latter reading, so later students frequently followed it too, not knowing the original. They even went looking for this supposed quotation in the scripture. What a laugh! Don't they realize the *Lankavatara sutra* is just a book about Buddha's talks on mind? Mazu's statements indicate the main message of the scripture; they are not sayings from the scripture itself. Tianyi said, 'When it comes to the method of negation, you can only employ it methodically.' This is Tianyi's indication that the expression 'method of negation' is not a scripture quote. So the *Source Mirror* and *Communication of Enlightenment* collections made by the two sage teachers were not necessarily wrong; probably these are simply errors of later transmitters. As a proverb says, 'When one word is copied three times, a *horse* and a *house*

become a *hose*.' How true it is! If literate people read the *Lankavatara* and find there is no such saying, they will consider the citation in Chan Master Dongshan Cong's *Essentials of Chan* to be correct."

156. Master Shending Yin said,

A monk asked Shoushan, "How is it when nary a wisp has appeared?"

He said, "Meeting the founder of Chan on the road."

"What about after appearing?"

"Don't tarry in doubt any more."

A monk once asked me how it is when nary a wisp has appeared; I said to him, "White clouds over the ridge." When he asked me how it is after appearing, I said, "Water flows at the bottom of the gulch."

These two sayings are worth gnawing on, looking at them from all angles. As for my sayings, they are like chewing on a piece of wood or tile, truly flavorless. You will only get them by seeing on your own and realizing on your own.

Understand?



The sky is high in the southeast; the earth is slanted to the northwest.

157. Master Tianyi Huai said,

Two thousand years ago, the greatly awakened World Honored One wanted to take a group of saints up to the sixth heaven to expound the *Great Collection* scripture. He commanded the humans and angels of this and other worlds, as well as all the evil demons and spirits, to gather all together and accept instruction from the Buddha to protect the true teaching.

Any who didn't go were chased to the gathering by hot iron discuses hurled by the kings of the four skies. Once all had assembled, none did not follow the Buddha's directions, each vowing to protect the true teaching.

There was, however, a demon king who said to Buddha, 'Gautama, I will aspire to enlightenment when all beings have attained buddhahood, all realms of beings are emptied, and even the names of beings no longer exist.'

One whose mind and heart do not change when facing danger is one with true integrity. How would you express a saying to put forth energy on behalf of Gautama? Ordinary spiritual powers,

subtle capacities, intelligence, and eloquence are totally useless here.

Everyone loves Buddha, but when you get here, what is Buddha, what is a demon? Can anyone distinguish?

Do you want to know the demon? Open your eyes and you see light. Do you want to know the Buddha? Close your eyes and you see darkness.

With my staff I have pierced the noses of both demon and Buddha at once.

*Dahui commented*, “This critique by old Tianyi is indeed extraordinary, but even so he hasn’t avoided dualism in speech. If he had stopped at the point where he asked what is Buddha and what is a demon, he would undoubtedly have caused people to wonder. But then he went on to say “Want to know the demon? Open your eyes and you see light. Want to know the Buddha? Close your eyes and you see dark.” This is quite indulgent. He also said he had pierced the noses of both demon and Buddha with his staff—this is adding frost to snow.

“I myself will say a word on Gautama’s behalf. When the demon king said he would aspire to enlightenment when all realms of beings are emptied and even the names of beings no longer exist,

I would say, ‘I almost mistakenly called you a demon king.’ This saying has two contradictions: if you can find them out, then it must be admitted you have Chan perception.”

158. National Teacher Shao said,

The true source is but one; myriad virtues have no words. When confronting light straight on, it’s like a diamond sword. This is how those who realize suchness attain true awakening in all places—on swordlike mountains, in forests of blades, in cauldrons of boiling water, in embers of fireplaces, at the impact of staves, at the sound of shouts.

Thus there is not the slightest appearance of change in the alternation of action and stillness, going and coming, coming to life and passing away; there is no appearance of difference. And there is no more understanding in terms of perception and consciousness.

Why? Good people, this is what is called the natural potential of the subtle essence, beyond the circuit of yes and no.

This is the basis of the saying, ‘If you give life I too give life; if you kill, I too kill’—the capacity of the universal ruler to give life and to kill interacts like a thunderbolt.

159. Master Daowu Zhen said to an assembly,

When a lion roars, a colt of even the finest breed jumps. Clear  
in the mirror of the ancient Buddhas, the solitary moon over the three  
mountains shines bright.

[then he did a jig and got down from the platform]

A monk asked, "How is it when one understands immediately  
upon concentration?"

"A pestle tied to a rat's tail."

"What is Buddha?"

"Dongting is his parasol."

"An ancient said, 'When we came, we brought nothing; when  
we leave, we take nothing.' What does this mean?"

"Three lifetimes, or sixty eons, is still not a long time."

The monk said nothing. The master asked, "Understand?"  
The monk said he didn't. The master said, "Dongting extends  
hundreds of miles, but that still isn't big."

"What is the substance of being as is?"

"A demon bends its knees; the pupils of the eyes are black."

"What is the function of being as is?"

"A diamond pestle smashing iron mountains."

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Note

Dongting is a large lake.

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160. Lingyun awakened to the Way on seeing peach blossoms.

He composed a verse on the occasion:

*For thirty years I sought a swordsman;  
How many times have the leaves fallen and shoots sprouted!  
But ever since seeing the peach blossoms once,  
I have never doubted any more.*

When he quoted this to Guishan, Guishan said, “Those who gain access through objects never backslide; keep it well.”

Xuansha said, “He’s quite correct, but I’ll bet he’s not done yet.”

*Dahui commented*, “When something comes up in one house, a hundred houses are busy.”

161. Master Yangqi said to an assembly,

When body and mind are pure, objects are pure; when objects are pure, body and mind are pure. Do you know what I’m getting at? The coin that was lost in the river must be retrieved from the river.

162. Master Deshan said to an assembly,

What concerns do you have, from morning to night? Isn't it that you want to show off by questioning me? I'm not afraid of you, but I wonder what doubts you have.

Recently, in this time of degenerate teaching, there are lots of groups of ghosts who run off at the mouth to others, claiming to be Chan teachers. I wonder how much Chan you have managed to learn—come tell me about it!

Your blind baldies at various centers have taught you to 'practice'—how many Buddhas have you produced running to irrelevancies?

If there is nothing to learn, then what are you after? If you have learned anything, then try to show me what you've learned. But you'll have to be ready to take a beating if you say anything wrong.

You've been charmed by the old baldies in centers all over into claiming you are 'practitioners' and rigidly posturing as if you were like enlightened people.

Don't use your mind whimsically; revolving in endless mundane routines is all because of state of mind. Why? Because when the mind is aroused all sorts of things arise.

If you can refrain from producing a single thought, you'll be forever freed from birth and death, and will not be bound up by birth

and death. You go when you want to go and sit when you want to sit—what further concern is there?

I see that wherever you go you determine to learn Buddhism in the assembly of some old baldy, taking on a load without concern for your body or life. All of you have had your eyes nailed shut and your root of life severed. You're like two or three hundred whores.

You say your regal sway sets up the banner of the teaching to open the eyes of later generations; but can you even save yourselves?

You talk of 'practice' like this, but haven't you heard that Buddha went through three long eons of cultivation? And where is he now? He died after eighty years—how was he different from you?

Don't go crazy; I suggest to you that it would be better to stop and not be obsessed with anything. The moment a thought flashes through your mind, you're a minion of the devil, an immoral worldling.

You see me appearing in the world, and you all want to get together in groups of five and ten and come challenge me with difficult questions, hoping to tongue-tie and silence me. You're puppets! Why don't you come forth now?

If you fill a burlap sack with awls, you'd be quite skilled if none of them stuck out. I'd like to ask you what's true—don't be mistaken. You impulsively run elsewhere claiming to understand Chan and the Way, boasting and putting on airs. When you get to this point, you'll have to vomit it all out before you can realize freedom.

Just do not stick to sound and form externally, and do not conceive of subject and object internally. In essential being there is neither ordinary nor holy—what more would you learn? Even if you learn a hundred thousand marvelous doctrines, you're just a sore-sucking ghost; it's all mere fascination.

This void of mine might be said to exist, yet it is not existent; it might be said not to exist, yet it is not nonexistent. You might call it ordinary, but it is not ordinary; you may call it holy, but it's not holy. It cannot be placed anywhere, but it is the teacher of all your myriad things.

I do not mean to slander him about this, but this is why Buddha spewed out so much spittle of expedient means, to teach you to be free. Don't search outside. As long as you don't acquiesce, you want to collect unusual sayings and store them in your chest, so you can talk cleverly, getting by on glibness, hoping to



be acknowledged by people as a Chan master, wanting to obtain a position of prominence.

If you entertain such views, some day you'll go to hell where your tongue will be pulled out.

Everywhere you go, you look for people to say you are a member of the school of the Chan founder, but when you are questioned about the fundamental matter your mouths are like a wooden bolt, immediately shooting off about *bodhi*, *nirvana*, thusness and liberation, extensively quoting the verbal teachings of the triplex canon, claiming this is Chan, this is the Way, fooling the people at large.

What relevance has this? You are bringing our spiritual forbears into disrepute.

My perception is not that way. Here I have no Buddha and no Dharma. Bodhidharma was a smelly old foreigner; the bodhisattvas of the tenth stage are dung haulers; the equally and subtly enlightened are immoral worldlings; bodhi and nirvana are donkey-tethering stakes; the twelve-part canonical teachings are ghost tablets, paper for wiping pus from sores; those who have attained the four fruitions, the three ranks of sages, and those from initial inspiration to the tenth stage, are ghosts haunting ancient tombs,

unable to save even themselves; Buddha was an old foreigner, a piece of crap.

Good people, don't make the mistake of putting on a garment of sores.

What are you studying? Having eaten your fill, you talk about thusness and nirvana—do you have blood under your skin? You have to have a strong character before you can attain: don't be infatuated with sages, for 'sage' is an empty name. Anyone who can present you anything from anywhere for you to cling to obsessively, produce interpretations for, keep carrying around and caring for, has in any case become delusive and aberrant.

This is the result of insisting there is something to acquire by learning. This is what is meant by sprites haunting grasses and trees, and wild foxes.

Here I have no doctrine at all to give you to interpret. I don't understand Chan myself, and I am no teacher. I don't understand anything at all; I just consume and excrete. What else is there?

I urge you to be free from concerns, promptly stopping your search: don't learn aberration and madness. Everybody carries around a corpse, traveling, licking up the slaver of the old baldies wherever you go. Imbibing their drivel, you immediately proclaim

that you are going into *samadhi*, cultivating capacities, accumulating good deeds to nurture the embryo of sagehood in hopes of fulfilling the realization of buddhahood.

I see such people as having poison arrows in their hearts, blinding needles deranging their eyes. They are the antithesis of our spiritual ancestors; they cause the plan of our school to stagnate. They say they are renunciants, but this way they consume the donations of patrons everywhere without being able to digest even water.

Don't calculatingly claim you venture to travel in foreign lands, not taking care of your parents at home—do you think there is no fault in that? Don't misuse your mind—the lord of the underworld will dun you for the cost of your footgear some day, put a ring through your nose and hitch you to a post to make you pay back the cost of your lodging. Don't say I didn't tell you!

You people sure seem lucky, meeting me coming out in public to untie you, uncage you, and unburden you, so you can be decent people. No state of being in any realm can contain you. There is no special doctrine besides.

This radiant void is unobstructed, free: it is not something you can attain by embellishment. From the Buddha and from the Chan

founders, all have transmitted this teaching, whereby they attained liberation; the doctrines of the whole canon just put it in orderly arrangements.

You are people of the present time; don't seek somewhere else. Even if Bodhidharma were to come here, he would just tell you to be without affectations; he would tell you not to be contrived. Dressing, eating, excreting, there is no more 'birth and death' to be feared, and no nirvana to be attained, no enlightenment to be realized. You're just an ordinary individual, without affectations.

Most important of all, don't fold your hands and pretend to be a Chan teacher, looking for a place to appear in public, talking cleverly to seduce the younger generation in hopes of getting people to call you an Elder. Totally alienated from your real self, you only know a flood of subjective consciousness, hoking up oddities day and night, never ceasing, claiming famous names, titles, and heritage. I am not one of your gang: If I see a great master failing to discern good and bad, I criticize him for it.

As for you, just don't get obsessed with thoughts of reputation and appearance, terminology and rhetoric, maxim and meaning, objective representation, function and principle, good and bad, ordinary and holy, grasping and rejection, focus on objects,

defilement and purity, light and darkness, being and nonbeing. If you get it this way, only then are you an unaffected individual. Then even Buddha cannot compare to you; even the Chan founders cannot compare to you.

Don't go running off flattening your feet—there is no special Chan path to study. If anything is attained by study, it is secondary or tertiary, an externalist view.

There are no psychic powers or capacities of altered manifestation to attain either. You say psychic powers are wisdom, yet angels, wizards, cultists with the five powers, and titans also have psychic powers—but are they enlightened?

Suppose you live alone on a solitary mountain peak, eat but once a day, sit constantly without lying down, practice prostration and recitation six times a day, and try to fend off birth and death with that: Buddha had a saying, 'all activities are impermanent—this is the law that whatever is created must perish.'

If you say you can attain by entering concentration, stilling the spirit, quieting down thoughts, well, some cultists have also managed to get into states of tremendous concentration seeming to last eighty thousand eons, but are they enlightened? Obviously they are mesmerized by false notions.

Buddha was not a holyman; Buddha was an old foreigner, a piece of crap. What I want of you is to distinguish good and bad; don't get stuck on personality and ego. Then you will avoid the language of 'holymen' and the language of 'enlightenment,' becoming liberated.

Wonderful sayings and principles drown you and bind you. Why? If the deluded mind isn't stopped for a moment, this is how birth and death will continue.

Time does not wait for anyone: don't pass the days wavering and shilly-shallying. Time should be valued.

I'm not expecting you bumpkins to carry baggage—if you agree, then trust; if you don't agree, well, everyone has his own bowl of crap—take it away!

I also don't seek after your old baldies all over the place who occupy a site and preach Chan and Tao. You rush to learn from them and quote from them, but here I don't have any doctrine at all to give you.

You take what you get by question and study to be knowledge and understanding, but I can't go to the hell for liars, where tongues are pulled out—if anyone has anything at all to teach you, or says

there is the Buddha, there is the doctrine, there is the world to escape, they are all foxy charmers.

Do you want to know? It's just a void, with nothing to attain, pure and clear everywhere, radiant with light, thoroughly translucent inside and out. There is no affectation, no dependence, nothing to dwell on. What are you concerned with?

I'll just be an old beggar all my life, until the day I die. Though I live in the world, I'm not affected by it—where would I want to escape from? Even if there were some place to go, that too would be a cage, where bedevilment can get at you.

Don't belabor your body and mind, for there is nothing to attain. All that is necessary is to avoid belaboring sound and form at all times; just set aside your activities hitherto, and you will suddenly shed bridle and chain, and forever remove cover and wrapping. When a single thought is not produced, then linear succession is cut off: without cogitation, without thought, there is nothing at all that can affect your feelings.

How can you even attempt to express this in words? You have a lot of intellectual understanding, but have you ever perceived It face to face? Renunciants and others up to the tenth stage bodhisattvas with satisfied hearts cannot even find a trace of It. That

is why the celestial angels celebrate, the earth spirits offer support, the Buddhas of the ten directions sing praises, and the king of demons wails. Why? Because this void, leaping with life, has no root, no dwelling place.

If your eyes waver at this point, then you miss it.

Don't seek Buddha, for Buddha is a mass-murdering robber who has seduced who knows how many people into the pits of the demons of lust. Do not seek Manjusri or Samantabhadra, for they are bumpkins. What a pity to be a fine upstanding individual, but take someone else's poison and then try to imitate the appearance of a Chan teacher, seeing spirits and seeing ghosts.

After that you'll go crazy, running around to other houses looking for gypsy women to tell fortunes. You have been slipped 'fortunes' by ignorant old baldies who tell you to bow to the ghosts of 'Patriarchs,' the ghosts of 'Buddhas,' the ghost of 'enlightenment,' the ghost of 'nirvana.'

The little whores who don't understand them ask, 'What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?' The old baldies then hit their meditation benches, pretending that is objective representation; or hold up a fly whisk and say, 'Fine weather, nice rain, good lamps,' using clever words to create arbitrary categories,



saying there is a ‘mystic path,’ a ‘bird’s path,’ and an ‘outreach.’ If you hold onto explanations like this, that is like putting filth in a precious vessel, like using human waste for incense.

You are grown adults, just as others are—who should you be afraid of? You spend whole days slurping the snivel and drool of old baldies elsewhere, and wind up without conscience and shameless. How miserable—they make you crazy.

The result of this cause is clear. As water buffaloes, you will pull plows, your eyes bulging; your strength unable to rise to the occasion, you will be beaten on the back. This is for having stolen food and clothing from Buddhism, claiming you were ‘practicing.’

If you do not understand the great principle, even if you pass through Buddha’s belly you’re just a walking piece of crap. Never having met a good person, you readily accept the scenery at the doors of the six senses, spouting clichés as if they were mysterious words and marvelous sayings, colorful and fresh, without having any attainment of your own—it’s just the snivel and drool of other people.

There is also a type who gather in twos and threes for discussion—where is freedom from affectation preferred?—winter and summer they glibly talk about Chan, with intellectual interpretation for understanding meanings and principles. You all

entertain views like this, looking for some advantage. Is there any true principle like this? You'll go to hell some day; don't say I didn't tell you.

Wherever you go, you don't harvest a single vegetable, you don't gather a single bundle of firewood—one day when your luck runs out, you'll be eating nothing but grass. Consuming the donations of the faithful in vain, you only arbitrarily claim to be studying, even pretending to be Chan masters.

This is of no benefit to people. For your own part, in all your activities twenty-four hours a day your mind will stick to things; when you see people, you only want to seduce them, wagging your tail, pointing to one thing and talking about another. In the eyes and in speech unable to see in actuality, you just want to use imitative sayings to check understandings.

How am I different from you? Don't take the glibness of the moment and wind up ingesting others' poison, becoming like greedy whores with no morals, blind baldies and herds of sheep-like monks perverting other people and leading them into hell.

Don't read books in a trivializing way, pursuing slogans and mottoes, looking for competition. When one after another passes stuff like this along, when will you ever stop?

What I am encouraging is not a bad thing. You must have your own eyes to discern the pure and the polluted—are they words of a Buddha, or words of a demon? Don't let others confuse you.

The most wonderful sayings are all temporary expedients of Buddha. What is essential is to stop—don't rely on anything, or take in the words of others for intellectual understanding, discriminating near and far, forging superficial falsehoods, memorizing the idle words and long talks of others—all of this is conjectural thought.

I'm afraid you'll fall into a pit doing superficial acts of piety, robbed by mere talk, getting little but considering it enough, stationary in quietude, unwilling to progress further. Confused by things yourself, you get other people mixed up. You follow myriad doctrines because you don't believe there is fundamentally nothing concrete to the void; you can't augment it or diminish it.

You people are like crows, with bodies in the sky but minds in the trash, just looking for carrion to eat. Don't say I've never engaged in community discussion, that I holler mercilessly, without fear of the consequences. It's just because you don't keep to your own lot but race off to the four quarters to stand by others' doors, like banshees relating statements and passing on sayings, making up interpretations according to obsessions, tracks of mind not forgotten.

Not even standing on your own, you carry a corpse around all the time, wearing stocks and chains, traveling five hundred or even a thousand miles to come here and stand in front of me, as if you lacked the way of Chan—‘Master, explain for us, instruct us!’ I act with my whole being, clobbering and warding off you bumpkins, hollering at you thieving pieces of crap. You may put on impressive appearances, but you don’t know good from bad.

For you to come to me is like meeting someone from the bayous and cooking up a mess of fish chowder. What I am aiming at for the time being is for you to put down your heavy burden, take off your stocks and chains, to be decent people. Do you consent?

If you consent, then stay. If not, go off wherever you will. Fare well. Good bye.

163. The National Teacher called his attendant three times. The attendant answered three times. The National Teacher said, “I though I was letting you down—who would have known you’d let me down!”

*Dahui commented*, “Did the National Teacher see the attendant? Did the attendant see the National Teacher?”

164. Master Xuedou said to an assembly,

One who can fill a cloth bag with awls without any sticking out is an expert. My awls are sticking out— isn't there a Channist standing by who disapproves? Come forth! [a long silence] Since you've all drawn in your heads, now listen to critical examination of the centers all over.

165. One day Xuedou asked a monk, "Have you bathed?"

The monk said, "I am not going to bathe in this life."

The master asked, "What is your purpose in not bathing?"

The monk said, "Today I've been exposed by the master."

The master said, "A robber doesn't strike a poor man's house."

166. Master Linji said to an assembly,

Those who study Buddhism in the present time should seek truly accurate perceptive understanding for now. If you attain truly accurate perceptive understanding, then birth and death do not affect you; you are free to go or to stay. Don't seek the extraordinary, for the extraordinary comes of itself.

Past worthies since ancient times all had ways of developing people. What I teach people just requires you not to allow yourself

to be confused by others. Act when necessary, without further hesitation.

Where is the ailment of students of the present time who do not attain realization? The ailment is in their failure to trust themselves. If you cannot trust yourself enough, you will frantically pursue all sorts of objects, spun around and changed by those myriad objects, unable to be free.

If you stop your mind from rushing seeking thought after thought, then you are no different from Buddhas and Chan masters.

Do you want to know what a Buddha or a Chan master is? It's what's right there in your presence listening to the teaching.

When students cannot trust in this, they seek outside. Even if you get something by seeking, it's all just literary terminology and description—after all you don't get the meaning of living Chan mastery.

If you don't find it this time, you will go on changing, experiencing different states and conditions for a thousand lifetimes over myriad eons, pursuing good and bad objects, being reborn in the bellies of donkeys and oxen.

My vision is no different from Shakyamuni Buddha's; every day, in your various activities, what is missing?

The six-fold spiritual light has never been interrupted. If you can see this way, you'll be an unaffected individual for the rest of your life.

The world is unstable, like a house on fire. This is not a place you stay forever. The killer demon of impermanence is instantaneous, and makes no distinction between aristocrats and commoners, or between the old and the young.

Do you want to be no different from Buddha and Chan masters? Just don't seek outside.

The moment the light of mind is clear, this is the elemental embodiment of Buddha in your house.

The moment the light of mind is free of discriminatory thought, this is the blissful embodiment of Buddha in your house.

The moment the light of your mind is free of division, this is the temporal embodiment of Buddha in your house.

These three embodiments are you, the people present listening to the teaching. You have these capacities only by virtue of not seeking outside.

According to academics, the three embodiments are the ultimate ideal. In my view that is not so. These three embodiments are descriptions. They are also a kind of dependency.

An ancient said, 'Embodiment is defined depending on meaning, while the land is defined on the basis of substance. For the embodiment of the essence of things there is the land of the essence of things.' So obviously these are reflections of a light. You should apprehend that which is dealing with the reflections—this is the original source of all Buddhas; your homecoming takes place everywhere.

Your physical body cannot expound the teaching or listen to the teaching; your spleen, stomach, liver, or gall bladder cannot expound the teaching or listen to the teaching. Empty space cannot expound the teaching or listen to the teaching.

What is it that can expound the teaching and listen to the teaching?

It is something quite evident, right here, an individual independent light—this can expound the teaching and listen to the teaching.

If you can see in this way, then you're no different from Buddha and Chan masters. Just don't interrupt it anymore, at any time—whatever meets the eye is It.

Yet, because 'when feelings arise, wisdom is blocked; as mental images change, substance differs'—that is why you revolve in



mundane routines, undergoing all sorts of suffering.

In my view, nothing is not extremely profound, nothing is not liberation. The element of mind has no form, but pervades the ten directions—in the eyes it is called seeing, in the ears it is called hearing, in the nose it smells, in the mouth it speaks, in the hands it grips, in the feet it walks.

Basically it is a single spiritual light, differentiated into a six-fold collective. With the whole mind void, you are liberated wherever you are.

When I speak in this way, where is my intention? It is just because you cannot stop the mind from compulsively seeking everywhere that you get into the idle devices of the ancients.

If you take my view, you preside over the psychic and magical Buddhas; the tenth stage bodhisattvas with fulfilled hearts are like migrant laborers; the equivalent and sublime illuminates are peasants wearing stocks and chains; the saints and solitary illuminates are like sewage; enlightenment and nirvana are like donkey-tethering stakes.

Why so? It's just because you haven't realized the emptiness of the incalculable eons that you have these obstacles. If you were real true people of the Way, you wouldn't be like that.

Just be able to dissolve past habits according to circumstances, going when you need to go, sitting when you need to sit, without any thought of seeking buddhahood. Why so? An ancient said, 'If you're going to act in contrived ways to seek buddhahood, then buddhahood is a major sign of birth and death.'

Time is to be valued. You just depend on others, superficially studying Chan, studying Tao, learning names and terms, seeking Buddhas, seeking masters, seeking spiritual guides, measuring conceptually.

Make no mistake about it—you only have one father and mother; what more do you seek? Turn your awareness back on your self and look.

A man once saw the back of a mirror and thought he'd lost his head—only when he stopped looking for it was he relieved.

Be ordinary—don't put on appearances.

There's a kind of baldy who cannot distinguish good from bad, who sees spirits and ghosts, points to one thing and describes another, makes the best of fair weather and foul—some day people like this will have to pay their debts, swallowing hot iron balls in front of the king of the underworld. Men and women of good families get

charmed by these foxy devils, then hoke up wonders. Blind fools, they will be dunned for their food bills some day.

It is urgent that you seek truly accurate perceptive understanding. Then you can go freely through the world, avoiding physical and mental derangement at the hands of this type of spiritual charmer.

Don't contrive any more; just be normal. As soon as you form a mental urge, you're already mistaken. Just don't seek buddhahood—'buddha' is a term. Rather, do you know what it is that is seeking?

The Buddhas and Chan masters of all times and all places only emerge because of quest for truth. People today who study the way only do so in quest of truth. Only when you get the truth are you done; as long as you haven't gotten it, as before you revolve in mundane states.

What is the truth? The truth is the element of mind. The element of mind is formless, and all-pervasive. It is being used right here and now, but people cannot trust it fully, so they learn terms and expressions, seeking their conceptual assessments in writings. They are as far from the Way as the earth is from the sky.

When I speak of the teaching, what teaching do I expound? I expound the teaching of the mind ground, which can enter into purity, into defilement, into the ordinary, into the holy, into the absolute, into the conventional; and yet is not your absolute or conventional, ordinary or holy. It can give names to all the absolute and the conventional, the ordinary and the holy, but no absolute or convention, nothing ordinary or holy, can affix a name to it.

If you can lay ahold of it, then use it—don't fiddle around any more. Only then will you accord with the mystic message.

My teaching is distinct from everyone else. Even if a Manjusri and a Samantabhadra were to come forth, each manifesting an incarnation before my eyes, and ask about the teaching, as soon as they addressed me I would already have distinguished them.

How can I do this? Because my vision is distinct—outwardly I do not grasp the ordinary or the holy, while inwardly I do not dwell in the fundamental. I see through the basic reality, and no longer doubt or err.

167. The 25<sup>th</sup> Grand Master of Buddhism, Vasasita, debated with the Hindu Venerable Anatman. The Hindu said, "Please discourse silently, without using words." The Buddhist master said, "If words

are not used, who will know who won?" The Hindu said, "Just get the proposition." The Buddhist master said, "What is your proposition?" The Hindu said, "My proposition is there is no mind." The Buddhist said, "If there is no mind, how can you have a proposition?" The Hindu said, "The mindlessness I preach ought to be called a non-proposition." The Buddhist said, "You say mindlessness ought to be called a non-proposition; I say non-mind ought to propose a non-term." The Hindu said, "If you're going to propose a non-term, who can understand the proposition?" The Buddhist said, "You use the term non-proposition—what term does this designate?" The Hindu said, "It is to define non-proposition; this term has no designation." The Buddhist said, "Since the term is not a designation, the proposition is not a proposition either. Who understands, and what is to be understood?" They went back and forth like this fifty-nine times before the Hindu was silenced, believing in the Buddhist and acquiescing.

*Dahui remarked*, "Why was Vasasita so troubled? If I had been asked by the Hindu for silent discourse without using words, I would have immediately said, 'Your proposition has fallen through.' Now is there anyone who wants to debate silently with me? If someone

comes up and says, 'Your proposition has fallen through,' I know you're making a living in a ghost cave."

168. Master Daning Kuan said to an assembly,

No thought is the source, no dwelling is the basis, true emptiness is the substance, ethereal being is the function. That is why it is said that the whole earth is true emptiness, the whole universe is ethereal being.

Now tell me, who can apply this?

The four seasons go on and on, the sun and moon are always light; reality basically never changes, the Way has no location. Adapt to conditions and you will be free; pursue objects and you will rise and fall.

In this land and other regions, you enter the ordinary and the holy, but tell me, how do you express going into a village and adapting to its customs?

[a long silence]

Sanskrit in India, Chinese in China.

169. Master Yuanming said to an assembly,

The bequest of Spiritual Mountain has been transmitted to the ten directions. When Buddhas emerge in the world, that is called setting up a site of enlightenment and turning the wheel of universal teaching. This teaching is right in the immediate present; it is still far from the school of living Chan. Why don't the most advanced followers ask any questions?

[A monk came forward, but Yuanming said,] "Go, go! The road to India is very, very long!"

Q: "What is the meaning of the assembly on Spiritual Mountain?"

A: "The initial illusion reaches right to the very present."

Q: "What is the very first proposition?"

A: "Three lifetimes, sixty eons."

Q: "Does someone who's experienced a great awakening have any faults?"

A: "Iron mountains stand across the road." [He also said] "Cut off the sunlight, and sky and earth are dark. Those in a frantic hurry circle the earth, throughout every clime. At such a time, if Buddhas or Chan masters appeared they'd deserve a beating. But even so, 'while officially not even a needle is admitted, privately a horse and carriage can get through.'"

170.. Master Jiangshan Fang said to an assembly,

It's not a matter of being able to say it or not; everywhere they take it for a marvel. Hanshan lit a fire, his hair got full of ashes; he laughingly scolded Fenggan, this old brigand.

Q: "How is it when the lotus blossom has not yet emerged from the water?"

A: "When threading a needle, you don't like the eye to be too small."

Q: "How about after it emerges?"

A: "Relaxing sorrowful brows all day long."

Q: "What is the immutable icon?"

A: "Walking through town wearing a cotton shirt."

Q: "I don't understand."

A: "Riding a donkey stepping through the waves of Lake Dongting."

Q: "Passing through the three levels of waves, I single-mindedly listen for one peal of thunder."

A: "When you extend your hand, you can't even see your palm."

Q: "Can I go forward or not?"



A: "You're stamping the earth while calling to the sky."

Q: "A cloth drum is hard to sound at the gate of thunder."

A: "An embroidered ball can't be used to sew a scarlet banner."

Q: "This saying will circulate widely after thirty years."

[Fang thereupon struck a blow.]

Q: "A rushing stream crosses sword blades, fast flames pass spear points—do you allow your students to be tentative?"

A: "When the weather is cold and the days are short, the nights are even longer."

Q: "The embroidered curtains are sewn with mandarin ducks—passersby cannot see."

A: "Inside the skull, the mettle to challenge the heavens."

Q: "Teacher!"

A: "A chicken head but a phoenix tail."

Q: "Everyone else washes in mud, but you produce a picture."

A: "I'm the guest today; I hope you'll be attentive. Even so, it won't do to let go." [The master smacked the meditation platform once and got down.]

171. Master Xinghua said to an assembly at the opening of a hall,

This stick of incense is basically for Sansheng, but Sansheng was too strict for me, so it is appropriate for me to succeed to Daxue. Daxue was very generous to me. With Sansheng I learned expressions of host and guest—if I hadn't met Daxue, they'd have misled me all my life. At Daxue's, taking a beating I saw the logic of spiritual grandfather Linji getting a beating at Huangbo's. This stick of incense I offer to the late master Linji.

Q: "What did Buddha and Kasyapa discuss at the Shrine of Many Children?"

A: "When one person conveys a falsehood, ten thousand people pass it on as truth."

172. Master Wuzu Yan said to an assembly,

"Suchness," the "ordinary," and the "holy" are all dream talk; "Buddha" and "sentient beings" are both excess verbiage. If someone were to come forth and say, "What about the elders of Panshan?" I would just say to him, "If not for the early blooming of the flowers on the outskirts of the capital city, how could we have the orioles alighting on the willow branches?" If he went on to ask, "What about the elder of Wuzu?" I would say to myself, "Yes! Keep awake!"

173. As Zihu was hoeing the ground, he pressed down on the hoe. Turning around, he looked at Shengguang and said, "It's not that there's nothing to do, but if you've got an attitude, you err."

Shengguang immediately asked, "What is there to do?"

Zihu kicked him in the chest, knocking him down. At this Shengguang was enlightened.

174. Master Fahua Ju said to an assembly,

If you open your mouth, you're saying too much. Even if you don't open your mouth, that's still excess talk.

The imperial monarch hands down decrees, but the custom of a rustic shop is different.

175. Master Xuansha said to an assembly,

The true school of the ancient Buddhas always manifests in response to people, adapting with dignity, shedding light everywhere, even-minded in concealment as in the open, thoroughly aware of high and low.

This is why the eye of the Way is primary; merge with the fundamental and clarify the mind, for this alone is the end.

Myriad forms are one body, from the same source: when you open up, there is no boundary—who speaks of getting stuck?

The phenomena of countless ages are all in the immediate present, but people of the time have developed opposition to the eternal essence over the course of long years. Perceiving things with confused minds, they thereby turn away from the true source, fixated on being or stuck on emptiness.

Failing to meet good friends, or companions on the Way, they only go by their own subjective interpretations; even if they hold discussions, it is all speculative.

Even when it comes to finding out the ground of principle, you do not distinguish true from false—of course you have never fished out your self in everyday life.

As for the ancient worthies, sages of yore, they knew their own times. Mastering themselves, pressing on with their work, they lived in mountain caves.

An ancient worthy said, 'If your feelings retain a sense of holiness, you still fall into religious materialism. If your view of self hasn't been forgotten, it turns into affliction.'

It cannot be said that you will hit the mark by fasting, discipline, constant sitting without reclining, stopping the mind,

meditating on emptiness, freezing the spirit, or entering concentration—what connection is there?

Cultists in India can go into trances lasting eighty thousand eons, freezing the spirit in utter silence, closing their eyes, mortifying their bodies and annihilating their intellects; but when that period is up, they cannot escape repeating mundane routines, all because their perception of reality is not clear and they have not broken through the root source of birth and death.

The unattached are not like this. They cannot be the same as those cultists; all of them truly understand and have great knowledge and vision, able to penetrate like the Buddhas, silently aware, forgetting conceptual knowledge, taking in myriad forms without resistance.

Right now, where is not you? Where is not clear? Where is not evident?

Why don't you understand this way?

Without this state, what can you do about the various kinds of impulse? It all turns into falsehood—where is your everyday empowerment?

If you really haven't had an awakening yet, then you need to be urgent about it at all times, even if you forget to eat and lose

sleep, as if you were saving your head from burning, as if you were losing your life. Concentrate deeply to liberate yourself—cast aside useless mental objects, stop mental discrimination, and only then will you have a little familiarity.

Otherwise, one day you will be carried away by consciousness and emotion—what freedom is there in that?

Now there's no compare to the clarity of the exposition of inanimate objects. The earth, the trees, the stones—they expound the teaching with exceptional veracity; it's just that few people can hear it.

If you do hear this exposition, only then can you discuss it.

But tell me, how do you discuss the teaching expounded by the inanimate? Let's see you try to say. Don't tell me they have 'no speech, no explanation, no seeing, no hearing.' And don't tell me they 'explain without being asked, lauding their own course.'

Haven't you read [in the *Flower Ornament Scripture*] how the youth Sudhana visited fifty-three advisers, finally meeting Maitreya? In a finger-snap he gained entry through the door; once he had entered the door, it shut by itself.

Inside the tower he saw the past deaths and reincarnations of a hundred thousand Buddhas, and one hundred and twenty advisers

on whom he called, as projected scenes inside the tower, all appearing at the same time, witnessing and testifying to enlightenment for him. Sudhana's doubts ceased all at once.

Anyone who has this discovery of true reality can discuss it. Then being in the rough and tumble of the ordinary world is the same as being in the pure lands of the Buddhas. What birth and death would you fear anymore?

Who knows that all the teachings have no real substance?

Even Kasyapa's inner hearing at the assembly on Spiritual Peak was like talking about the moon.

The saying of the ancient worthy, 'Don't think good or bad at all' is the same as pointing at the moon.

All the practices and stages of the three vehicles, liberation, bodhisattvas, nirvana, holy virtues, and sanctification are all like flowers in the sky, horns on a rabbit.

Haven't you heard it said, 'When you come back and observe the world, it's like something in a dream.' Contrived mental states are not to be relied upon; over the long run, they are of no benefit.

It is just because you veer away from reality and abandon the root that you try to detach from ordinary feelings and break down your mind on a religious path. If you entertain views like this, you will

not get out of their limitations, and won't be able to dispense with their mental and physical elements.

Haven't you heard it said: 'All activities are impermanent—this is the law that whatever is originated passes away.' You just try to forge ahead—how can you understand what's right here?

Only when you have penetrated can you know this.

If you have not yet found out, you should know they are all vain, mundane, unbelievable things. Only if you have great basic capacity can you understand them.

If you can just penetrate now, it'll be thus forever. An ancient worthy said, 'You should finish in this life—who can take on leftover misfortune for eons on end?'

176. Master Langya Jiao said to an assembly,

Go forward and you die, retreat and you perish. If you neither advance nor retreat, you fall into the realm of indifference.

Why so?

'Although the capital city is fun, it's not a place for a long stay.' *Dahui remarked*, "Weeping tears of blood is no use; it's better to get through the rest of spring keeping your mouth shut."



177. Master Yangqi Hui held up a staff and said to an assembly,

One is all, all are one. [drawing a line] Mountains, rivers, the whole earth, and all the old masters in the world are shattered—what are your nostrils? [a long silence] A sword is drawn from the jeweled scabbard on account of iniquity; medicine is taken out of the gold bottle on account of illness.

178. Master Guanxi Xian said to an assembly,

There are no walls in the ten directions, and no gates in the four quarters; bare, naked, there is nothing to grasp.

Q: “Why did the founder of Chan come from the West?”

A: “A bowl full of rice, a container full of soup.”

Q: “I don’t understand.”

A: “When hungry, eat; when full, stop.”

Q: “Long have I heard of Guanxi, the Pouring Stream, but now that I get here I only see a flax-soaking pond.”

A: “You only see the flax-soaking pond, not the pouring stream.”

Q: “What is the pouring stream?”

A: “Swift as an arrow.”

179. Elder Huo called on Deshan. As soon as Deshan saw him, he made as if to take out his seat cloth. The elder said, "Leaving this aside for the moment, if someone comes with mind and environment unified, what would you say to him to avoid being criticized everywhere?"

Deshan said, "You're still three steps short of past days; come back as an independent individual."

The elder thereupon shouted.

Deshan didn't reply.

The elder said, "I've choked the old fox."

Guishan heard this story told. He remarked, "The elder may have gotten the advantage, but nevertheless he was covering his ears to steal a bell."

180. An the Iron Lion was at Fengxue, sitting by the fireside, when a certain minister of education came to visit. Seeing An there, he immediately asked, "How do you get out of the burning of the world?"

An picked up a poker and stirred the fire. The minister tried to think of something to say. An said, "Minister of Education, Minister of Education."

181. When Sansheng called on Deshan, as he was about to spread out his seat cloth to bow, Deshan said, “Stop—don’t spread your picnic cloth here; we have no leftovers to give you.”

Sansheng said, “Lucky there are none—if there were, where would you put them?”

Deshan hit Sansheng. Sansheng caught the cane and pushed Deshan over. Deshan laughed. Sansheng cried, “Heavens!” and left the audience hall.

The chief monk asked, “High-minded people on pilgrimage should attain objective proof of the fundamental way; what is objective proof of the fundamental way?”

Sansheng said, “What did you say?”

The chief monk asked again. Sansheng hit him with his seat cloth and said, “Ignoramus! How many decent people have you offended?”

As the chief monk was about to exchange courtesies, Sansheng walked past him to the second-ranked monk and extended his courtesies to him.

182. Master Dayu Zhi, addressing an assembly, quoted Panshan’s verse saying, “The light is not illumining objects, and the objects are

not even there. When light and objects are both forgotten, then what is this?" Now the master held up his whisk and said, "The lights of Buddhas numerous as atoms are all here, irradiating your hearts, livers, and guts. Don't speak of it in the presence of a Chan monk; you'd best watch your mouth!"

At an informal gathering, he said to an assembly, "The reverberations of a single clang, crystal clear, resound throughout the universe; even as one who knows lends an ear, the enemy has already crossed the river. Understanding thus is like taking a donkey saddle ridge for your father's lower jaw bone."

183. Master Cuiyan Zhen quoted a story about Huangbo when he was the head of the assembly at Nanquan's and the workman Gan Zhi requested a distribution of money. Huangbo said, "Disbursal of money and teaching are equal." The worker carried the money out of the hall. In a moment he came back and again asked for a distribution of money. Huangbo said, "Disbursal of money and teaching are equal." Now the workman went around handing out the cash.

Master Cuiyan Zhen said, "As for the workman, 'a clever lad loses his profit.' As for Huangbo, when did he ever dream of

material giving?”

*Dahui commented*, “The run of the mill follow perverts and criminals; this cloud-dwelling saint is a bit better.”

184. Master Gushan said to an assembly,

If you have not yet mastered the great task, and have not tapped the artery of the source, avidly memorizing words and phrases is making a living in conceptual consciousness. Haven’t you read the saying, ‘Conception is a robber; consciousness makes waves in which everyone is drowned, without any freedom.’

If you have not yet penetrated the great matter, it’s best to stop, ceasing all striving, so body and mind are simple and serene. Refrain from fixation at all times, and the matter will actually be easily revealed.

This is something I say to you by way of encouragement, just because I have no choice. The ancients called it medicine for a dead horse. If it is a realized individual, talking to someone this way is like talking in your sleep.

Now what about you—can you actually use a single word from the twelve-part teachings? Can you actually use a single phrase from the sayings of the adepts? If it is the twelve-part teachings,

which teaching are you in? If it is the sayings of the adepts, in what saying will we find you?

Therefore it is said that the twelve-part teachings cannot express it, ordinary and sacred cannot contain it, the passage of time cannot move it, verbal expression cannot cover it.

Talk like this is generally for people who've gotten their heads stuck in doctrine, to free them up; but if you talk this way to someone who's never given a hint of that, he'll grab you and ask why you're babbling nonsense—and you can't blame him.

You must be very discerning. Do not fail to distinguish the auspicious from the ominous. If anyone can distinguish, come forth and demonstrate it.

185. Master Huanglong Nan said to an assembly,

Haklena appeared in disguise in the sky, Manora pointed to the earth and produced a spring. In Deshan's school, that's incomparable, but in Linji's school it only gets one side. [a long pause] What is the other side?

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Note

Haklena and Manora were Indian forerunners of Chan. Their enlightenment stories are retold in *Transmission of Light*.

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186. A monk asked Nanyuan, “Where have the sages since time immemorial gone?”

He replied, “If not to heaven, then to hell.”

The monk asked, “What about you, master?”

He replied, “Do you know where I’ll wind up?”

The monk hesitated, trying to think of something to say. The master hit him with his fly whisk. Then he told the monk to approach and said, “The command is for you to exercise,” and he hit him again.

Xuedou said, “Since the command went into effect on its own, the whisk was ignorant of the reason. I say ‘Blind!’ just to add frost to snow.”

*Dahui commented,* “Balancing the three essentials and three mysteries of Linji must be credited to that Nanyuan—then why does Xuedou say the whisk was ignorant of the reason? I too say ‘Blind!’ just hoping both can get to meet.”

187. Baizhang asked Zhaozhou, “Where have you just come from?”

Zhaozhou said, “Nanquan.”

Baizhang asked, "What statements does Nanquan have?"

Zhaozhou said, "People who have not yet attained should simply be still."

Baizhang immediately shouted.

Zhaozhou made a gesture of fright.

Baizhang said, "Fine stillness!"

Zhaozhou danced a jig and left.

188. When Chan Master Jing of Mt. Sikong was questioned by students, he would answer with verses. Here are three that are recorded:

*The four gross elements have no owner; like flowing water,  
They meet the crooked and the straight without 'that' or 'this.'  
When minding neither purity nor pollution,  
How could blockage or free flow divide consciousness?  
When coming in contact with the world of objects, just be like water;  
In the world without minding, what problem is there one way or another?*

*Seeing, hearing, awareness, knowledge—there is no obstruction.  
Sound, scent, flavor, feeling—these are perpetual Samadhi.  
Neither grasping nor rejecting, no love or hate,  
If you can respond to situations basically not minding,  
Then you can finally be called independent observers.*



*Only when you've seen the Way do you practice the Way*

—

*If you don't see, what do you practice?*

*The emergence of the Way is like space—*

*What is there to cultivate in space?*

*Those who practice the Way by all kinds of contemplation*

*Are stirring fire looking for foam.*

*Just observe the manipulation of the puppets—*

*When the strings are cut, it all stops at once.*

189. Deshan asked the administrator, "How many people are here for the first time today?"

The administrator said, "Eight."

Deshan said, "Call them and we'll try them all at once."

190. Master Zhenjing said to an assembly on disbanding the summer retreat,

Does anyone have any questions? [hitting his meditation bench once with his fly whisk] The natural mechanism of the universe includes negative and positive, life-giving and death-dealing.

The shining of the sun and moon is sometimes bright and sometimes dim, sometimes hidden and sometimes clear.

The flow of rivers may be high or low, constricted or free.

In the governments of enlightened rulers, there is leadership and administration, there is ceremony and music, there is reward and punishment.

In the existence of Buddhas in the world, there are sudden and gradual, there are temporary and true, there are joining and disbanding.

The joining is on the fifteenth day of the fourth month, when all the holy and ordinary of the whole world, even the plants and the rocks [tapping his left with the whisk] join together all at once from *here*. [holding up the whisk] They're all on the whisk—see? [shouting once, he continued] As for the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the rocks and the trees throughout the world, and the holy and the ordinary [tapping to his right with the whisk] disband all at once from *here*. [shouting, he continued] How about before the fifteenth day of the fourth month and after the fifteenth day of the seventh month? Is it in session or out? [holding up the whisk] It's all on the whisk—do you see?

[then he shouted and said] Eminent worthies, in these three shouts, there is one shout that is an adamant diamond sword, one shout that is a crouching lion, and one shout that is a test. If people can distinguish each one of them, then they can see great

master Linji's way goes beyond ordinary sense—even Huangbo got slapped, even Dayu got punched. Even though two or three centuries have passed since then, I would admit that you can personally become his direct heirs.

After that, you can open up the door of nonduality, balancing the paths of the various masters, smashing falsehood and revealing truth, supporting the school and establishing the teaching, repairing the deteriorated order, freely exercising great knowledge and vision, with the eye of universal truth shining, decisively defeating the army of the devil without stirring from the fundamental state.

[shout] You should know there's a shout that doesn't act as a shout. When you get here, you have to have the adamantine eye to suddenly pick up before making a mess.

But tell me, eminent worthies—pick up what? [after a long silence, he shouted one shout]

191. Master Letan Jun said to an assembly,

This morning is the tenth day of the twelfth month. Last night it snowed, and the ridges are all white, as far as the eye can see, high and low; the green bamboo and pines are hard to distinguish. Next year's silk worms will mature and the wheat will ripen and everyone

will rejoice, drumming their bellies and singing and laughing unceasingly, taking up pan pipes, playing wildly, dancing around forgetting themselves.

[shouting a shout] When Chan travelers meet, they just snap their fingers; how many people can know what this means?

192. A Hindu king asked Parati, "What is buddhahood?"

Parati said, "Seeing nature is buddhahood."

The king asked, "Do you see nature?"

Parati said, "I see the nature of buddhahood."

The king asked, "Where is the nature?"

Parati said, "The nature is in function."

The king asked, "What function is this? I don't see it now."

Parati said, "It is functioning now; it's just that you yourself don't see."

The king asked, "Does it exist in me?"

Parati said, "If you do anything, it is there; if you don't use it, though, the substance is invisible."

The king asked, "When it is used, how many places does it appear?"

Parati said, "If it appears, there must be eight."

The king said, “Please explain those eight appearances for me.”

Parati said, “In the womb, it is called the body. In the world, it is called the person. In the eyes, it is called seeing. In the ears, it is called hearing. In the nose, it distinguishes smells. In the tongue it talks. In the hands it grips, in the feet it steps. It manifests everywhere, including the universe, concentrating it in an atom; those who know realize it is the Buddha nature, while the undiscerning call it the spirit.”

When the king heard that, his mind opened up and awakened. *Dahui commented*, “Right now I dare ask you all—which is buddha-nature, which is spirit?”

193. Devadatta slandered Buddha and so fell into hell while still alive. Buddha had Ananda relay a message to him: “Are you comfortable in hell?” Devadatta said, “Even though I’m in hell, I’m as blissful as in the third meditation heaven.” Buddha also had Ananda ask, “Do you want to get out?” Devadatta said, “When the Buddha comes, then I’ll leave.” Ananda said, “The Buddha is the teacher of the whole world—how could he have any place in hell?” Devadatta said, “How could I have any place out of hell?”

Cuiyan Zhen remarked, “Familiar words come from the mouth of the familiar.”

194. Yunmen asked Caoshan, “What is purifying practice?”

Caoshan said, “Eating the crops of the endowment.”

Yunmen asked, “How is it when going on just so?”

Caoshan said, “Can you accumulate stores?”

Yunmen said, “What is hard about dressing and eating?”

Caoshan said, “Why don’t you talk about wearing fur and bearing horns?”

Yunmen then bowed.

195. A Confucian scholar who read the scripture *Names of a Thousand Buddhas* asked Master Changsha, “Of the hundreds and thousands of Buddhas, we only hear the names—what lands do they live in, and do they teach people?”

Changsha said, “Cui Hao wrote a poem on the Yellow Crane Pavilion; have you ever written a poem on that subject?”

The scholar said, “No.”

Changsha said, “When you have nothing to do, write one.”

Huanglong Xin eulogized,

*In front of Yellow Crane Pavilion*

*At the time of religious war  
The hundred thousand Buddhas fly the flag of  
surrender—*

*If they have no lands, where will they return?  
At least they won a poem from a scholar.*

196. In an address at Baiyun, Master Wuzu Yan quoted, “Xuefeng asked Deshan, ‘What doctrine have the sages since antiquity taught people?’ Deshan said, ‘Our school has no verbal expression, and not a single doctrine to give people.’ Xuefeng had an insight from this. A monk asked Xuefeng, ‘When you saw Deshan, what did you attain to enable you to have peace?’ Xuefeng said, ‘I went empty-handed and returned empty-handed.’

“Today I am speaking to those who have yet to pass through. Suppose two people come from Loyang, but when you ask where they’re from they say Suzhou. When you ask them how things are in Suzhou, they say everything’s as usual. Even so, they can’t fool me. Why? Because their pronunciation is different.

“Ultimately? The wheat of Suzhou, the lotus of Shaobai.”

In another address to an assembly, he cited, “A monk asked Caoshan, ‘How is it when the Buddha has not yet emerged in the world?’ Caoshan said, ‘I am not comparable.’ ‘What about after emergence in the world?’ ‘Not comparable to me.’ If you view this

from the standpoint of conventional truth, Caoshan deserves twenty blows. If you view this from the point of view of the Chan path, I deserve twenty blows. Even so, there's an eye on the cane; both men get hit, but one completely agrees while one completely disagrees. If you can tell them apart, I'll admit you have half an eye."

197. When Xingyang Jing first called on Xiyuan, he asked, "When about to question but not yet having questioned, then what?"

Xiyuan immediately hit him. Jing remained silent. Xiyuan said, "If you call it a cane, your eyebrows and whiskers will fall out."

Jing was greatly awakened at these words.

198. Master Langya Jiao said to an assembly,

My late teacher composed a verse:

*Three mysteries, three essentials—  
the actualities are hard to differentiate.  
When you get the meaning, forget the words,  
and the Way is easy to approach.  
When one statement is clear, it includes myriad forms;  
On the ninth day of the ninth month, chrysanthemums  
bloom anew.*

[Shouting once, Langya said] Which mystery is this? [after a long pause, he said] You are infinitely sorry, and I too am infinitely sorry.



A monk asked, "What is Buddha?"

Langya said, "Bronze head, iron forehead."

The monk said, "I don't understand."

Langya said, "Bird beak, fish gills."

199. A monk asked Master Dalong, "The physical body deteriorates and decomposes; what is the indestructible body of reality?"

Dalong said, "The mountain flowers, blooming, resemble brocade; the valley stream, brimming, is deep as indigo."

*Dahui remarked*, "If you take these two lines to explain the body of reality, you'll fall living into hell."

200. When Master Cuiyan Zhen was the assembly leader in the community of Master Guizong Nan, Nan asked him, "I hear you always use the story of the girl coming out of concentration to help people—is that so?"

Zhen said, "No."

Nan said, "When extravagant, one is not sparing; when sparing, one is not extravagant. Why do you say no?"

Zhen said, “Even if they’re genuine Chan monks, you can’t let them lack salt and broth.”

Nan then turned and called to an attendant to tell the cook to make only plain gruel the next day.

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Note

The story of the girl coming out of concentration appears in the *Wumenguan*. A girl remained in concentration after an assembly had dispersed. Manjusri, who represents transcendent insight, tried to rouse her, but was unsuccessful. Buddha then summoned a bodhisattva named Netted Light, who was able to rouse the girl from concentration at a finger snap. This stands for the principle that prajna, transcendent insight, intuitively emptiness, or the absolute, while jnana, knowledge, here represented by Netted Light, distinguishes conditional existence or relative truth.

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201. As master Xuansha was attending Xuefeng on a walk, Xuefeng pointed to the earth in front of them and said, “This spot of ground is good for building a seamless monument.”

Xuansha said, “How high?”

Xuefeng looked up and down.

Xuansha said, “In the matter of human and divine rewards for virtue, I don’t deny you; but when it comes to the prophecy of Spiritual Mountain, you haven’t even dreamed of it.”

Xuefeng said, “What would you say?”

Xuansha said, "Seven or eight feet."

Langya Jiao remarked, "When a country is pure, talented people are valued. When a family is rich, the children are delicate."

202. On an occasion when monks came to call on Fayan, he pointed to a bamboo blind. Two monks went and rolled it up. Fayan said, "One gain, one loss."

203. Longji asked a monk, "Where are you coming from?"

The monk said, "From Cuiyan."

Longji asked, "What has Cuiyan been saying to followers?"

The monk replied, "He always says 'meet Maitreya when you go out the gate, see Shakyamuni when you go in the gate.'"

Longji said, "How can you say that?"

The monk asked, "What about you, Master?"

Longji said, "Going out the gate, meet 'who,' going in the gate, see 'what.'"

At these words the monk had insight.

204. When Master Dacheng Zun was in the assembly of Cizhou, one day he asked, "What was the meaning of the ancient in asking

for fire?”

Cizhao said, “Let it go out.”

Dacheng asked, “After it’s out, then what?”

Cizhao said, “The thirty-first day of the first month.”

Dacheng said, “Then it’s a good time.”

Cizhao said, “What principle do you see?”

Dacheng said, “All tired out today.”

Cizhao thereupon struck him. Dacheng then composed a verse:

*The opportunity for seeking fire is really fast!  
The subtle function with the hidden edge, few people suspect.  
If you want to understand my teacher’s personal message,  
When the fire goes out in the crimson furnace, he doesn’t add  
more fuel.*

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#### Note

The story of the master asking for fire is recounted in a later segment of this collection. One day Guishan was standing by Baizhang. Baizhang said “Who is it?” He said, “Lingyou.” Baizhang said, “Stir up the brazier to see if there is any fire or not.” Guishan stirred it up and said, “There is none.” Baizhang got up himself, stirred deeply, and found a little fire. Showing it to him, he said, “Is this not fire?” Guishan was thereupon enlightened.

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205. Master Guanghui Lian said to an assembly,

When the Chan imperative goes into effect, the tracks of humans and divinities disappear; when a pathway is opened up, we temporarily talk of complications. Why so? In the interval of an urge to deliberate, you've already lost your life.

I do not shrink from the criticisms of others—I go into mud and water for your sake. Doesn't anyone understand? For the moment, let me try to convey a message. [silence] Look, look—everyone's living in the world of bedevilment!

[then he held up his staff and said] Speak quickly! Speak quickly!

[the group hesitated; he then shouted a shout]

A monk asked, "What is a true human with no position like?"

He said, "Wood above, iron below."

The monk said, "Then the fault is in being."

The master said, "The judge tosses down his pen."

The monk bowed. Lian said, "Haul him out!"

206. Master Luohan Chen asked a monk from Baofu, "How is Buddhism taught there?"

The monk said, "Baofu sometimes says to the group, 'Block your eyes so you can't see; block your ears so you can't hear; stop

your conceptual faculty so you can't discriminate."

Chen said, "I ask you, if you don't block your eyes, what do you see? If you don't block your ears, what do you hear? If you don't stop your conceptual faculty, how do you discriminate?"

The monk had insight at these words.

*Dahui remarked*, "Wealth despises a thousand mouths as too few; poverty resents one body as too much."

207. When Master Touzi was in Tongcheng county, Zhaozhou asked him, "Aren't you the master of Touzi hermitage?"

Touzi said, "Donate some cash to me for tea and salt."

Zhaozhou went back to the hermitage before Touzi. Come evening, he saw the master return carrying oil. Zhaozhou said, "Long have I heard of Touzi, but now that I've arrived I only see an old oil vendor."

Touzi said, "You only recognize an old oil vendor—you don't recognize Touzi."

Zhaozhou said, "What is Touzi?"

Touzi held up the oil jar and said, "Oil, oil!"

208. Caoshan questioned the Paper-Robed Wayfarer when the latter visited, “Aren’t you the Paper-Robed Wayfarer?”

The wayfarer replied, “I do not presume.”

Caoshan asked, “What is the phenomenon in the paper robe?”

The wayfarer said, “Once a fur garment is put on the body, myriad things are *thus*.”

Caoshan asked, “What is the function in the paper robe?”

The wayfarer stepped forward, said, “Yes!” and then passed away right then and there.

Caoshan said, “Since you know how to go this way, why don’t you come this way?”

The wayfarer suddenly opened his eyes and asked, “How is it when the real essence of the one spirit does not avail itself of a womb?”

Caoshan said, “This is not yet sublime.”

The wayfarer asked, “What is sublime?”

Caoshan said, “Borrowing without dependence.”

The wayfarer said farewell, then sat down and died. Caoshan then composed a verse:

*The essence of awareness, complete and clear, is a formless body:*

*Don’t mistake far and near based on intellectual opinion.*

*When thoughts differ, you're blind to the substance of the mysterious;*

*When mind diverges, you're not neighbor to the Way.*

*When subjectively discriminating myriad things,*

*You get submerged in the objects before you;*

*When conscious awareness is fragmented,*

*You lose the basic reality.*

*If you understand such expressions with complete clarity,*

*You'll wind up unburdened, as you were before.*

A monk asked, "How is it when one ox drinks water and five horses don't neigh?"

Caoshan replied, "I know how to keep my mouth shut!"

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Note

The one ox stands for mind, the five horses stand for the primary senses.

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209. Zhaozhou said to an assembly,

Brethren, those who come from the South I unload, while those who come from the North I load. This is why it is said, "If you approach a superior person to ask about the Way, you lose the Way; if you approach an inferior person to ask about the Way, you find the Way."

Brethren, when a true person expounds a false doctrine, the false doctrine accordingly becomes true. When a false person



expounds a true doctrine, the true doctrine accordingly becomes false. Everywhere else they are hard to see but easy to know; here I am easy to see but hard to know.

[he also said to an assembly]

This matter is like having a brilliant jewel in the palm of your hand: when a foreigner comes, a foreigner is reflected; when a native comes a native is reflected.

I take a blade of grass and use it as the sixteen-foot golden embodiment of Buddha; I take the sixteen-foot golden embodiment and use it as a blade of grass. Buddhahood is identical to affliction, affliction is identical to buddhahood.

210. A monk asked Zifu, “What is ‘entering correct concentration on a single atom’?”

Zifu assumed a posture of meditation.

The monk asked, “What is ‘rising from concentration on all atoms’?”

Zifu said “Who are you asking?”

Yunmen remarked, “This teacher got trapped in words without even realizing it.” He added, “The first act was already complication; then he even says, ‘Who are you asking?’”

211. Nanquan asked Huangbo, “‘When concentration and insight are learned equally, you can see the Buddha-nature clearly’—what is the principle here?”

Huangbo said, “One only gets it when not leaning on anything twenty-four hours a day.”

Nanquan asked, “Is this your view?”

Huangbo said, “I don’t presume.”

Nanquan said, “Never even mind the fee for soup and water for now—who will you have pay the cost of footgear?”

Huangbo stopped.

*Dahui remarked*, “Haven’t you read the saying—‘When you meet a swordsman on the road, you’d better show your sword; don’t present a poem to someone who’s not a poet.’”

212. A monk asked Master Shexian Sheng, “Suppose a total incorrigible came to you; would you try to help him?”

The master said, “When a law is outdated, it becomes corrupt.”

The monk asked, “Where is the compassion?”

The master said, “The years turn into devils when you get old.”

Question: “How is it when the precious sword hasn’t been drawn from its scabbard?”

Answer: “Smacks you in the face.”

Question: “How about after it’s drawn?”

Answer: “Pulls out your teeth.”

Question: “How is it when ‘speaking of the immediate, not leaving any traces’?”

Answer: “When midnight strikes at high noon, a stone man tilts his head to listen.”

Question: “What about ‘speaking of the gradual, countering the conventional to conform to the Way’?”

Answer: “The question is clear; it is presented right to your face.”

Question: “What is action transcending a teacher?”

Answer: “How much have my eyebrows grown?”

Question: “What is the ‘solitary body revealed in sense objects’?”

Answer: “The thousand-man ships north of the Pass, the ten-thousand-bushel vessels south of the River.”

Question: “Then it is not an object of sense.”

Answer: “Literalists write ten thousand lines in one letter.”

Question: "What is the master's deepest point?"

Answer: "A cat has the ability to stop bleeding, a tiger has the power to raise a corpse."

Question: "Is this it?"

Answer: "The pestle pounds southeast, the grindstone rolls northwest."

213. A monk asked Master Shimen Cong, "Days and months come and go, with movement and change; before we realize it, we are deteriorating with age. Is there anyone who does not grow old?"

The master said, "There is."

"How is the one who does not grow old?"

"A young dragon is powerful, roaring loudly; later on, refinement and spirituality grow more and more."

Question: "What is the most profound point for a student?"

Answer: "A turtle withdraws its head, feet, and tail in the depths of the water."

Question: "What is it like there?"

Answer: "Someone traveling on the road has no way of knowing."

Question: “I hear there is an ancient saying, ‘Just *this*—now who moves his mouth?’—what does this mean?”

Answer: “Don’t mistake the ridge of a donkey saddle for your father’s lower jawbone.”

214. A monk asked Master Baoen Cong, “How is it when the lion has not come out of the cave?”

He said, “Weapons cannot attack it.”

Question: “How about after it comes out of the cave?”

Answer: “No way to hide.”

Question: “How about when on the verge of coming out?”

Answer: “Life hangs by a thread.”

Question: “What about what’s passing?”

Answer: “Pressure.”

215. Master Cuiyan Zhen said to an assembly,

A monk asked master Baling, ‘What is the Way?’

He replied, ‘Someone with clear eyes falls into a well.’

The monk also asked Baoying, ‘What is the Way?’

He replied, ‘In front of Five Pheonix Pavilion.’

The monk also asked Shoushan, ‘What is the Way?’

He replied, 'Where you stand, three feet deep.'

Of these three sayings, one 'stands like a mile-high wall,' one 'transports a boat over dry land,' and in one 'host and guest interact.' Can anyone distinguish them? Try to say.

If not, for now practice the compassion of arhats to break through bondage; practice the compassion of bodhisattvas to bring peace to living beings; practice the compassion of Buddhas to realize the character of suchness.

216. Wayfarer Kefu asked Linji, “What is ‘removing the subject but not the object’ like?”

Linji said, “The warm sun produces growth, spreading over the earth like brocade; a baby’s hair hangs down, shiny as floss.”

“What about ‘removing the object but not the subject’?”

“The royal command has already gone into effect all over the land; the general beyond the pass is free from smoke and dust.”

“What about ‘removing neither subject nor object’?”

“The king ascends the precious throne, old peasants sing songs.”

“What about ‘removing both subject and object’?”

“The states of Bing and Feng incommunicado, occupying one region alone.”

Kefu understood the message at these words. Entering deeply into the doors of the three mysteries, three essentials, and four statements, he helped the mystic teaching greatly.

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## Notes

Fenyang describes the three mysteries as follows:

The first mystery: the reality realm is boundlessly vast; interconnections and myriad forms are all complete within a mirror.

The second mystery: Shakyamuni Buddha questioned Ananda; the learned one answered according to the issue. Response according to capacity is unlimited.

The third mystery: directly emerging before the emperors of antiquity, outside the four propositions and hundred negations [all formal philosophy], a villager questions a sage.

He also defined the three mysteries as follows:

The first mystery: personally transmitted before Kasyapa [the first Indian patriarch of Chan, regarded as successor to the Buddha]

The second mystery: beyond definition, apart from verbal explanation.

The third mystery: a clear mirror reflects without bias.

Fenyang describes the three essentials in these terms:

The first essential: no fabrication in speech.

The second essential: a thousand sages enter mysterious depths.

The third essential: outside the four propositions and hundred negations, walking through the paths of Cold Mountain.

The four statements are the four relations of subject and object referred to in this citation.

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217. Fayen pointed to a chair and said, "If you know the chair, there's plenty of room."

Yunmen said, "If you know the chair, you're as far off as sky from earth."



Tianyi said, "If you know the chair, it's made of maple and cedar wood."

*Dahui remarked*, "If you know the chair, you'd better shave your head and wash your feet. Even so, there are many people who still misunderstand."

218. Master Deshan, one day when the meal was late, took his bowl and left the hall. At that time Xuefeng was in charge of preparing the rice. As soon as he saw Deshan, he asked, "The bell hasn't rung yet, old fellow, the drum hasn't sounded yet—where are you going with your bowl?"

Deshan thereupon returned to his room.

Xuefeng told Yantou about this. Yantou said, "Even the great Deshan doesn't understand the last word."

When Deshan heard this reported, he had an attendant call Yantou to him. He asked, "You don't approve of me?" Yantou secretly expressed his meaning.

The next day Deshan gave a talk that was not the same as his usual talk. Yantou clapped and laughed in front of the hall, saying, "Happily the old fellow in the hall understands the last word!"

Hereafter no one in the world will be able to oppose him. Even so, he only has three years.”

After three years Deshan did in fact pass away.

219. Prime Minister Yu Di asked Siyu, “I ask the teacher for a word on the ultimate principle of Buddhism.”

Siyu said, “Prime Minister, the ultimate principle of Buddhism requires you to get rid of your subjective rationales.”

The prime minister said, “Then I ask you to get rid of your subjective rationales.”

Siyu said, “Go ahead and ask a question.”

The prime minister asked, “What is Buddha?”

Siyu called, “Mr. Prime Minister!”

The prime minister responded.

Siyu said, “Don’t seek elsewhere.”

Later Yaoshan heard of this story and said, “What a pity! Prime Minister Yu was buried alive at the foot of Siyu Mountain!”

The prime minister heard of this and made a special visit to Yaoshan. He asked, “What is Buddha?”

Yaoshan called to him, “Mr. Prime Minister!”

The prime minister responded, “Yes?”

Yaoshan said, "What is this?"

Now the prime minister had an insight.

Shaoqing brought this up with Luoshan and said, "Equally they are saying 'what's special?' But there is a vast difference."

Luoshan said, "Even though you are a great master, still you shouldn't be hasty. At that time it was lucky to meet Prime Minister Yu: here if he roused a tiger with a burning tail from a nest of weeds, where would Yaoshan be?"

Shaoqing said, "How so?"

Luoshan said, "Did you know minister Yu had done refining gold?"

220. Master Xuedou said, "There are no walls in the ten directions, no gates in the four quarters'—where did the ancients meet guests? If you can utter a line taking hand in hand, then I'll allow you 'the heavens above and the earth below.'"

221. Yunmen went to Tiantong. Tiantong said, "Can you be sure?"

Yunmen said, "What are you saying?"

Tiantong said, "If you don't understand, you're wrapped up in the immediate present."

Yunmen said, “If you do understand, you’re wrapped up in the immediate present.”

*Dahui remarked, “At the crossroads, he took his stand with unyielding daring.”*

222. Master Tianyi Huai composed two verses on matter and emptiness:

*Matter is empty, emptiness is matter; the emptiness of matter is empty.  
It blocks the Tong Pass, so the road is impassable.  
When the eonic fire rages, every wisp is consumed.  
The green mountains, as before, are in the white clouds.*

*East, west, south, north,  
Ten myriad, eight thousand;  
Even Subhuti is at a loss—  
Lotuses sprout within fire.*

223. Baofu asked a monk, “What Buddha is it in the shrine?”

The monk said, “Let the master try to determine.”

Baofu said, “Shakyamuni Buddha.”

The monk said, “Better not treat people like fools.”

Baofu said, “It’s you who are treating me like a fool.”

Baofu also asked a monk, “What is your name?”

The monk said, “Xiance,” [which means *Benefiting All Like Moisture*.]

Baofu said, “Suppose you meet a desiccant; then what?”

The monk said, “Who’s the desiccant?”

Baofu said, “I am.”

The monk said, “Better not treat people like fools, Master.”

Baofu said, “It’s you who are treating me like a fool.”

Baofu also asked the rice cook, “How wide is the cauldron?”

The cook said, “Let the master try to measure it himself.”

Baofu made a gesture of measuring with his hands.

The cook said, “Better not treat people like fools.”

Baofu said, “It’s you who are treating me like a fool.”

Also, when Baofu saw a monk he said, “What work have you done to get so big?”

The monk said, “How much shorter are you, Master?”

Baofu hunched, making as if he were shorter.

The monk said, “Better not treat people like fools, Master.”

Baofu said, “It’s you who are treating me like a fool.”

224. Master Zhaozhou asked Touzi, “When someone who has undergone the Great Death returns to life, then what?”

Touzi said, "One cannot go by night; it is necessary to get there when it's light."

225. When Luoshan was at Heshan, as he saw off Elder Ju, a fellow traveler, when they went out the gate Luoshan poked in front of him with a staff. The elder did not respond.

Luoshan said, "A stone ox blocks the ancient road; one horse spawns a pair of colts."

Later a monk quoted this to Sushan. Sushan said, "A stone ox blocks the ancient road; one horse spawns three tigers."

226. Master Letan Ying said to an assembly,

When Shakyamuni pointed to the sky with one hand and the earth with the other and said, "In the heavens above and on earth below, I alone am the sole honored one," you may say he was acting as if there were no one around. If a clear-eyed Chan monk had been there at the time, he would have caused Shakyamuni to find no road up to the heavens and no gateway into the earth. Even so, the bronze dish lamp must be filled with oil before this is possible."

*Dahui remarked*, "It could be valued, it could be denigrated."

227. A monk asked Jianfu Si, “When the ancient shrine has no Buddha, then what?”

He replied, “Where does the pure voice come from?”

The monk also asked, “How can one attain fulfillment without resorting to cultivation and realization?”

He replied, “If you cultivate realization, you don’t attain fulfillment.”

228. Chan Master Fayán’s verse on the theme of the triplex world being only mental:

The three realms are merely mental,  
Myriad things are but representation.  
Only representation, only mental—  
Sound to the eye, form to the ear.  
Form does not reach the ear;  
How can sound contact the eye?  
Form to the eye, sound to the ear—  
Myriad things are in order.  
Myriad things are not mental objects—  
How can you view them as illusory?  
Earth, mountains, and rivers—  
Who is enduring, who changes?

Also, his verse on the six characteristics of the Flower Ornament teaching:

The Flower Ornament principle of the six characteristics:  
Within sameness there is still difference;  
If difference is different from sameness,  
That is not Buddha’s teaching at all.

In the meaning of the Buddhas,  
When have totality and distinction  
Ever had sameness and difference?  
When entering concentration in a male body,  
No attention's focused on the female body.  
When no attention's focused,  
There are no names;  
Myriad forms are distinctly clear,  
Neither abstract nor concrete.

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Note

The six characteristics of the Flower Ornament teaching are descriptions of the universe and all things in terms of sameness and difference, totality and distinction, formation and disintegration.

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229. Qingyuan asked Shanhui, "Where are you coming from?"

Shenhui said, "From Caoqi."

Qingyuan asked, "What have you brought?"

Shenhui shook himself and stood there.

Qingyuan said, "You're still carrying rubble."

Shenhui said, "Don't you have any gold to give people,  
teacher?"

Qingyuan said, "Even if I had, where would you put it?"

230. Master Luohan Nan said to an assembly,



Scarlet mist penetrates the sky, white herons dot the isle of immortals. I am not the man of Cold Mountain; at times at the ancient ford riding a swift steed I gallop to a high tower; jade globes roll in the Milky Way, ten thousand miles. Trying to understand true liberation separately is looking for bubbles in fire.

He also instructed an assembly,

Chan is not Chan, Tao is not Tao. The tongue seeps at random. Last night the solar disc floated cassia flowers; this morning the lunar cave produces mushrooms and herbs. Ah, ha, ha! Ten thousand ounces of pure gold—there's nowhere to look. When one statement cuts off thinking, things do not reach each other.

231. Xuefeng said, "There are people who starve to death sitting by a basket of food; there are folks who die of thirst on the bank of a river." Xuansha said, "There are people who starve to death inside a basket of food, people who die of thirst with their heads in the water." Yunmen said, "The whole body is food, the whole body is water."

*Citing this, Dahui shouted and said, "Talkative teachers are irrepressibly outstanding indeed. 'The whole body is food, the whole*

body is water’—where does this information come from?”

232. Great Master Bodhidharma’s *Teaching on Peace of Mind* says,

When people are deluded, they follow things; when people are liberated, things follow them. If you’re liberated, then consciousness absorbs form; if you’re deluded, form absorbs consciousness.

As long as there is conscious discrimination making comparative assessments of the immediate experience of your own mind, it is all dreams. If the conscious mind is silent, without any stirring thought, this is called true awareness.

What is the immediate experience of your own mind? When you see all things existing, their existence is not existence of itself, but your own mind conceives of them as existing. When you see all things as nonexistent, their nonexistence is not nonexistence of itself; your own mind conceives of them as nonexistent.

This is how it is with everything—in every case it is your own mind construing them as existing or not existing.

Also, even if people have done all sorts of things wrong, once they see the spiritual ruler in themselves they will attain liberation.

Those who attain liberation through actual events are robust in strength. Those who see the teaching in the context of actual events never lose mindfulness wherever they are. Those whose understanding comes from writings are weak. Those to whom the teaching and actual events are identical are deep.

No matter what you do—leap and dance, or stumble and fall—none of it is outside the realm of reality. Anyone who tries to use the realm of reality to enter into the realm of reality is an ignoramus. Whatever you do is never outside the mind of the realm of reality. Why? Because the substance of mind is the realm of reality.

People of the world study various branches of learning—why don't they attain enlightenment? Because they see themselves—that's why they don't attain enlightenment. The self means the ego; perfected people are not troubled when they experience misery, and are not delighted when they experience pleasure, because they don't see self.

The reason they are not concerned by pain or pleasure is that they are selfless and therefore attain supreme emptiness. If even the self is not there, what would not disappear?

If all things are empty, who cultivates the path? If you have a 'who,' then you need to cultivate the path. If there is no 'who,' then

you don't need to cultivate the path. 'Who' is the ego; if you are egoless, then you don't create judgments as you encounter things.

When you affirm something as so, that is your own affirmation, not that the thing itself is so. When you deny something as not so, that is your own denial, not that the thing itself is not so.

As long as you are mindless even as you are mindful, this is considered attainment of buddhahood. When you apprehend things directly without creating views, this is called attaining the path. One who, on encountering things, directly apprehends their source, is one whose eye of insight is open.

Those with wisdom let things be as they may, but not themselves, so they have no grasping and rejecting, opposition and accord. Fools let themselves be as they may, but not things, so they have grasping and rejection, opposition and accord.

Not seeing a single thing is called seeing the Way; not practicing anything is called practicing the Way.

When you're one with all places, you have no place; when you're one with all activities, you have no activity.

The state of nonstriving is seeing Buddha. When you look at appearances, then you see ghosts everywhere. By grasping

appearances, you fall into hell; by observing reality, you attain liberation.

If you see conceptually, you experience things like boiling water and burning coals, witnessing the appearances of birth and death. If you see the nature of the universe, it is the nature of nirvana. Have no conceptual thought, and there is the nature of the universe.

The mind is not material, so it is not existent; yet it functions, so it is not nonexistent. Also, while it functions yet it is always empty, so it is not existent; while empty it always functions, so it is not nonexistent.

233. Master Shimen Cong said to an assembly,

Questions and answers must make supposition and refutation complete; if you have a dragon's head but a snake's tail, you're fooling yourself. It's like a king wielding a sword—it's up to the king's will. It resembles a mirror on a stand—it calls for an excellent view. As soon as you open your mouth you're a million miles away; if you lower your head in thought, there are myriad barriers. If you direct people without true insight, the least that will happen is becoming a wild fox.

A monk asked, “What is the mind of the ancient Buddhas?”

The master replied: “Stepping on a balance weight, hard as iron.”

Q: What is the meaning?

A: The bright sun tells you.

Q: I don’t ask about the verdant mountains and aquamarine waters  
—how do you express intensity?

A: The hands reach past the knees, the ears droop to the shoulders.

234. Master Guanghui Lian said to an assembly,

There’s originally nothing to Buddhism; the sages since time immemorial have all been hoking up wonders, creating programs, oppressing free people and making them menials, burying their posterity. Then there were Yunmen, Zhaozhou, Deshan, and Linji; deadly dull, they suffered injustice all their lives.

Here I am not that way. Even if old Shakyamuni Buddha were to show up, I’d banish him to another world, so there would be no trace of him. Why would I do this? So I wouldn’t have to worry about losing my posterity.

When I speak this way, how do you people understand? If you can understand here, won’t that be joyous? It will get you to shed your hair shirt so you can be clean and free. If you don’t understand,

next year there will be more new stipulations, disturbing the spring wind, with never an end.

A monk asked for more instruction in a private interview, saying, “The master just said that even if old Shakyamuni Buddha came up you’d banish him to another world....” Before he had finished quoting, Lian said, “If you understand this way, you’ll go to hell like an arrow.” The monk said, “Then how should I understand?” Lian hit him. The monk hesitated, trying to think of something to say. Lian said, “Understand?” The monk said, “No.” Lian said, “Today I have explained to you without trying to avoid being censured everywhere; to serve infinite lands with this profound heart is called requiting the blessings of Buddha.”

*Dahui cited this and said with scorn*, “Decent people are unwilling to do it; you have to lie in your piss.”

235. Master Zhenjing said,

The ancient caves of Xinfeng—myriad layers pierced; the true trail of Wuben—a thousand forests thickly clustered. In beautiful places past and present, Buddhist service long flourishes. Therefore in days of old the great teacher Wuben once said in a lecture, “Only

the enlightenment of Buddhas is a real resort.” Then he shouted and said, “Still behaving this way.” Chan worthies, what did the great teacher mean by “still behaving this way”? Do you know what it comes down to? There are many in monastic communities who discuss this. Some say, “Listening to Buddha, listening to the teaching, is like a born enemy; how much the more so having a resort! Therefore it is subject to the great teacher Wuben’s critical examination.” Some say, “Wuben just wanted people to stop.” Some say, “Wuben just saw the sharpness of the awl; he didn’t see the squareness of the chisel.” When have such ilk seen the ancient even in dreams? Since it is not like this, then how is it?

Chan worthies, this matter requires close attention; don’t be crude minded. First class study of Chan ultimately gets to the bottom of it; the thousand differences and myriad distinctions in the school of the source, the different routes of concealing and revealing, only those of great wisdom understand. Ever since, no one has fathomed this, and so many hug a child who isn’t crying, hit a clean ball, hold the mooring rope while launching the boat, hold onto a bridge pillar to wash. Everyone is capable—who has no share? If you understand all at once, you drive off the plowman’s ox, take away the hungry man’s food, enter fire without burning, enter



water without drowning, not lingering anywhere, fulfilled everywhere, spiritual light shining alone, clearly distinct. This can be called being clear and free, raising the sail to cross over to the shore, setting in motion the boat that carries people over, appearing and disappearing in the heaps of foaming waves in the ocean of birth and death, going and coming, roaming independently. (shouting) Let others slander, let others repudiate; wearing both rain hat and raincoat in the rain, now I temporarily part from the moon at the strait and for the moment carry fish back to market.

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Note

The names Xinfeng and Wuben both refer to the great master Dongshan Liangjie, ancestor of the Cao Dong school of Chan.

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236. Hu “The Nail” called on master Baoshou. Baoshou asked, “Aren’t you Hu ‘The Nail’?” Hu said, “I don’t presume.” Baoshou said, “Can you nail space?” Hu said, “Please pound it in, Master.” Baoshou thereupon hit him. Hu “The Nail” didn’t agree. Baoshou said, “Later there will be a talkative teacher who will point it out for you.” Subsequently he called on Zhaozhou. Zhaozhou aid, “Aren’t you Hu ‘The Nail’?” Hu said, “I don’t presume.” Zhouzhou said,

“Can you nail space?” Hu said, “Please pound it in, Master.”

Zhaozhou said, “For the moment I’ll nail this gap.” Hu then mentioned the story of Baoshou using his cane. Zhaozhou said, “My speaking this way is thousands of miles away from that Baoshou.”

237. A monk asked master Shuilu, “What should a student apply his mind to?” Shuilu said, “To apply the mind is to miss.” The monk said, “How is it when not arousing a single thought?” Shuilu said, “A useless fellow.” The monk said, “How is this thing preserved?” Shuilu said, “Beware.” The monk asked, “When meeting on a narrow road, what then?” Shuilu grabbed him by the chest and gave him a shove.

238. Master Jinfeng said to an assembly, “Twenty years ago I had an indulgent heart; twenty years later I have no indulgent heart.” A monk asked, “How was it having an indulgent heart twenty years ago?” He said, “When asked about the ordinary, I answered about the ordinary; when asked about the holy, I answered about the holy.” The monk said, “How is it having no indulgent heart twenty years later?” He said, “When asked about the ordinary, I don’t answer

about the ordinary; when asked about the holy, I don't answer about the holy."

239. Master Huangbo said to an assembly, "You people are all gobblers of dregs; if you travel like this, where will you have Today? Do you know there are no Chan teachers in all of China?" Then a monk asked, "What about those who order followers and lead groups everywhere?" Huangbo said, "I don't say there's no Chan, just that there are no teachers."

Guishan asked Yangshan about this. Yangshan said, "A king goose picking out milk [from water] is sure no duck." Guishan said, "This is truly hard to distinguish."

240. Master Yungai An asked Shishuang, "I don't ask about myriad doors being closed; how is it when myriad doors all open?"

Shishuang said, "What about the business inside?" An said, "No one greets him." Shushuang said, "You've said quite a bit alright, but you've only managed to say eighty percent." An said, "I ask you to say, please, Master." Shishuang said, "No one knows him."

*Dahui remarked*, "A pair of iron hammerheads without no hole; one of them is heavier."

241. Master Langya Jiao said to an assembly,  
“Originally there is not a single thing” crushes people of the world.  
Even if you understand immediately, you’re sitting in a cesspit. What  
is the one route to pass through to freedom? Subtle sound,  
observing the sound of the world, the sound of purity, the sound of  
the ocean tide.

In a verse on the story of Baizhang’s fox, he said,  
*The clear mirror on its stand, those who emulate it are rare:*  
*When Chan people get here, they try to figure it out.*  
*Even if you can point out the moon in the autumn sky,*  
*After all you’re just a wild fox.*

In a verse on Qingping’s saying about the great vehicle and lesser  
vehicle, he said,  
*When mountains are high, the sun’s emergence is early;*  
*In a steep fastness the green pines grow old.*  
*Trampling the flowering apricot branches,*  
*Let the cold wind sweep.*

In a verse on the story of the wind and the flag, he said,  
*“It is not the wind, and not the flag”—*

*No talkative professor can explain.*

*If you seek mystic understanding with clever words,*

*You'll be separated by a thousand mountains, blocked by myriad mountains.*

242. Master Letan Jun said to an assembly,

The mainspring of the founding teacher is hidden in mystery; few people know it. How can it be brought up to those who don't understand mind? [shouting once] What am I saying? If it were only thus, the whole school of Bodhidharma would have been wiped off the face of the earth. Therefore when the World Honored One first realized this matter, he thereupon opened the gate of expedient means to show the manifestation of reality and enable every Tom, Dick, and Harry everywhere to understand this matter.

Today I cannot but open the gate of expedients in emulation of the ancients. [hitting the Chan seat once with his whisk] The gate of expedients is opened—what is the manifestation of reality? [a long pause] Eight out of ten, nine out of ten ignorant people run at night.

243. Master “Conquering Demons” Zang called on Master Xiu of the Northern School. Xiu asked, “You’re called ‘Conquering Demons’—

there are no mountain sprites or woodland spooks here. Are you going to turn into a demon?" He said, "Where there are Buddhas, there are demons." Xiu said, "If you are a demon, you must be dwelling in the state of the inconceivable." He said, "Here even Buddhas are empty—what state is there?"

244. Master Shitou said to an assembly,

My teaching is the transmission of past Buddhas; it does not discuss meditation or diligence, just arriving at the knowledge and insight of Buddhas. Mind itself is Buddha—mind, Buddha, living beings, enlightenment and affliction—the names are different but the essence is one. You should know the spiritual essence of your own mind is beyond annihilation and eternity, not defiled or pure, profoundly calm and perfectly complete, equal in ordinary people and saints. Its responsive function has no standard method; it is beyond thought, ideation, and cognition. The three realms and six courses of existence are only manifestations of your own mind. How could the moon in water or images in a mirror have any origin or passing away? If you are able to know this, you lack nothing.

A monk asked, “What is liberation?” He said, “Who binds you?” The monk said “No one binds me.” He said, “Who seeks liberation?”

He asked a monk, “Where are you coming from?” The monk said, “From Jiangxi.” He said, “Did you see Great Master Ma?” The monk said, “Yes.” Shitou then pointed to a piece of firewood and said, “How is Master Ma like this?” The monk had no reply. He went back and quoted this to Great Master Ma. Ma said, “Did you see how big the log was?” He said, “Immeasurably large.” Ma said, “You are very strong.” The monk said, “How so?” Ma said, “You carried a log all the way here from Nanyue—doesn’t that take strength?”

245. Yantou went with Xuefeng and Jinshan to call on Linji. On the way they encountered Elder Ding. Yantou asked him where he was coming from; Ding said, “From Linji.” Yantou asked, “Is the master well?” Ding said, “The master has passed away.” Yantou said, “We three were going just to pay respects to him; now we find the master’s passed away. We’re unfortunate, not seeing the master; pray tell, what sayings did he have? Please cite one or two examples.” Ding then cited Linji saying, “In the mass of naked flesh

there is a true human with no status, always going out and in through our senses. Those who have not yet witnessed this, look, look!’ At that time there was a monk who asked, ‘What is the real human with no status?’ Linji got down from the Chan seat, grabbed him, and said, ‘Speak, speak!’ The monk hesitated; Linji then pushed him away and said, ‘A true human with no status—what a piece of crap.’ Then he returned to his quarters.” Yantou unconsciously stuck out his tongue. Jinshan said, “Why didn’t he say, ‘In the mass of naked flesh is not the true human with no status’?” Ding then grabbed him and said, “How far apart are a true human with no status and not a true human of no status? Speak quickly! Speak quickly!” Jinshan just turned green and yellow, unable to speak. Yantou and Xuefeng urged him, “This novice has offended you, Elder; please be merciful.” Ding said, “If not for these two old fellows, I’d have beaten this bed-wetting imp to death.”

246. Master Baiyun Duan said to an assembly,

“A clay Buddha does not get through water, a wooden Buddha does not get through fire, a metal Buddha does not get through a furnace. The real Buddha sits within.” Zhaozhou’s twelve sets of bones and eighty-four thousand pores have been thrown into your



chest all at once. Today, seeing injustice on the road, I will put forth energy for the man of old. (rapping the seat once) You should know that seas and mountains belong to an enlightened ruler; it's not certain that heaven and earth fall to a good person.

247. A monk asked Yangshan, "Can the reality body teach?"

Yangshan said, "I can't say—someone else can say." The monk asked, "Where is the person who can say?" Yangshan pushed out a pillow. Guishan heard of this; he said, "Yangshan uses the business of the sword blade."

*Dahui commented*, "Guishan truly 'took pity on his son, mindless of being unseemly.' When Yangshan pushed out the pillow, this was already indulging; to further put a name on it, calling it the business of the sword blade, misleads literalists, who will thus accept vanity and continue an echo, circulating it further. Although I seem to be borrowing water to offer flowers, essentially there is no crooked determination of truth. Now is there no bystander who does not agree? Come forth; I want to ask you—does pushing out the pillow amount to the reality body teaching or not?"

248. Master Wuzu Yan said to an assembly,

The Buddhas of the ten directions, the six generations of patriarchs, and the teachers all over the land all share this tongue. If you know this tongue, only then do you understand great liberation. Then you say mountains, rivers, and earth are Buddha, plants, trees and forests are Buddha. If you don't know this tongue, you'll only achieve minor liberation, and will have a lot of work to do in the future.

When I speak thus, is there any reality to it or not? What is the reality? Return to the hall and drink tea.

249. When a certain nun was going to open a hall, master Tankong tested her, saying, "A nun has five obstructions and can't open a hall." The nun said, "When the Naga girl became a Buddha, how many obstructions did she have?" Tankong said, "When the Naga girl became a Buddha, she manifested eighteen transformations; let's see you try to transform." The nun said, "I'm not a wild fox spirit—what would I transform?" Tankong then hit her. Later the teaching master of Zhenzhou heard of this and said, "Did the master's staff break, trying to help someone with this understanding?" Cuiyan Zhi said, "Tell me, did the nun have eyes or not? Just carrying a broken cash string, how could one understand?"

250. When master Sansheng was in the community of Yangshan, an official came to see Yangshan. Yangshan asked him what his official post was, and he replied that he was a provincial judge. Yangshan raised his whisk and said, "Can you judge this?" The official was speechless. Yangshan had the whole community present sayings, but none of them was fitting. Sansheng was unwell and was in the nirvana hall trying to rest; Yangshan had an attendant go ask him to present a saying. Sansheng said, "Just say the master has an issue today." Yangshan then had the attendant go ask what the issue was. Sansheng said, "A second offense is not permitted."

251. When master Xinghua was in Sansheng's assembly, he always used to say, "When I traveled around the South, my staff never roused a single one who understood Buddhism." Later he went to Dajiao's place, where he was asked to be superintendant of the monastery. One day Dajiao called him out, "Superintendant, I hear you say that when you traveled around the South your staff never roused a single one who understood Buddhism. On what principle do you base this?" Xinghua shouted; Dajiao hit him. Xinghua

shouted again, and Dajiao hit him again. The next day in the teaching hall Xinghua called out, "Superintendant, I am dubious of these two shouts of yours." Xinghua shouted again, as before; Dajiao hit him. Xinghua shouted again, and Dajiao hit him again. Xinghua said, "When I was at Sansheng's place I learned the expressions of guest and host, but it's all been broken down by you, older brother. I say to you, give me a method of peace and ease." Dajiao said, "You blind ass! You come here and suffer defeat. Take off your patchwork robe and I'll give you a drubbing."

252. Master Jingqing said to an assembly,

If you have a boat but no oar, that won't do. If you have an oar but no boat, that won't do either. If you have both an oar and a boat, that still won't do. "Still won't do" won't do either. How is it with you?

One time he said,

If one person arrives, that still won't do. If one person doesn't arrive, that still won't do. If both arrive, that won't do either. "Won't do" won't do either. How about you? This is the subtlety within the subtle; wiping clear the blue sky, throughout the sky there is no obstruction.

253. Master Yangqi said to an assembly,

The scenery suddenly clear, beings' feelings relax. Taking a step—a thousand embodiments of Maitreya. Going into action—Shakyamuni everywhere. Manjusri and Samantabhadra are both here. If there are any in the group who are not fooled by others, they will say I am selling flour mixed with bran. Even so, they are filling a cloth bag with awls.

254. One day Yunmen said, “Dividing into two, splitting into three, where are the needle tube nostrils? Try to bring them up for me one by one.” He answered himself, “Upper, middle, lower.”

*Dahui commented*, “Leaning against the gate, standing by the door, he plays with the spirit.”

255. The fourth patriarch said to meditation master Rong,

The hundred thousand teachings revert alike to the heart; wonderful virtues as numerous as sand grains in the Ganges River all abide in the wellspring of mind. All methods of discipline, methods of concentration, methods of insight, spiritual powers and manifestations, are all inherent, not apart from your mind. All

afflictions and obstacles of habit are originally void; all causes and effects are like dream illusions. There is no triplex world to leave, no enlightenment to seek. Humans and non-humans are equal in essence and characteristics. The Great Way is empty and open, beyond thought, beyond cogitation. Now that you have gotten such principles, you lack nothing anymore; how are you different from Buddha? There is no special doctrine beyond this. Just let your mind be free; don't do contemplative exercises, and don't try to settle your mind either. Don't conceive greed or hostility, don't think of sorrow or worry. Clear and unobstructed, free as you will, not contriving virtues, not perpetrating evils, walking, standing still, sitting, lying down, whatever meets the eye, in any circumstance, is all the subtle function of Buddha. It is called Buddhahood because of happiness without sorrow.

256. Lecturer Liang called on Mazu. Mazu asked him, "I've heard you're quite a lecturer on scriptures and treatises; is this so?" Liang said, "I do not presume." Mazu said, "What do you lecture with?" He said, "I lecture with mind." Mazu said, "'Mind is like an artisan, ideas are like apprentices'—how can this lecture on scriptures?" Raising his voice, Liang said, "If mind cannot lecture, can space lecture?"

Mazu said, “Indeed, space can lecture.” Liang disagreed and left; as he was about to go down the stairs, Mazu called him, “Professor!” Liang turned his head, and was suddenly greatly enlightened. He then bowed. Mazu said, “This dull-witted preacher! What are you bowing for?” Liang went back to his monastery and told his audience, “I thought no one could match the scriptures and treatises I lecture on; today, at one question from Mazu, my whole life’s effort has dissolved.” He went straight into the western mountains and there was never any trace of him anymore.

257. Master Yunfeng Yue said to an assembly,

When speech does not leave nests, how can the path get out of enclosures? A cloud across a valley mouth misleads how many people from the source of the stream. Therefore it is said that words do not set forth facts and speech does not accord with situations, those who accept words are lost, those who linger over sayings are astray. When you get here, how will you speak of understanding? (pause) If you want to avoid action with immediate consequences, don’t slander the Realized One’s wheel of true teaching.

He also said to an assembly,

The whisk has swallowed the Polar Mountain. In ordinary discourse Deshan set up a sign in a bustling marketplace—how do you deal? (pause) Officially not even a needle is admitted; privately even a horse and carriage can pass.

258. Master Daming Kuan said to an assembly,

The perennial matter is not gotten from Buddhas, not sought from patriarchs. The inborn essence of great people is fundamentally naturally real of itself. Orderly in action and repose, going and coming without fixation, it is like a fish in water, surfacing and diving according to its nature, like a bird flying in the sky with no obstruction at all. Who understands such talk? (pause) One energy contains myriad forms without speaking; where do myriad spirits leave the impersonal?

A monk asked, “In the teachings it speaks of coming to know that all beings are originally buddhas; why are there afflictions and enlightenment?”

He said, “Sweet grass is sweet, coptis root is bitter.”

The monk said, “After all they turn out to be two.”

He said, “You sure understand, alright.”



The monk asked, "Given that it's one true reality realm, why are there then a thousand differences and myriad distinctions?"

He said, "When the roots are deep, the foliage flourishes."

The monk said, "Then is it possible to get out of this?"

He said, "Playing clever turns out clumsy."

The monk asked, "Doing, stopping, letting go, and annihilation are four illnesses in the teaching; how should beginners proceed?"

He said, "An expert craftsman wielding an axe does not follow a plumb line when cutting wood."

259. Master Longhua Yu said to an assembly,

When Matanga entered China, he was already involved in prolixity; when Bodhidharma came from the West, he didn't keep to his place. Now when I speak thus, this too is prolonging ignorance for others' idle issues.

When I was traveling, I met master Wuzu Jie. He asked, "How do you say the one statement that doesn't fall on the lips and mouth?" I said, "So venerable, so great, yet you don't even know a saying?" Jie then shouted. I shouted too. Jie picked up a cane, and I knocked it out of his hand. Jie said, "There's still something to talk

about.” I put my seat cloth over my shoulder and immediately left without looking back.

260. Master Nanquan said to an assembly,

The Burning Lamp Buddha said it—if what is thought up by mental descriptions produces things, they are empty, artificial, all unreal. Why? Even mind has no existence—how can it produce things? They are like shadows of forms dividing up empty space, like someone putting sound in a box, and like blowing into a net trying to inflate it. Therefore an old adept said, “It is not mind, not Buddha, not a thing,” teaching you how to practice. It is said that tenth stage bodhisattvas abide in the concentration of heroic progress, gain the secret treasury of teachings of all Buddhas, spontaneously attain all meditations, concentrations, liberations, spiritual powers, and wondrous functions, go to all worlds and manifest physical bodies everywhere, sometimes present the appearance of attaining enlightenment, turning the wheel of the great teaching, and entering complete extinction, causing infinity to enter into a pore, expound a one-line scripture for countless eons without exhausting the meaning, teach countless billions of beings to attain acceptance of the truth of no origin; yet this is still called the folly of

knowledge, the folly of extremely subtle knowledge, completely contrary to the Way. It's very difficult, very hard; take care.

261. Master Nanyuan said to an assembly, "In the mass of naked flesh stand like a wall a mile high." A monk asked, "In the mass of naked flesh stand like a wall a mile high'—isn't this a saying of yours?" He said, "Yes." The monk then overturned the Chan seat. Nanyuan said, "Look at this blind fellow acting rebelliously." The monk hesitated; Nanyuan hit him and drove him out.

*Dahui said*, "I now guarantee you this matter is ultimately not in vain."

262. Master Longshan asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From an old adept." Longshan asked, "What sayings did the old adept have?" The monk said, "When he spoke, a thousand statements, ten thousand statements; when he didn't speak, not a single word." Longshan said, "Then a fly lays eggs." The monk bowed. Longshan hit him.

263. Master Dongshan Liangjie got lost and came upon Longshan, so he called on him and paid respects. Longshan asked, "This

mountain has no roads; where did you come from?" Liangjie said, "Leaving aside for the moment the fact that there are no roads, where did you enter from?" He said, "I've never wandered." Liangjie asked, "How long have you been here?" He said, "Time is irrelevant." Liangjie asked, "Was this mountain here first, or were you here first?" He said, "I don't know." Liangjie asked, "Why don't you know?" He said, "I don't come from among humans or celestials." Liangjie then asked, "What is the host within the guest?" He said, "Never goes out the door." Liangjie asked, "What is the guest within the host?" He said, "The blue sky is covered by white clouds." Liangjie asked, "How far apart are guest and host?" He said, "Waves on the Long River." Liangjie asked, "When guest and host meet, what is said?" He said, "A clear breeze sweeps the bright moon." Liangjie also asked, "What principle did you see that you came to live on this mountain?" He said, "I saw two clay bulls fighting go into the ocean, never to be heard of since." Then he spoke a verse on the subject:

*I've dwelt all along in a three-section reed house;*

*In a single beam of spiritual light, myriad objects are at rest.*

*Don't bring right and wrong to judge me;*

*The scrutiny of the ephemeral world is irrelevant.*

264. Master Touzi said to an assembly,

You people come here looking for fresh sayings, to gather flowers and collect brocade, considering it important to have something to say. I'm an old man, with diminished energy, slow in speaking. If you question me, I reply accordingly, but I have no mysterious subtleties for you. And I don't have you dwell figuring. I never speak of transcendence or immanence, or the existence of Buddha, or Dharma, or ordinary or holy. And I don't maintain sitting to bind you people. A thousand kinds of manifestations are all your conception of interpretations, which you carry around on your own, experiencing yourselves what you yourselves have created. Here there's nothing to give you; I don't dare deceive you. There is nothing external and nothing internal that can be expressed to you. Do you know?

At that time a monk asked, "How is it when not taken in by either the external or the internal?" The master said, "Do you want to dwell on this trying to figure it out?" The monk asked, "Is there anything special in the canonical teachings?" The master said, "Recite the canonical teachings."

265. Master Baoming Yong said to an assembly,

There is a fellow with a suspicious gut, hateful eyes, and a straight nose, ragged and craggy, who faces south to see the North Star, knows how to make the gold crow (the sun) call at noon, make an iron ox bellow at midnight, so heaven and earth spin, mountains and rivers run, birds and beasts lose their territories; he finds Manjusri and Samantabhadra appearing and disappearing here and there, free in every way, through ten thousand experiences over a thousand lifetimes. Suddenly he meets Gautama Buddha, who without reservation pats him on the head again and again, giving him the prediction of enlightenment—"Good, good! You're doing a lot of Buddhist service; wonderful, wonderful!" At this he himself is ashamed and alarmed; he hides his head and pulls back his hands. Hey, everyone! If this talk circulates widely, what's the need to trudge on after thirty years?

266. Master Huaitang, addressing an assembly, knocked the seat once and said,

As soon as a mote of dust arises, the whole earth is contained in it. All your ears are in one voice, one voice extends to everyone's

ears. If you are swift hawks brushing the sky, then you should take advantage of the time; if you are tired fish staying in a pond, it's a waste of effort to make waves.

267. Master Zhaozhou said to an assembly, "Things fundamentally have no origin and presently have no extinction; there is no more to say. As soon as you speak, this is origination; and if you don't speak, this is extinction. People, what is the principle of no origination and no extinction?"

A monk asked, "Are plants unborn and undying?" He said, "This fellow only recognizes the dead word."

A monk asked, "What is the sixteen foot golden body?" He said, "Putting a neckband on sleeves, boring a collar at the side." The monk said, "I don't understand." He said, "If you don't understand, borrow someone else's tailoring."

Someone asked, "What was the intention of the coming from the West?" He said, "Gapped teeth grow fur."

Someone asked, "Does an oak tree have Buddha nature?" He said, "Yes." "When will it become a Buddha?" He said, "When the sky falls to earth." "When will the sky fall to earth?" He said, "When an oak tree becomes a Buddha."

268. When master Cuichan was in Ding province, he lectured in the provincial government headquarters: holding up his staff, he said, “Come forth, and I strike; don’t come forth, and I also strike.” A monk came out and said, “Cuichan!” Cuichan threw down the staff and said, “You’ve been standing a long time, Governor; take care.”

269. A monk asked Wayfarer Kefu, “What is the guest within the guest?”

He said, “Leaning on the gate, standing by the door, is like a drunk speaking out blowing off steam without shame or diffidence.”

“What is the host within the guest?”

“Verbally remembrancing Amitabha, with a pair of staffs a blind man doesn’t show up.”

“What is the guest within the host?”

“Holding the seal of the patriarchs high, action appropriate to potential benefits people; it should be known that what is said is compassionate.”

“What is the host within the host?”

“Wielding the sharpest sword sideways, fulfilling right order, in a realm of great peace cutting down the ignorant.”



“If it is a realm of great peace, why then cut down the ignorant?”

“It is not permissible to travel at night; as soon as you take up a torch you must go to the road to let people see.”

270. Master Xinghua one day called to a monk. The monk responded, “Yes!” Xinghua said, “If you arrive, you don’t check.” Xinghua called to another monk; the monk said, “What?” Xinghua said, “If you check, you haven’t arrived.”

A monk asked, “When there are comers from all directions, then what?” Xinghua said, “Hit the one in the middle.” The monk bowed. Xinghua said, “Everyone, yesterday I went to a village feast; halfway back I ran into a sudden storm and took shelter in an ancient shrine.”

271. Master Zhimen Zuo said to an assembly,

Nanquan said, “Since youth I have been tending a water buffalo. When I try letting it go east of the valley, it inevitably eats the water plants of that country’s king. When I try letting it go west of the valley, it inevitably eats the water plants of that country’s king. It’s better to take in a little bit everywhere without being seen at all.”

Therefore great master Yunmen said, “On level ground the dead are countless; those who can get through a forest of thorns are the

experts.” Even if you can cut off ordinary and holy and terminate being and nothingness, you’re just a rat going into a rice jar, and still don’t know the opening beyond.

At that time a monk asked, “What is the opening beyond?” Zuo hit him and said, “I’ve already smeared with you a piece of crap; why do you still come to bite my hand?” The monk hesitated; the master drove him off.

272. Master Puming of Qingliang said to an assembly,

The founder’s teaching of mind is all-pervasive, constant through all time. It is like this naturally. The truth as is is spontaneously realized without depending on cultivation, fulfilled of itself without depending on attainment. Totally present, it is called the immovable ground. Even when in use it is not existent; when unused, it is not nonexistent. The subtle essence is profoundly still, constant and unchanging. The essence is combined with subtle function, fully responsive without contrivance, reflecting infinite forms and features interacting.

Mind has no nature of its own; it manifests fully in contact with phenomena. Without stirring from the site of enlightenment it is

omnipresent in all worlds. For the moment turn attention around to this realm; if you turn away from awareness to get involved in sense objects, you mistakenly construe reflected phenomena.

The meaning of this concern is like a royal highway; if you travel on it, that's it, but even if you don't travel on it, you're still on the road.

A discourse like this is still an expression of teaching method. If we were to bring out the vehicle of the aim, all we could do would be to disperse at once.

273. Yangshan asked Sansheng, "What is your name?" Sansheng said, "My name is Huiji." Yangshan said, "Huiji? That's me!" Sansheng said, "My name is Huiran." Yangshan laughed out loud. *Dahui commented*, "Two fellows hiding their bodies while revealing their shadows—they pay no attention to onlookers."

274. Master Linji said to an assembly,

Followers of the Way, Buddhism has no place for exerting effort; it's just being without issues in everyday life, dressing, eating, excreting, lying down when tired. Foolish people laugh at me, but the wise know this. An ancient said, "Those who make efforts

outwardly are all ignoramuses.” You just be the master wherever you are, and wherever you stand is reality; no objects at all can jerk you around. Even if you have preexisting habit energies, acts that bring on immediate consequences, all of it becomes an ocean of liberation.

Those who study Chan in the present time do not know the teaching; they are like sheep in the grass, putting whatever they come upon in their mouths. They do not distinguish servant from master, do not differentiate guest and host. People like this enter the path with perverted minds, so they cannot be called genuine leavers of home; they are actually ordinary worldly people. Those who leave home must be able to distinguish constant truly accurate perceptive understanding, distinguishing Buddhas, distinguishing demons, distinguishing truth, distinguishing falsehood, distinguishing the ordinary, distinguishing the holy. If they can make such distinctions, they are called genuine leavers of home. If they cannot distinguish demons from Buddhas, they are actually leaving one home to enter another home; they are called people who create karma—they cannot be called genuine leavers of home.

Right now there is an identity of Buddha and demon. Clear eyed wayfarers strike both demon and Buddha. If you love the holy

and hate the ordinary, you bob endlessly in the ocean of birth and death.

At that time a monk asked, “What is the Buddha demon?”

The master said, “A moment of doubt in your mind is the Buddha demon. If you can realize that myriad phenomena have no origin, and mind is like an illusory projection, there is not a single atom or a single phenomenon anymore; everywhere is pure. Then there is no Buddha demon.”

[The master continued,] Buddha and sentient beings are two states, defilement and purity; according to my perception, there is no Buddha, no sentient beings, no past, no present. Those who get it get it immediately, with no restriction of time. And there is no cultivation or realization either, no gain and no loss. At all times there is nothing special beyond; even if there is anything beyond this, I say it is like a dream, like an illusion.

What I am talking about is just your solitary light clearly evident before your eyes right now, listening to the teaching. This person does not linger anywhere, independent everywhere, entering into all different states without being jerked around. In an instant one

penetrates the universe, speaking of Buddhas when meeting Buddhas, speaking of patriarchs when meeting patriarchs, speaking of saints when meeting saints, speaking of hungry ghosts when meeting hungry ghosts, everywhere traveling lands teaching people, without departing from the moment, pure and clear everywhere, light penetrating the ten directions, myriad things as one.

Followers of the Way, powerful people, now you know there is fundamentally no issue. Just because your faith is insufficient, you race around seeking, thought after thought, discarding your head seeking a head, unable to stop yourself. Bodhisattvas of the complete all-at-once teaching, for example, enter into the reality realm and manifest bodies in pure lands, weary of the ordinary and delighting in the holy. Such types have not yet forgotten grasping and rejecting, still minding defilement and purity. As for the perceptive understanding of the Chan school, it is not so—it is right here and now, no other time.

What I say is all temporary opposition of medicine to illness, with no real truth at all. If you see this way, you are genuine leavers of home; you can consume ten thousand ounces of gold a day.

Followers of the Way, don't go from one to the next, to be stamped by teachers everywhere and claim you understand Chan

and understand the Way, glib as a waterfall—this is all behavior creating hell. If you are authentic students of the Way, you don't see the faults of the world, you urgently seek real true perceptive understanding. If you arrive at the true mind, and realize its essence is complete illumination, only then will you be done.

Someone asked what real true perceptive understanding is.  
The teacher said,

You just enter the ordinary, enter the holy, enter the defiled, enter the pure, enter the lands of all Buddhas, enter Maitreya's tower, enter Vairocana's world, all of it—every place manifests lands becoming, abiding, decaying, and empty; Buddhas appear in the world, turn the wheel of the great teaching, and enter nirvana without remainder: you do not see that there is any appearance of going or coming; looking for birth and death, you cannot find them. Then you enter the reality realm with no origination, roaming in lands everywhere; you enter the flower bank world, and see all things completely real, all of them truth. There is only the independent wayfarer listening to the teaching—this is the matrix of all Buddhas. Therefore Buddhas are born from independence; if you realize independence, even Buddha has no attainment. If you can see this

way, this is real true perceptive understanding. When students don't understand, they cling and construe terms and expressions; they are obstructed by those terms ordinary and holy. Therefore they block their eye of the Way and cannot attain clarity.

As for the twelve-part teachings, they are all representational expressions; when students don't understand, they conceive interpretations of representational terms and statements. All of these are dependent, and fall into cause and effect, still not escaping birth and death in the triple world.

If you want to attain freedom to leave or stay in birth and death, right now discern the person listening to the teaching, with no form, no appearance, no root, no basis, no abode, leaping with life. This must be the function of myriad kinds of facility, but it has no location. Therefore if you seek after it, you become further estranged; if you look for it, all the more you turn away, calling it a mystery.

Followers of the Way, don't give recognition to a dreamlike illusory accompaniment; while you are losing time being dilatory, you will return to impermanence. What are you looking for in this world as liberation? You pass the time seeking a mouthful of food to eat and mending clothing, but you should visit good teachers. Don't



shilly-shally, wasting your life pursuing comfort, dying in vain. Time should be valued; every moment is fleeting. In crude terms you are oppressed by the four gross elements of earth, water, fire, and air, and more subtly by the four appearances of birth, abiding, change, and passing away, without any end in sight. Followers of the Way, for now you need to discern the four kinds of formless state to avoid being battered by conditions of the environment. What are the four kinds of formless state? When you have a thought of attachment in your mind, you are drowned by water. When you have a thought of hostility in your mind, you are burned by fire. When you have a thought of doubt in your mind, you are impeded by earth. When you have a thought of delight in your mind, you are blown away by wind. If you can discern in this way, you can avoid being affected by states or objects; in every situation you can utilize states and objects, welling up in the east and sinking away in the west, welling up in the south and sinking away in the north, welling up in the center and sinking away in the periphery, welling up in the periphery and sinking away in the center, walking on water as if it were earth, walking on earth as if it were water. How so? Because of realizing the four gross elements are like dreams, like illusions.

Followers of the Way, what is now listening to the teaching is not your four gross elements, but can use your four gross elements. If you can see this way, then you are free to go or stay.

According to my perception, there is nothing to reject. If you despise the ordinary and love the holy, you are bound by holy and ordinary states. There is a kind of student who goes to Mt. Wutai looking for Manjusri to appear. They have already gone wrong. There is no Manjusri on Mt. Wutai. Do you want to know Manjusri? Your present functioning with never any aberration, unobstructed everywhere—this is the living Manjusri. The undifferentiated light in your mind in each moment wherever you are is all Samantabhadra. The ability of your mind in a single moment to be independent, liberated wherever you are—this is the reality of the concentration of Avalokitesvara. They are principal and companion to one another; when manifest they are manifest at the same time, and when hidden they are hidden at the same time. One is three and three are one. Only when you understand this way should you read the teachings.

275. Yunmen said, “‘In the lands in the ten directions there is only the truth of one vehicle’—but tell me, is the self within the

truth of one vehicle, or outside the truth of one vehicle?” He answered himself, “Entry.”

*Dahui commented, “A particularly sad situation.”*

276. Master Baiyun Duan said to an assembly,

The body of Buddha fills the realm of reality, manifest in the presence of all living beings, reaching the senses according to conditions, omnipresent yet always on the seat of enlightenment. Everyone, how do you explain this principle of reaching the senses according to condition? In a snap it fully responds to the faculties and potentials of all living beings on earth, yet without ever moving a hair. This is called reaching the senses according to conditions while always on this seat. How about when I am invited by Dharma Blossom monastery, part from this community to lodge in Pine prefecture, open a teaching hall, then return to this temple—tell me, do I leave ‘this seat’ or not? If you say I leave, worldly truth prevails; if you say I haven’t left, how do you see this phenomenon of not leaving? Is it not the realms of infinite lands, one’s own and others, not being separate on a hair tip, all times not being apart from the immediate moment? Or is it not simultaneously pervading all

spontaneously, without thought? If so, this is waving a stick to hit the moon.

Here you must awaken before you get it; and after awakening you also need to meet someone else. If you say you can rest once you've awakened, then why do you need to meet someone else? If you have met someone after awakening, when you reach out expediently you will naturally have a way to succeed in every case; you will not blind students. If you just realize a dry turnip, you'll not only blind students, you yourself will also tend to be the first to run afoul of the point and hurt your hand.

Look—my teacher Yangqi asked his teacher Ciming, “When hidden birds twittering leave the clouds and go into the scattered peaks, then what?” He answered, “I walk in wild weeds and you enter a recondite village.” Yangqi said further, “Officially not a needle can get in’—let me ask another question.” His teacher shouted. He went on to say, “A fine shout.” His teacher shouted again. My teacher also shouted. His teacher then shouted twice in a row. My teacher finally bowed. Everyone, you should know that one who meets someone else after having awakened is shaking hands atop a thousand peaks when encountering people at a crossroads, and when meeting atop a thousand peaks is at a

crossroads shaking hands. For this reason I once composed a verse saying,

*Where others dwell, I do not dwell:*

*Where others go, I do not go.*

*It's not that I can't live with others;*

*In general, monks and lay folk must be distinct.*

Here as I am about to go, I've opened up my cloth bag and spread everything in front of you. Those who have eyes should not be mistakenly suspicious. Take care.

277. Master Dagui Zhenru said to an assembly,

The ancient Buddha said that in the past he taught the four truths at Benares—

he fell into a pit—then currently expounds the most subtle unexcelled great teaching—he adds mud to dirt. Now is there anyone who can transcend convention independently without going through steps?

(pause) Appear beyond the heavens—who is the person here?

A monk asked, “When the Buddha Victorious by Great Penetrating Knowledge sat on the site of enlightenment for ten eons, why couldn't he attain buddhahood?”

The master replied, “Torments people to death.”

A monk asked, “How was Niutou before he met the Fourth Patriarch?”

The master replied, “Hair standing up in the cold.”

The monk asked, “How about after meeting?”

The master replied, “Forehead breaking out in a sweat.”

278. Master Huanglong Nan said to an assembly,

“Where people of the time dwell, I do not dwell; where people of the time go, I do not go.” To perfectly understand the intended meaning here, you must know how to enter a pit of fire with your whole body. (drawing a line with the whisk) Foul smoke fumes, red flames rage. But those whose eyes are not yet clear are all inside. The ancient sages since time immemorial have all gone into the pit of birth and death, into the fire of ignorance, to lift out sentient beings. As for you people, how will you go in? If people can go in, they can be said to be in fire without burning, in water without drowning. If they can’t enter, not only can they not help themselves, they can’t help others either. If you can’t help yourself or help others, there’s no benefit to a shaven head and monastic robes. (after a long silence, he called to the group; when they raised their heads, he said,) Going out with an ox head, coming back with a horse head.

279. Vice minister Yang and imperial attendant Li had a dialogue with Master Mingsong of Tang.

Question: "Amitabha spreads the teaching in the West, Bodhidharma communicated mind in the East. When a foreigner comes a native appears; where water reaches, a stream forms. The five holy mountains stabilize, high and steep; a hundred valleys go to the source, immeasurably vast. The essence of one spirit manifests forms depending on the environment. In the three realms of existence, based on what is life established?"

Mingsong said, "A male immortal has no wife; a female immortal has no husband."

Yang said, "When a nun shaves her head, she no longer bears children."

Mingsong said, "The iron ox of Xia prefecture can bellow; the colossus of He province recites 'Maha.'"

Li said, "A sideways leap to a mountain top."

Mingsong said, "Riding an ox, one doesn't wear shoes."

Guanghai Lian said, "Goaded an elephant, he turns the spear around."

Fenyang Zhao said, "Straightening his body, he splits his face."

*Dahui commented, “Watch the play with the snow lion in the moonlight.”*

Question: “Xuansha didn’t leave the mountain, Baoshou didn’t cross the river. Sudhana called on fifty-three teachers, Huiyuan formed a group of eighteen monks and laymen. Xuefeng went to Touzi three times, Zhiyi lectured on the Lotus Sutra for ninety days. Were these six fellows foxes crying or lions roaring? Speak quickly, speak quickly!”

Mingsong said, “When the water flows swiftly, the fish are slowed down; where the peak is high, birds don’t nest.”

Yang said, “The great sage of Si province [thought to be a manifestation of the archetypal bodhisattva Avalokitesvara].”

Mingsong said, “Adding another layer of mud on top of dirt.”

Li said, “The tongue is covered with gold coins.”

Mingsong said, “Song and music at play in the middle of the night—who can appreciate the tune?”

Guanghai Lian said, “The streets are full of song—everybody looks.”

Fenyang said, “Seeing a picture on a wall, people laugh.”

*Dahui commented, “Foxes cry, lions roar.”*



Question: “Fengxue held up the seal, Nanyuan passed on the robe, Mr. Zhao spread the teaching in West River, Master Song leads disciples in Binglu—the teaching of the southern school flourishes greatly in the north. But tell me, whose benevolent power did each two teachers receive?”

Mingsong said, “He doesn’t go into the Lotus Pond to bathe, but lazily roams in the Himalaya Mountains.”

Yang said, “In the Clear Cool mountains, ten thousand bodhisattvas.”

Mingsong said, “In Vimalakirti’s congregation, the saints gather.”

Li said, “Carrying dry firewood on his back, he encounters a wildfire.”

Mingsong said, “The mouth is the gateway of disaster.”

Guanghui Lian said, “Zang’s head is white, Hai’s head is black.”

Fenyang Zhao said, “Addressing heaven, his hands press the earth; phew!”

*Dahui commented*, “Monkeys ride on a turtle’s back.”

Question: “The heaven of thirty-three deities is above the sun and moon; in the fourth meditation there are no disasters of wind or fire; at Sanjiao the cart of an iron ox is ridden, at Linru the seal of complete presentation is gripped; a monkey has an ancient mirror, a

cat has spiritual radiance reaching ten thousand miles—who is it that directly understands?”

Mingsong said, “In the morning he looks southeast, in the evening he looks northwest.”

Yang said, “Cats and cows do know of existence.”

Mingsong said, “Fatally stuck in reeds on a grave.”

Li said, “Heating an oil pot in the moonlight.”

Mingsong said, “A stone man’s belt.”

Guanghui Lian said, “Straw sandal Chan, Diamond Zhou.”

Fenyang Zhao said, “Pleated Robe again meets Hu the Nail.”

*Dahui said*, “A small excursion, a big meeting.”

Question: (writing the word ‘tail’ inside a circle) All Buddhas are inside: move and you’re bereft of your body and life; stare, and you’re blind on both sides. When you hesitate, a thousand mountains, ten thousand rivers; even if you understand immediately, you’re sitting on the ground in a storehouse of coal. If there’s anyone who doesn’t spare his eyebrows, convey the message.”

Mingsong said, “Shattered.”

Yang said, “I never lie.”

Li said, “Leaving its burrow, the rabbit runs into a net.”

Mingsong said, “No impediment east or west, free north and south.”

Guanghai Lian said, “Brandishing his staff, he goes down into hell.”

Fenyang Zhao said, “Boring through mountains, penetrating stone walls, his nose is bleeding.”

*Dahui commented*, “One experiences the results of one’s own actions.”

280. Master Huanglong Xin said to an assembly,

An empty valley transmits echoes; time and again you hear what you haven’t heard. Adhesive within color is clear; everywhere you see without seeing. Since there is no seeing in seeing, and what has not been heard is heard, this is called the door of absorption in the inexhaustible treasury, the door of spiritual powers of the inexhaustible treasury, the door of wisdom of the inexhaustible treasury, the door of liberation of the inexhaustible treasury. If one can know and see thus, believe thus, cultivate and realize thus, awaken and enter thus, I say this person has reached the source of the Buddha mind, entered the knowledge and vision of Buddhas. Since this is entering the knowledge and vision of Buddhas, is this subjective perception or objective perception? If it is objective perception, what do you take to be the subject? If it is subjective

perception, what do you consider the object? If you consider that both subjective and objective perception are not the Buddha vehicle, what is the Buddha vehicle?

Therefore the Realized One is not intellectually clever; the Realized One is the source of wisdom. The founding teacher is not comprehended by subtlety; the founding teacher is the essence of subtlety. Once the source and essence are distinguished, clarity and pollution are self-evident. Once you understand clarity and pollution, substance and function are both complete. Once you are complete in substance and function, you attain great freedom. The precious sword of Spiritual Peak is always openly present, able to kill people and also able to give people life. Trying to advance results in loss of life; trying to retreat turns against the person concerned. But tell me, how do you express not advancing and not retreating? (pause) The pines in the valley, a thousand years old—cranes come and gather. The red cassia on the moon—phoenixes nest.

281. The enshrouding demon king led his cohorts following Diamond Navel bodhisattva for a thousand years but couldn't find out where he appeared. Suddenly the demon got to see him one day and asked, "Where do you abide?" The bodhisattva said, "I

don't abide in an existent abode, and I don't abide in no abode. I abide this way."

Fayan said, "Granted that the enshrouding demon king didn't see Diamond Navel, what about Diamond Navel—did he see the enshrouding demon king?"

*Dahui said*, "Since they couldn't find the place of appearance, what were they following for a thousand years? Diamond Navel said, 'I don't abide in an existent abode, nor abide in no abode; I abide like this.' They fooled each other. Fayan said, 'Granted that the enshrouding demon king didn't see Diamond Navel, did Diamond Navel see the enshrouding demon king?' Such a critique is seeing a hole and putting a stopper in it. Right now isn't there anyone who knows where I appear? (following up with a shout) Why are you talking in your sleep?"

282. Master Zhou of Guangde monastery in Rang province said to an assembly,

Before the bell just now had rung, you elders must have known the time; why should you show up? Holding a symbol of authority at my chest actually serves to submerge and cramp you elders. This being so, I've strewn sand in your eyes. The Buddhas

of past present and future are on your noses turning the wheel of the great teaching—look, look! (pause) The rites of spring are being carried out in winter.

283. A monk asked master Yi of Taizi monastery in Fen province, “What is the realm of Fenyang like?” He said, “The Helu mountains are covered by clouds and mist; the water of West River, rushing, pours into the ocean.” The monk asked, “What is the person in the realm like?” The master said, “The local noble enforces proper order; beware of violating his dignity.” The monk asked, “What should a student be familiar with?” The master said, “Sitting straight, mindful of the characteristics of reality.” The monk asked, “What is the point of turning around?” The master said, “The head of the street, the tail of the alley.” The monk asked “Where is effort to be applied?” The master said, “A thousand pound load sways on both sides.” The monk asked, “I’ve gotten your instructions on three propositions; is there anything beyond?” The master said, “There is.” The monk asked, “What is beyond?” The master struck him. The monk asked, “One tune has no notes—how can I harmonize?” The master said, “Three times nine is twenty-seven; play a pipe at the fence.” The monk said, “The musical scale is not related to the

subtle; a stone man claps and laughs.” The master said, “Only one on the same path will know.”

284. A monk asked master Guo of Dacheng monastery in Tang province, “What is the thing that has been transmitted since time immemorial?” The master said, “A gold dish is presented—everyone look!” The monk asked, “What is the meaning of the coming from the West?” The master said, “When the sky clears, the sun comes out.” The monk said, “I don’t understand.” The master said, “When rain falls, mud forms.”

285. Master Dayu Zhi said to an assembly,

Vertically it comprehends past, present, and future;  
horizontally it pervades the ten directions—pick it up, and the emperor of gods is startled; put it down, and the earth spirits are shaken. If you don’t pick it up and don’t put it down, what do you call it? (he answered himself) A frog.

He also said to the group,

The Buddhas of past, present, and future do not know existence; cats and cows do know existence. (then he held up his

whisk and said) cats and cows are all here, radiating light and shaking the earth. Why is it so? The two stages are not the same.

*Dahui commented*, “If Dayu had not made the latter statement, he might have had his eyes replaced by cats and cows. Even so, he still didn’t escape a back-and-forth of balance weights.”

286. Master Bajiao said to an assembly,

Suppose someone traveling suddenly comes upon a ten thousand fathom pit in front of him, while a wildfire is approaching him from behind. On both sides are thickets of thorns. If he goes ahead, he falls into the pit; if he retreats, the wildfire burns him. If he turns to either side, he is obstructed by a forest of thorns. Now how can he escape? If he can escape, he must have a way out. If he can’t escape, he is a fallen dead man.

287. Master Linji asked the monastery superintendent, “Where have you been?” He said, “I’ve been to town to sell yellow rice.” Linji drew a line with his staff and said, “And did you manage to sell this?” The superintendent shouted; Linji hit him. The chief cook came, and Linji recounted this to the cook. The cook said, “The



superintendent didn't understand what you meant." Linji said, "What about you?" The cook bowed; Linji hit him too.

Huanglong Nan said, "When the superintendent shouted, it would not do to let him go. When the cook bowed, he let go what wouldn't do. Linji carried out the imperative. As for my two 'wouldn't do,' after twenty years there will be someone who will explain."

288. Nanquan asked a lecturer, "What scripture can you lecture on?" He said, "The scripture on Maitreya's incarnation." Nanquan said, "When will Maitreya be incarnated?" He said, "Now he's in heaven, yet to come." Nanquan said, "There is no Maitreya in heaven, and no Maitreya on earth."

Dongshan cited this and asked Yunju about it. Yunju said, "If there is no Maitreya in heaven, and no Maitreya on earth, who gives the name?" At this question, Dongshan's seat shook; he said to Yunju, "When I was at Yunyan's I questioned the old man, and the brazier shook; today, questioned by you, my whole body runs with sweat." Ming-an said, "Now I cite this; if there is anyone who can pose a question, do so." Then he said, "The earth is shaking."

*Dahui commented*, "I don't deny that the seat shook, the brazier shook, and the earth shook, but if these three old fellows want to see

Nanquan, they'll have to wait until Maitreya is incarnated. If someone comes forth and says, 'If there is no Maitreya in heaven and no Maitreya on earth, then who would you have incarnated?' How would you reply? I would just tell him, 'My fault.'"

289. Master Xuedou cited an ancient saying, "Sand can't get in the eyes, water can't get in the ears—if there is someone who can trust completely and hold still, and not be fooled by others, what sound of a hotpot are the verbal teachings of patriarchs and Buddhas? Then let him hang up his bowl bag and break his staff—he is definitely a wayfarer without issues. Also an ancient said the polar mountain can fit in the eyes, the water of the ocean can fit in the ears, ordinary folk listen to others' deliberations, the verbal teachings of patriarchs and Buddhas are like dragons taking to water, like tigers in the mountains; then it is necessary to pick up the bowl bag and carry the staff—this too is a wayfarer without issues. It is also said this way won't do, not this way won't do either; after that, there's no connection. Of these three wayfarers with no issues, you need to choose one to be your teacher."

*Dahui commented*, "Which among these three people can be a messenger? I want to call him to wash my feet. Xuedou is this way,

I am not this way. If a patchrobed monk comes forth and says they should be charged on the same indictment, you can't suspect him."

290. The twenty-seventh patriarch Prajnatara showed Bodhidharma a priceless pearl given him by a king of southern India and asked, "This pearl is round and bright—is there any that could match this?" Bodhidharma said, "This is a worldly treasure, not fit to be considered supreme; of all treasures, the treasure of Dharma is supreme. This is worldly luster, not fit to be considered supreme; of all luster, the luster of wisdom of supreme. This is worldly brilliance, not fit to be considered supreme; of all brilliance, the brilliance of mind is supreme. The lustrous brilliance of this pearl cannot shine of itself; it needs the light of knowledge to discern it. Once one discerns this, one knows this is a pearl; once one knows it's a pearl, then one understands it's a treasure. If one understands it's a treasure, the treasure is not a treasure of itself. If one discerns the pearl, the pearl is not a pearl of itself. The pearl is not a pearl of itself in that one must use the pearl of knowledge to distinguish a worldly pearl. That a treasure is not a treasure of itself means that it is necessary to depend on the treasure of wisdom to understand the treasure of Dharma. So you have the Way, Teacher, thus the

treasure appears. When people have the Way, the same is true of the treasure of mind.”

The reverend Prajnatara knew Bodhidharma was his Dharma successor, and subsequently entrusted the treasury of the eye of truth to him. He said in verse,

*The mind ground produces seeds;*

*It also produces principles based on facts.*

*When the fruit is complete, enlightenment is fulfilled;*

*When the flowers blossom, the world arises.*

*Dahui commented,* “He explained the principle; you should take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.”

291. Chan master Yangqi Zhenshu said to a assembly,

All human consciousnesses have one source, provisionally called Buddha. When the physical body comes to an end, this does not perish. Metal may liquefy, simplicity may be lost, but this is always there. In the ocean of essential nature, golden waves rise spontaneously without wind. The vital spirit of mind has no sign, but myriad forms are equally perceived. Those who comprehend these principles reach everywhere without speaking; their work assists

mystic influence without exertion. How can you turn away from awareness and instead get mixed up in the toil of the senses, mistakenly imprisoning yourself in the clusters and elements?

292. Master Shitou asked Layman Pang one day, “How are your everyday affairs since you met me?” He replied, “If you ask about everyday matters, there’s simply no way to say.”

Shitou said, “I knew you were thus; that’s why I asked.” The layman then presented a verse saying,

*Everyday affairs are no different;*

*It’s just that I myself am in harmony.*

*At no point is it a matter of grasping or rejecting;*

*Nowhere is there any reaching out or turning away.*

*Who gives titles of nobility?*

*There’s not a speck of dust in the mountains.*

*Spiritual powers and marvelous functions—*

*Hauling water and carrying firewood.*

Shitou approved of this.

293. Master Fahua Ju said to an assembly, “One, two, three, four, five; you may cite them in reverse. When have pillars and lamps

ever become Buddhas and patriarchs? Those who do not spare their eyebrows, say it right away.” A monk asked, “Say what?” The master said, “Outside of the light dress of midnight to ten, a jug and wool cloak.” The monk said, “At just such a time, then what?” He said, “Meditating at night, the solitary moon is cool; arising in the morning, a fleck of cloud is high.” The monk hesitated, trying to think of something to say. The master said, “Understand?” The monk said, “No.” So the master composed a verse to teach him, saying,

*Thirty, fifty—why cite anymore?*  
*Adapting successfully to square and round,*  
*Eliminate Buddhas and patriarchs.*  
*Before they have made the names known*  
*I cannot grasp them.*

294. Master Jiuling Yuan called on Changqing. Changqing asked, “What is your name?” He said, “Mingyuan.” Changqing said, “What about the matter of the Other Side?” He said, “I retreat two steps.” Changqing said, “Why do you pointlessly retreat two steps?” Yuan had nothing to say. Changqing said in his stead, “If I do not step back, how can I know Mingyuan?” Yuan thereupon got insight.

Later a monk asked, “When there is not a single thing ahead and responsive function lacks nothing, then what?” Yuan held up a firebrand; that monk got insight.

295. The Hindu ascetic Dirghanakha, soliciting a debate with the Buddha, said, “I would debate with you; if my doctrine is refuted, I’ll cut off my own head.” The Buddha said, “What is the basis of your doctrine?” The ascetic said, “I take total nonacceptance to be fundamental.” The Buddha said, “Do you accept this view?” The ascetic abruptly left. On the way he reflected and said to his disciples, “I should go back and cut off my head to apologize to the Buddha.” His disciples said, “You should hopefully gain victory in the presence of humans and deities—why cut off your head?” The ascetic said, “I would rather cut my head off before a man of wisdom than gain victory before ignoramuses.” Then he said regretfully, “My doctrine fails on two points. If I accept this view, my failure is crude; if I do not accept this view, my failure is a fine point. No humans, deities, or followers of the two vehicles know the point of failure of my doctrine; only the Buddha and the great bodhisattvas know the failure of my doctrine.” He went back to the Buddha and said,

“My doctrine fails on two points, so I should cut off my head to apologize to you.” The Buddha said, “There is no such thing in my doctrine of enlightenment. You should change your mind and aim for enlightenment.” At this the ascetic and his group of five hundred disciples all submitted to the Buddha at once, became monks, and realized sainthood.

Master Tianyi Huai said in verse,

*If he accepts this view, he disbands his school;*

*If he doesn't accept this view, with whom will be debate?*

*The carrying pole suddenly breaks; both sides fall off.*

*Heaven and earth appear on the tip of a hair.*

296. Dongshan said to an assembly, “Brethren, at the beginning of autumn, the end of summer, you go east and go west; you should just go where there is not a single inch of grass for ten thousand miles.” He also said, “But how do you go where there is not an inch of grass for ten thousand miles?”

Later a monk cited this to Shishuang. Shishuang said, “As soon as you go out the gate there's grass.”

*Dahui commented*, “Haven't you heard it said that a single drop of lion's milk disperses ten gallons of donkey milk?”



297. The master known as the Oven Breaker did not reveal his name or surname. His speech and action were inscrutable. He lived in seclusion on Mt. Song. The mountain villagers had a shrine they considered most sacred. In it there was only an oven. People far and near constantly held ceremonies, cooking many living creatures to death. One day the master, accompanied by attendant monks, went into the shrine; he knocked the oven three times with his staff and said, "Tsk! This oven is just a construction of clay and brick; where does the holiness come from, whence does the sanctity arise, to cook living creatures to death this way?" He knocked it three more times, and the oven collapsed. The master said, "It's broken, collapsed!" In a trice someone in a blue robe and tall hat appeared and bowed to him. The master said, "Who are you?" He said, "I was originally the spirit of the oven of this shrine. For a long time I have been subject to consequences of action. Now that you've explained the principle of no origin to me, I've been freed from this place and born in heaven; I came just to thank you." The master said, "This is your inherent nature, not my imposed explanation." The spirit bowed again and disappeared. The attendant monks asked, "We've been attending you for a long time, but have not received expedient

direction. What indication of method did the spirit get to be born in heaven right away?" The master said, "I just said to him, 'This is a construction of clay and bricks; where does the holiness come from, whence does the sanctity arise?' I had no reasoning for him besides this." The attendant monks stood there thinking. The master said, "Understand?" They said, "No." The master said, "Why don't you understand inherent nature?" The attendant monks were enlightened at once. Later there was a Chan master Yifeng who cited this to National Teacher An. The National Teacher said in praise, "This guy thoroughly understands the oneness of beings and self. He can be said to be like the bright moon in the sky, visible to all. It's hard to fathom the line of his speech."

298. Linji asked Xingshan, "What is the white ox on open ground?" Xingshan imitated the lowing of an ox. Linji said, "Shut up." Xingshan said, "What about you, old brother?" Linji said, "This animal!" Xingshan gave up.

299. Master Jiashan had a disciple who attended him for a long time; he sent him traveling, and he made the round of Chan shops. Later he heard that his teacher had gathered a group and his way

had become very famous. He returned to visit him and asked, “If you had something so extraordinary, Master, why didn’t you tell me before?” Jiashan said, “When you steamed rice, I lit the fire; when you served the food, I set out the bowls—how did I let you down?” From this the disciple became enlightened.

300. Chan master Chang called on the Sixth Patriarch. The patriarch asked, “Where do you come from? What are you seeking?” Chang said, “I recently went to Mt. Baifeng, paid respects to master Datong, and was taught the doctrine of seeing essential nature and realizing buddhahood; I have not yet resolved my doubts, and hope you will be so kind as to take me in.” The patriarch said, “What did he say? Try to quote it to me, and I will testify for you.” Chang said, “I had been there for three months and still had gotten no instruction. In my eagerness for the teaching I went to the abbot’s room alone, paid respects, and pleading, asked, ‘What is the fundamental essence of my original mind?’ He said, ‘Do you see space?’ I answered, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘Do you see that space has any appearance?’ I said, ‘Space is formless—what appearance does it have?’

He said, ‘Your fundamental essential nature is like space; look back into your own essential nature—nothing can be seen at all. This is called right seeing. There is nothing knowable at all—this is called true knowledge. There is no blue or yellow, long or short—you only see the complete illumination of the essence of awareness, clear and pure at its fundamental source. This is called seeing essential nature and realizing buddhahood. It is also called the world of bliss. It is also called the knowledge and vision of the Realized.’ Though I heard this explanation, I am not yet sure; I implore you to instruct me so that I won’t be stuck.” The patriarch said, “That teacher’s explanation still maintains perception and knowledge; that’s why it makes you uncertain. I will now teach you a verse:

*Not seeing a single thing but maintaining a view of nothingness  
Is like floating clouds blocking the face of the sun.*

*Not knowing a single thing yet keeping to recognition of emptiness  
Is like flashing lightning occurring in the vast sky.*

“This knowledge and perception produce mistaken recognition at a glance—when have you ever understood expedient means? You should instantly acknowledge your error; your own spiritual light is always manifest. Always heed the verse, and your mind will be open.” Then he uttered a verse saying,

*Producing intellectual interpretation with no basis  
Seeking enlightenment fixated on descriptions,  
If you keep a single subjective thought of enlightenment,  
How can you transcend past confusion?  
The inherent source of awareness is basic;  
If you follow perception, you flow madly along;  
If you don't enter the room of the founding teacher,  
You absent-mindedly head in both directions.*

301. Master Langya Jin held up his staff and said to an assembly, "Panshan said, 'The one road upward is slippery.' Nanyuan said, 'Standing like a mile-high wall is inaccessible.' Linji said, 'Sparks and lightning are slow.' I have a statement that settles heaven and earth; let everyone set their sights high, set their sights high." Standing up his staff, he got down from the seat.

He also said to an assembly, "Understanding in a statement, a wandering son returns home; understanding in mind, only then can one serve in the hall of honor. If you can be like this, only then are you able to step forward from the top of the hundred foot pole. No mind in a statement, no statement in mind—once you can be like this, then how do you turn around and put forth energy? If you don't

understand, the staff will put out energy for you.” Standing up the staff, he got down from the seat.

302. Yunmen said, “Do you want to know the founding teacher?” Pointing with his staff, he said, “The founding teacher is hopping on your head. Do you want to know the founding teacher’s eyes? The founding teacher’s eyes are under your feet.” He also said, “This is tea and rice feasting ghosts and spirits. Even so, ghosts and spirits are insatiable.”

*Dahui commented*, “Haven’t you heard it said that residual illusion gives luster to life?” At that time a monk standing by coughed. Dahui said, “What’s wrong with my speaking this way?” As the monk tried to come up with something to say, Dahui hit him.

303. Changsha Cen said to an assembly,  
If I were to bring up the teaching of the source completely, the weeds would be ten feet deep in front of the teaching hall. It is because I have no choice that I tell you people that all worlds in the ten directions are a single eye of the ascetic; all worlds in the ten directions are the whole body of the ascetic; all worlds in the ten directions are one’s own light; all worlds in the ten directions are

within one's own light; in all worlds in the ten directions there is no one who is not oneself. I always tell you that the Buddhas of all times together with the beings of the whole universe are the light of great wisdom; before the light emanates, where do you understand? Before the light emanates, there is not even any information of Buddhas or beings—where do you find mountains, rivers, and lands?

At that time a monk asked, "What is the eye of an ascetic?"

The master said, "Impossible to ever get out." He also said, "It is impossible to get out by becoming a Buddha or a master, and it is impossible to get out revolving in the six paths of existence."

The monk asked, "Impossible to get out of what?"

The master said, "Seeing the sun in daytime, seeing the stars at night."

The monk said "I don't understand."

The master said, "The colors of the wonderfully high mountain are green upon green."

*Dahui said*, "A familiar place is hard to forget."

304. Master Lingshu was asked by a monk, "What is the way of your house?" He said, "A thousand year field, eight hundred owners."

The monk asked, "What is a thousand year field with eight hundred owners?" He said, "A ramshackle house no one repairs."

*Dahui said*, "Sad man, don't talk to sad people."

305. When Xiangyan was in the community of Baizhang, his natural intelligence was brilliant and swift, but he couldn't attain Chan. After Baizhang passed away he went to Guishan. Guishan questioned him, "When you were at our late teacher Baizhang's place, you had ten answers for every question, a hundred answers for every ten questions. This was your brilliance and mental acuity, conceptualization of intellectual interpretation, the root of birth and death. Try to tell me something about before your parents gave birth to you." At this one question, he was simply at a loss. He went back to the dormitory and looked over the writings he used to read, looking for a saying to use for a reply. Ultimately he couldn't find one, and lamented to himself, "A picture of a cake cannot satisfy hunger." He respectfully went up to the hall and begged Guishan to explain for him. Guishan said, "If I explained it to you, later on you'd revile me. What I say is mine, and has nothing to do with you."



Xiangyan finally took all the writings he'd collected and burned them. Then he said, "I won't study Buddhism in this lifetime; for now I'll work as a perpetual server monk, and avoid belaboring mind and spirit." Then he tearfully took leave of Guishan and went straight to Nanyang; seeing the ruins of National Teacher Zhong's abode, he stayed there and built a hut. One day as he was clearing away weeds and brush, when rubble hit some bamboo and made a sound, he was suddenly awakened. He went right back, bathed, and lit incense; bowing to Guishan from afar, he said in praise, "The master's great kindness surpasses that of parents; if you had explained for me back then, how could this have happened today?" Then he said in verse,

*At one impact, I forgot what I knew;*

*I no longer depend on practice.*

*My conduct upholds the ancient path,*

*Not falling into passivity.*

*Everywhere there are no tracks or traces*

*In manners outside sound and form.*

*Those who arrive at the Way*

*All call this the supreme key.*

When Guishan heard of this, he said, "This fellow is through." Yangshan, who was standing by, said, "This is composed by mental machination, conceptual consciousness; wait till I have personally tested him." Subsequently Yangshan met Xiangyan and said, "The master has praised your discovery of the great matter. Try to explain." Xiangyan then recited the foregoing verse. Yangshan said, "This comes from memory of earlier learning. If you have truly become enlightened, let's see you give another explanation." Xiangyan composed another verse, saying,

*Last year's poverty was still not actually poverty;*

*This year's poverty is poverty indeed.*

*In last year's poverty I still had ground to stick an awl;*

*This year I'm so poor I don't even have an awl.*

Yangshan said, "I'll grant that you understand the Chan of Buddhas, but you still haven't even dreamed of the Chan of patriarchs." Xiangyan composed another verse:

*I have a device;*

*It's seen in the blink of an eye.*

*If people don't understand,*

*Call a novice besides.*

Yangshan then reported this to Guishan and said, “Happily Xiangyan understands patriarchs’ Chan.”

*Dahui said*, “Guishan in his later years was good at directing plays; he made this set of live puppets admirable. But what was admirable? Each watched the movements of each other’s hands and feet; how could it be known the speech was in someone else?”

306. When master Judi was dwelling in a hermitage, there was a nun who came right up with a hat on and circled his meditation seat and said, “If you can speak appropriately, I’ll take off my hat.” Judi had no reply; then nun thereupon went off. Judi said, “Why don’t you stay awhile?” The nun said, “If you can speak appropriately, I’ll stay.” Judi again had no reply. After the nun left, Judi lamented to himself, “Though I’m a grown man, I don’t have a manly spirit.” He was going to abandon his hermitage to go traveling around seeking but that night the spirit of the mountain said to him. “You don’t need to leave the mountain: a living mahasattva will come and explain the teaching for you.” As it turned out, in ten days master Tianlong arrived at the hermitage. Judi welcomed him courteously and told him all about what had happened. Tianlong raised a finger to show him. Judi was immediately greatly enlightened.

After that, whenever he was asked a question, Judi would just raise a finger. There was a boy working as a food server who whenever asked anything would also respond by raising a finger. Someone said to Judi, "This boy surely can't also understand Buddhism. Whenever anyone questions him, he always raises a finger like you." Having heard this, one day Judi concealed a knife in his sleeve and called the boy to him; he asked, "I hear you also understand Buddhism; is this true?" He said, "Yes." Judi said, "What is Buddha?" The boy immediately raised a finger. Judi cut it off. The boy ran out screaming. Judi called him back; when the boy turned his head, Judi said, "What is Buddha?" The boy unconsciously made to raise his hand; when he didn't see his finger, he was suddenly greatly enlightened.

Judi always used to say, "I attained Tianlong's one-finger Chan, and used it all my life without exhausting it."

Langya Jiao said in verse,

*Judi's one finger I report for you to know;*

*A newly hatched hawk takes to the skies and flies.*

*If you don't have the strength to lift a cauldron and uproot a mountain,*

*A horse that gallops a thousand miles isn't easy to ride.*

307. Master Sanjiao said to an assembly, "If we discourse on this matter, in lowering and raising the eyebrows you've already stumbled past." At that time Magu came forth and asked, "I don't ask about lowering and raising the eyebrows; what is 'this matter'?" Sanjiao said, "Stumbled past." Magu then overturned the Chan seat. Sanjiao immediately hit him.

Changqing said, "Dispirited."

*Dahui said*, "He stumbled past Magu without even knowing it."

308. Master Zhimen Zuo said to an assembly,

There's been quite a lot of spring rain for the last two or three days, a veritable downpour. Ordinary people see water as water, celestials see water as crystal, fish see water as a dwelling, hungry ghosts see water as fire. What do you patchrobed monks call it? If you call it water, you're the same as ordinary people. If you call it crystal, then you're the same as celestials. If you call it a dwelling, you're the same as fish. If you call it fire, you're the same as hungry ghosts. So what is usual for you? This is why it is said that if one has attained, one speaks of fire without burning the mouth, speaks of water without drowning. When you eat rice every day, can you lack

a single grain? Also, an ancient spoke of wearing clothes and eating rice all day long without ever chewing a single grain or ever putting on a single thread. Even so, you must really arrive here before you can accomplish this. If you have not yet arrived at this state, don't try to fake it.

A monk asked, "In the clear purity of omniscient knowledge, do hells still exist?"

The master said, "The king of hells is not created by ghosts."

"What is Buddha?"

"Wearing out straw sandals, go on barefoot."

"What is beyond Buddha?"

"Hanging the sun and moon on the tip of a staff."

"How is it when the lotus has not yet emerged from the water?"

"Lotus blossoms."

"How about after emerging?"

"Lotus leaves."

309. Master Shoushan Nan said,

If you want to attain intimacy, first of all don't come questioning with questions. Do you understand? The question is in the answer, and

the answer is in the question. If you question with a question, I am under your feet. If you hesitate, trying to come up with something to say, then you're out of touch.

At that time a monk came forward and bowed. Shoushan immediately hit him. The monk asked, "How is it when one hangs up one's staff deep in the mountains?" He said, "Wrong." The monk said, "Wrong." Shoushan hit him.

310. Master Baiyun Xiang said to an assembly,  
Do you people understand? Just get an understanding in the streets, at the end of the market, among butchers and brokers, in the hot water of the cauldrons of hell. If you understand this way you can be teachers of humans and celestials. If in the school of patchrobed monks, you're as far away as sky from earth. There is another type who just become good people on a bench. Tell me, which of these two kinds of people is superior?

311. Luzu used to immediately face the wall whenever he saw a monk come. When Nanquan heard of this, he said, "I usually tell monks to get an understanding before Buddhas appear in the world,

and still can't find one or a half. This way, he will go on till the year of the donkey."

Baoju asked Changqing, "In the case of Luzu, where was the embellishment, that he was spoken of this way by Nanquan?"

Changqing said, "Not one in ten thousand can withdraw himself and defer to others."

*Dahui said*, "If not for Nanquan, Luzu might stare right through the wall."

312. After Luopu had finished traveling around, he went right to the Anshan peak of Mt. Jia and built a hut. After some years Jiashan came to know of this and composed a letter, which he sent a monk to deliver. Luopu received it, then sat down and extended his hand again, as if seeking something. The monk had no reply; Luopu then hit him and said, "Go back and tell your teacher about this." The monk went back and related this to Jiashan. Jiashan said, "If this monk reads the letter, he will surely come within three days. If he doesn't read the letter, this man cannot be saved." Jiashan then had someone watch for him to leave his hut, and then burn the place. As it turned out, after three days he left the hut and came. Someone told him his hut was on fire, but Luopu didn't even look back; he went



directly to Mt. Jia to see Jiashan. Without bowing, he stood there in front of him with folded hands. Jiashan said, “When a chicken roots in a phoenix nest, it is not of the same kind—go away.” Luopu said, “I’ve come from afar with the wind—please meet with me once.” Jiashan said, “There is no you before me, no one here.” Luopu shouted. Jiashan said, “Wait, wait—don’t be careless and hasty. Clouds and moon are the same, mountains and valleys are different. It’s not that you can’t cut off the tongues of everyone on earth, but how can you get a tongueless man to be able to speak?” Luopu stood there thinking; Jiashan then hit him. Xinghua said, “Just know how to be Buddha—what sentient beings will you pity?”

313. National Teacher Zhong asked a Chan practitioner where he’d come from. He said, “From the South.” The teacher said, “What teachers are there in the South?” He said, “The teachers are quite numerous.” The teacher said, “How do they teach people?” He said, “The teachers there directly point out to students that mind itself is Buddha—Buddha means awareness, and you presently are fully equipped with the nature of perception and cognition. This nature is able to raise the eyebrows and blink the eyes; its functions,

going and coming, pervade the body—in the head, the head knows; in the feet, the feet know. Therefore it is called accurate pervasive knowledge. There is no Buddha apart from this. This body has birth and death, but the nature of mind has never ever been born or passed away. The birth and death of the body is like a dragon changing its bones, a snake shedding its skin, a person leaving an old house. So the body is impermanent, while that nature is permanent. Teaching in the South is generally like this.”

The teacher said, “If so, it’s no different from the outsider Sanjaya. He said there is a spiritual nature in this body; this nature can recognize pain and itch. When the body disintegrates the spirit leaves, like the owner of a house getting out when the house burns down. The house is impermanent, while the owner is permanent. Clearly those with such a view cannot distinguish falsehood from truth. How can this be right? When I was traveling around I saw a lot of this type; recently they’ve become especially abundant. They gather groups of three to five hundred cloud gazers, saying this is the message of the Southern School, taking the Platform Scripture and altering it, adding confused drivel and excising what the sage meant, deluding followers. How can this be the verbal teaching? Ouch! Our school is lost! If perception and cognition were the

Buddha-nature, Vimalakirti would not have said, ‘The truth is beyond perception and cognition; if you act on perception and cognition, this is perception and cognition—it is not seeking truth.’”

The monk also asked, “The definitive doctrine of the Lotus of Truth opens up the knowledge and perception of Buddhas—what about this?”

The teacher said, “This doesn’t even speak of bodhisattvas or the two vehicles—how could the ignorant confusion of sentient beings be considered the same as the knowledge and perception of Buddhas?”

The monk also asked, “What is the Buddha mind?”

The teacher said, “Fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles.”

The monk said, “This is very much at variance with scripture. The Nirvana scripture says, ‘It is other than inanimate things like fences and walls, therefore it is called Buddha nature.’ Now you say these are the Buddha mind—are mind and nature different or not?”

The teacher said, “When confused, they’re different; when enlightened, they’re not different.”

The monk said, “Scripture says Buddha nature is permanent, while mind is impermanent; now you say they’re not different—why?”

The teacher said, “You’re just going by the words, not by the meaning. It is like water freezing into ice during the cold months, and ice melting into water when it’s warm. When people are confused, this freezes nature into mind; when people are enlightened, this melts mind into nature. If you cling to the inanimate having no Buddha nature, scripture shouldn’t say the triplex world is only mental. So it is you yourself who are at variance with scripture, not me.”

The monk asked, “If inanimate things have the nature of mind, can they teach?”

The teacher said, “They are clearly always teaching, uninterruptedly.”

The monk said, “Why don’t I hear them?”

The teacher said, “You yourself don’t hear.”

The monk said, “Who can hear?”

The teacher said, “The saints can hear.”

The monk said, “Have common people no part in it?”

The teacher said, “I teach for common people, not for saints.”

The monk said, “I am deaf—I do not hear the teaching of inanimate things. You must hear it.”

The teacher said, “I don’t hear it either.”

The monk said, “If you don’t hear it, how do you know inanimate things teach?”

The teacher said, “Lucky I don’t hear it—if I could hear it, you wouldn’t hear my teaching.”

The monk said, “Can common people ultimately get to hear it?”

The teacher said, “If common people hear it, then they are not common people.”

The monk said, “What scriptural basis is there for the teaching of the inanimate?”

The teacher said, “Haven’t you read the Flower Ornament saying, ‘Lands teach, beings teach, everything in all times teaches’?”

The monk said, “Beings are sentient, aren’t they? You’ve only said inanimate things have Buddha-nature—what about sentient beings?”

The teacher said, “Since it is true even of the inanimate, how could it not be true of sentient beings?”

The monk said, “If so, then the teachers of the South who say that perception and cognition are Buddha-nature should not be classified as being the same as outsiders.”

The teacher said, “I’m not saying they have no Buddha nature. How could outsiders have no Buddha nature? It’s just that their view is wrong; they conceive of one reality as dual, so I repudiate them. “

The monk said, “If both have Buddha nature, well, if you kill sentient beings that is binding action subject to retribution, but I’ve never heard that there is retribution for damaging inanimate things.”

The teacher said, “Sentient beings are subjective; they think of self and possession, and form resentments, so there are consequences of wrongdoing. Inanimate things are objects and have no feelings of resentment, so it is not said that there is retribution.”

The monk said, “In the teachings we only read that sentient beings become Buddhas; we do not see inanimate things receiving the prediction of enlightenment. And which of the thousand Buddhas in the eon of intelligence was an inanimate Buddha?”

The teacher said, “It is like a crown prince is just an individual before he has inherited kingship, but after he inherits the throne the whole land belongs to the king—is the land enthroned separately? Now when a sentient being receives the prediction of attaining Buddhahood, all lands in the ten directions are the body of Locana Buddha—how can there be inanimate objects receiving the prediction in addition?”

The monk said, “If all beings live on the body of Buddha, then they befoul the body of Buddha with excrement, they excavate and tread upon the body of Buddha. How could there be no wrongdoing?”

The teacher said, “The totality of beings is Buddha; who do you want to consider at fault?”

The monk said, “Scripture says the body of Buddha is unobstructed; now you take compounded solid things to be the body of Buddha—doesn’t this contradict the holy teaching?”

The teacher said, “The major scripture on transcendent insight says you cannot speak of the uncompounded apart from the compounded. Do you believe form is empty?”

The monk said, “It is the true word of Buddha—how could I not believe?”

The teacher said, “If form is empty, how could there be any obstruction?”

The monk said, “If sentient beings’ Buddha nature is the same, it only takes one Buddha’s practice for all sentient beings to be liberated at that time. Now this is not so; where is the significance of sameness?”

The teacher said, “Haven’t you seen the Flower Ornament doctrine of six characteristics, which states that there is difference in sameness and sameness in difference, and that this is true of all the categories of becoming and decay, totality and distinction? Although sentient beings and Buddhas have the same one nature, this does not preclude separate individual cultivation and individual attainment. I have never seen that when others eat I am full.”

The monk said, “There are teachers who indicate to students that if they just know their own nature, when they die and slough off this leaking shell, the intelligent nature affixed to the spiritual dais departs, and this is called liberation. What about this?”

The teacher said, “I have already said this is still a judgment of the two vehicles and outsiders. The two vehicles reject birth and death and delight in nirvana. Outsiders also say, ‘I have great trouble because I have a body’ and aim for oblivion. People who



have entered the stream spend eighty thousand eons, those of the other three attainments spend sixty, forty, and twenty thousand eons, and pratyeka-buddhas spend ten thousand eons absorbed in space, while outsiders dwell for eighty eons in neither perception nor non-perception. The two vehicles, when these eons are complete, can still shift their minds to the great vehicle, while outsiders return to cyclic existence.”

The monk said, “Is Buddha nature of one kind, or different?”

The teacher said, “It cannot be of one kind.”

The monk said, “How so?”

The teacher said, “There is the completely unborn and undying, and the half born and half dying, half not born or dying.”

The monk said, “Who makes this interpretation?”

The teacher said, “Here with me Buddha nature is completely unborn and undying; with you in the South, Buddha nature is half born, half dying, and half not born or dying.”

314. Dongshan went to Guishan and asked, “I recently heard that National Teacher Zhong held that inanimate things teach; I have not yet plumbed that subtlety.” Guishan said, “Here I also hold this, but it’s hard to find suitable people.” Dongshan said,

“Do tell, master.” Guishan said, “The mouth born of my father and mother will never explain for you.” Dongshan said, “Is there anyone who sought the Way at the same time as you?”

Guishan said, “There is a series of caves from here; there is a wayfarer, Yunyan—if you can watch the wind by the way it blows the grass, he’ll certainly be esteemed by you.” When he got to Yunyan he asked, “Who can hear the teaching of the inanimate?” Yunyan said, “The inanimate can hear.” Dongshan said, “Can you hear?” Yunyan said, “If I could hear it, you wouldn’t hear my teaching.” Dongshan said, “Why don’t I hear?” Yunyan stood up his whisk and said, “Do you hear?” Dongshan said, “No.” Yunyan said, “You don’t even hear my teaching; how could you hear the teaching of the inanimate?” Dongshan said, “In what scripture is the teaching of the inanimate?” Yunyan said, “Haven’t you read the Amitabha scripture saying, ‘Water birds and woods all remembrance Buddha and remembrance Dharma; inanimate plants and trees pipe and sing in concert’?” At this Dongshan had insight. He then produced a verse saying,

*Wonderful, wonderful!*

*The teaching of the inanimate is inconceivable.*

*If you listen with your ears you'll never understand;*

*When you hear their voice with your eyes, only then will you know.*

Later, when he left Yunyan, he asked, "After you die, if someone asks whether I can describe your likeness, how shall I reply?"

Yunyan was silent for a long while, then said, "Simply say, 'Just this is it.'" Dongshan sank into thought. Yunyan said, "Having gotten this matter, you really have to be thorough." Dongshan left without saying anything. Later, as he was crossing water, he saw his reflection and only then was he suddenly enlightened. Then he produced a verse saying,

*Just avoid seeking from others,*

*Or you'll be estranged from self.*

*I now go on alone; everywhere I meet It.*

*It now is really I, I now am not It.*

*Only when understanding this way*

*Can one accord with suchness as is.*

315. Linji said to an assembly,

There is someone who is on the road yet not away from home; there is someone away from home who is not on the road—which one deserves the support of humans and celestials?

*Dahui said, “The thief’s body is already exposed.”*

316. Master Shexian Sheng said to an assembly,  
Journeying Chan followers must be deliberate. Study requires the eye to study, the state of perception must find expression of the state of perception; only then do you have some familiarity, and only then will you not be confused by objects and not fall into evil ways. Ultimately, how do you understand? Sometimes expression reaches but mind does not—you mistakenly focus on phenomena that are reflections of thought about present sense data. Sometimes mind reaches but expression does not—you are like blind people touching an elephant, each describing it differently. Sometimes mind and expression both reach—breaking through heaven and earth, light illumines the ten directions. Sometimes neither mind nor expression reach—people with no eyes run hither and thither, and suddenly fall unawares into a deep pit.

He also said to an assembly,  
The bloodline of the teachers of the school, the ordinary or holy, Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, heaven, hell, boiling water in cauldrons, coals of furnaces, oxhead soldiers of hell, myriad forms, sun, moon,

stars and planets, other regions, this land, sentient beings, inanimate things (drawing a line with his hand) all enter this school. In this school it is possible to kill and also possible to give life. To kill you need a killing sword, to give life you need a life-giving expression. What are the killing sword and life-giving expression? Anyone who can say, come forth and try to tell everyone. If you can't say, you are failing your everyday life.

A monk asked, "If one has not yet understood oneself, what can be used as a test?" The master said, "Striking the signal to sleep in a bustling market place." The monk asked, "What does that mean?" The master said, "Lighting a golden lamp at noon."

317. Master Zhenjing said to an assembly,  
In the school of Dongshan, sometimes we mix with mud and water, sometimes we stand like a wall a mile high. If you people try to see Dongshan in mixing with mud and water, Dongshan is not in mixing with mud and water. If you try to see Dongshan in standing like a wall a mile high, Dongshan is not in standing like a wall a mile high. If you try to see Dongshan everywhere, Dongshan is not everywhere. If you don't want to see Dongshan, Dongshan has you

by a nose halter. If you try to go to sleep, he gives the halter a yank, making your eyes spin without you even knowing it. I don't need you to know Dongshan—if you just get to know yourself, that will do.

318. Master Baofu Huo was asked by a monk, “How is it when a house that is poor gets robbed?” He said, “It cannot be wiped out.” The monk asked, “Why can't it be wiped out?” He said, “The thief is one of the family.” The monk said, “If he is one of the family, why does he become a thief?” He said, “Since there is no response inside, he can do nothing outside.” The monk asked, “When the thief is suddenly caught, where is credit due?” He said, “I've never even heard of a reward.” The monk said, “Then it is effort without achievement.” He said, “It's not that there is no achievement; it is accomplished without resting on it.” The monk asked, “Since it is a successful achievement, why not rest on it?” He said, “Haven't you heard it said that peace is originally achieved by the general, but it is not permitted for the general to see peace?”

*Dahui said, “Wrapped up in fooling.”*

319. Master Lumen Tan was asked by a monk, “What is the noumenal ground of ultimate reality?” He said, “The southern

continent, the northern continent.” The monk said, “Then things are the same unity.” He said, “They’re still separated by the polar mountain.”

320. Master Deshan said to an assembly,  
Having no issues in regard to self, don’t seek at random. Attaining something by random seeking isn’t attainment. Just have nothing on your mind; when you have nothing on your mind, you are openly aware, sublimely unoccupied. Even the slightest course of speech is all self-deception; even the slightest fixation of thought is active causation of the three mires [of hells, hungry ghosts, and animality]; even a flicker of emotional arousal is a fetter for myriad eons. The names of the holy and the epithets of the ordinary are all empty sounds; exceptional appearances and inferior shapes are all illusory forms. If you want to seek these, how can you not be burdened? But then if you reject them, that too becomes a great affliction. In the end there is no benefit.

321. Master Dazhu said to an assembly,  
You people are luckily naturally fine people without issues; why do you suffer fatally contriving to wear stocks and go to prison? Every

day until nightfall you run fitfully saying you're studying Chan, learning the Way, understanding Buddhism. This way you become increasingly out of touch. This is just pursuing sound and form—when will you stop? I heard master Mazu say, "Your own treasury is totally complete—use it freely; it isn't based on external seeking." From this I came to rest at once; my own treasure is available for use wherever I am. This can be called happiness. There is nothing to grasp, and nothing to reject. I do not see any sign of origin or destruction in anything; I do not see any sign of coming or going in anything. Throughout the worlds in the ten directions, there's not a single atom that's not your own treasury. Just carefully examine on your own the three treasures in one body in your own mind. This is always spontaneously evident, without doubt. Don't pursue thought, don't seek; the essence of mind is originally pure. Therefore the Flower Ornament Scripture says, "All things are unborn, all things are undying. If you can understand this way, the Buddhas will always be present." Also, the scripture Vimalakirti's Advice says, "Contemplate the true characteristic of the body; the Buddha is also thus." If you do not follow sound and form stirring thoughts, and do not pursue appearances, conceiving interpretations, you will naturally have no issues. Don't keep standing there—goodbye.



(The assembly remained without dispersing; Dazhu said,) Why are you people staying here, not leaving? I have already made a presentation to your face; will you stop? What is there to doubt? Don't misuse your mind, madly wasting your energy. If you have feelings of doubt, you may ask whatever you want.

A monk asked, "What is Buddha? What is the teaching? What is the community? What are the three treasures in one body?" The master said, "Mind is Buddha; you don't need to use Buddha to seek Buddha. Mind is the teaching; you don't need to seek the teaching by means of the teaching. Buddha and the teaching are not two; their combination is the community. This is the three treasures in one body. Scripture says, "Mind, Buddha, and living beings—these three have no distinction." Purity of body, speech, and mind is called Buddha appearing in the world; impurity of their actions is called Buddha passing away. For example, it is like when angry there is no joy, and when joyful there is no anger—it is just one mind; actually there are no two entities. When basic wisdom naturally without fault manifests, it is like a snake transforming into a dragon, without changing its scales; when people turn their minds around to become Buddhas, they don't change their faces. Essential nature is

fundamentally pure, and doesn't depend on cultivation to become so. Having realization and cultivation is the same as conceit. True emptiness has no blockage, responsive function is inexhaustible, beginningless, endless; those of keen faculties suddenly awaken, function without compare—this is unexcelled enlightenment. Mind has no form or appearance—this is the subtle body; having no appearance, it is itself the reality body as it really is. Nature and characteristics are inherently empty—this is the boundless body of space. The array of myriad practices is the reality body of virtue. The reality body is the basis of myriad transformations; they are named according to the situation. The function of wisdom is inexhaustible—this is called the inexhaustible treasury. It can conceive myriad truths—this is called the treasury of fundamental truth. It is endowed with all-knowledge—this is called the treasury of insight. Myriad things are ultimately as such—this is called the treasury of those who arrive at suchness. Arrival at suchness means the suchness of all things. All things in the world, becoming and disappearing, are without exception ultimately thus.”

He was asked, “Scripture says, ‘Those six teachers of outside paths are your teachers; you left home relying on them. When those

teachers fall, you too fall along with them. Those who donate to you are not called fields of blessings; those who support you fall into the three evil paths. Slandering Buddha, tearing down the teaching, not entering into the numbers of the community, ultimately not allowing transcendence in extinction—if you are like this, then you can take food.’ Now I request the Chan master to clearly explain this.”

Dazhu said, “Randomly going along with the six sense faculties is called the six teachers. Seeking Buddha outside mind is called outside paths. Possessing something to donate is not called a field of blessings. Intentionally accepting offerings falls into the three evil ways. ‘If you can slander Buddha’ means not seeking with fixation on Buddha. ‘Tearing down the teaching’ means not seeking with fixation on the teaching. ‘Not entering the numbers of the community’ means not seeking with fixation on community. ‘Ultimately not attaining transcendence in extinction’ means the function of knowledge is present. If there are any who can understand this way, they obtain the ‘food’ of delight in truth and the bliss of meditation.”

He was also asked, “A scripture on insight speaks of liberating all kinds of sentient beings so they all enter nirvana without remainder; it also says there are really no sentient beings attaining liberation in

nirvana. How can these two passages of scripture be reconciled? Everyone says it means actually liberating sentient beings without grasping the features of sentient beings. I've always wondered about this and am still uncertain; please explain to me."

He said, "All kinds of sentient beings are inherent in one body; they develop according to actions. Therefore ignorance constitutes birth from eggs, being wrapped up in afflictions constitutes birth from wombs, immersion in the water of affection constitutes birth from moisture, and suddenly occurring affliction constitutes birth from transformation. When enlightened, one is a Buddha; when deluded one is called a sentient being. Bodhisattvas just consider successive thoughts sentient beings; to understand successive thoughts are essentially all empty is called liberating sentient beings. The insightful liberate before formation in their own original state; since before formation is empty, they know there really are no sentient beings attaining liberation by extinction."

322. Yunmen held up his staff and cited the teachings, saying, "Ordinary people actually consider this existent, the two vehicles analyze it and call it nonexistent, those awakened to conditionality call it illusory existence, bodhisattvas identify its

essence with emptiness, and patchrobed monks see a staff and just call it a staff—when they walk they just walk, and when they sit they just sit, totally unshakable.”

*Dahui said*, “Bitter gourd is bitter to the root, sweet melon is sweet to the stem.”

323. Master Lingquan Ren was asked by a monk, “What was the intention of the founding teacher?” He said, “Facing upward, raising his eyebrows alone; turning his head, clapping by himself.” When asked, “What is your family style?” He said, “Riding an ox wearing a hat of woven vines, crossing water wearing shoes and a shirt.”

324. Master Sheng of Mt. Da’an was asked by a monk, “Please speak apart from the four propositions and beyond the hundred negations.” The master said, “There is no such sword in my armory.” He was asked, “How is it when there are multiple locks and no information gets through?” He said, “How did you manage to get here?” The questioner said, “What about after arriving?” He said, “How are things therein?” He was asked, “What is the real of the real?” He said, “A clay Buddha at a crossroads.”

325. Master Lumen Zhen was asked by a monk, “What is your family style?” He said, “There is salt, no vinegar.” He was asked, “What is a wayfarer like?” He said, “The mouth is like the nose.” He was asked, “Suppose a guest comes; how do you treat him?” He said, “Thanks for passing by this rustic shack.” He was asked, “What is Chan?” He said, “A phoenix goes into a chicken coop.” He was asked, “What is the path?” He said, “A lotus fiber leading a huge elephant.” He was asked, “When the eon disintegrates, does *this* disintegrate too?” He said, “Facing a bank, looking at the edge, is particularly sad.” He was asked, “What is your turning point?” He said, “Last night at midnight I lost my pillow.”

326. Master Letan Jun said to an assembly,  
Drilling a precious pearl or sawing a jade slab is easy; seeing a hole and putting in a stopper is hard. The color of the moon merged with the clouds is white; the sound of the pines soaked in dew is cold—I don’t ask you people about this; but tell me: what did elder Maudgalyayana and Subhuti discuss? (silence) The handle of the dipper in the house to the east is long, the handle of the dipper in the house to the west is short.

327. Master Dongshan Chu said to an assembly,  
Here at Dongshan ordinarily in the abbot's room it's not like the Chan path or Buddhism subjectively expounded elsewhere, one coming, one going, humming and buzzing. I have always explained fully to you, spoken fully, held forth fully, sifted fully; there's no room for you to block or cover up one way or another. I have turned it all out at once; how do you Chan worthies understand? Try to tell the assembly. It's like the case of insects being able to land anywhere but not being able to land on flames of fire. You get the sweet talk of old baldies elsewhere dealt out to you, saying 'This is Chan,' 'This is the Way,' 'This is enlightenment, nirvana,' 'This is reality as is, liberation.' Your eyes are bunged with stoppers two foot eight long, yet you do not know, are not aware; coming here to Dongshan, you don't know what I'm talking about. Can you understand? Even if you understand reality as is, nirvana, bodhi and liberation, it makes no difference—you're tied up by the feet and can't get loose. If you are spiritually sharp patchrobed monks, you'll bite right through and be free and clear. Wouldn't that be pleasant? If you chomp and chomp and can't chew through, as before you enter an antique shop. When will you ever get out? I cannot help but make effort for you as a bystander.

328. Master Tiantong Qi asked master Fulong, "Where have you come from?" He said, "From Fulong ['subdued dragon']." Qi said, "And did you manage to subdue the dragon?" Fulong said, "I never subdued this beast." Qi said, "Go have some tea." Also, the great worthy Jian asked, "The student comes standing out, requesting the teacher to be clear and to the point." The master said, "Here I crap once, and that's all—what 'outstanding' or 'clear and to the point' are there?" Jian said, "Answering like this, you'd better buy straw sandals and go traveling again." The master said, "Approach." Jian approached; the master said, "What is wrong with my answering this way?" Jian had no reply. The master hit him.

329. Jiashan said to an assembly, "Remain the master, and you don't fall into a second view." Master Baiyuan Tong came forth from the crowd and said, "It should be known that there is one person who doesn't join company." Jiashan said, "This is still a second view." Tong overturned the Chan seat. Jiashan said, "What about you, old brother?" He said, "When my tongue rots I'll tell you."



Another day Tong asked, “There is nothing before the eyes. The mind is before the eyes. *This* is not before the eyes. It is not within reach of ear or eye’—is this not a saying of yours?” Jiashan said, “Yes, it is.” Tong then overturned the Chan seat and stood there with hands folded in a salute. Jiashan got up and hit him with his staff. Tong then withdrew. Fayan said, “Why didn’t he leave as soon as he overturned the Chan seat? Why did he insist on waiting for Jiashan to hit him before leaving?”

330. Master Liutong Shao went to Tongquan. One day he burned off the weeds for a new field; when he came back, Tongquan asked him, “Where have you been?” He said, “Burning off a field.” Tongquan said, “How are things after the fire?” He said, “An iron snake can’t bore in.”

331. Master Yungai Han was asked by a monk, “What are waves flooding the skies on a mountain peak?” He said, “Manjusri is making a ruckus.” “How is it when making a ruckus?” “Not extending great compassion before an opportunity.”

332. Jianfeng said to an assembly, “Bringing up one, don’t bring up two. If you let the first move go, you fall into the secondary.” Yunmen came forth from the group and said, “Yesterday there was someone who came from Tiantai and went to Jingshan.” Jianfeng said “Don’t do chores tomorrow.”

*Dahui said*, “Each one brings out the family disgrace; luckily there are no witnesses.”

333. Master Ciming said to an assembly, “The body of reality is formless; it manifests forms in response to beings.” (holding up his staff) This is a staff—what is the reality body? Leaving this complication aside, the communal hall and Buddha shrine have gotten into your nostrils, the waters of the four great oceans are on your heads, the dragon kings are under your fingernails—do you feel them? If you feel them, you go three thousand by day, eight hundred by night, smoke rising under your feet, fire rising on your heads. If you don’t know, eat when hungry, sleep when tired. (he planted his staff once)

334. Master Wushi Guan kept his door closed and sat alone. One day Xuefeng knocked on the door, and he opened it.

Xuefeng grabbed and held him and said, “Is this ordinary or holy?” Guan spat and said, “This wild fox spirit,” and pushed him out and shut the door again. Xuefeng said, “I just wanted to know the old brother.”

335. Master Shuangling Zhen asked Daowu, “Why are the tracks of a bodhisattva without spiritual powers impossible to follow?” Daowu said, “Only one on the same path would know.” Zhen said, “Do you know?” Daowu said, “I don’t know.” Zhen said, “Why not?” Daowu said, “Go away—you don’t know what I’m saying.”

336. Master Daowu was first enlightened when he heard a shamaness in a village hut propitiating a spirit saying, “Consciousness of the spirit has no teacher.” Later he called on master Guannan Chang, who confirmed his understanding. He also went to Deshan’s school; whenever there was a lecture, he’d put on a lotus blossom hat, bare his chest, take a bamboo strip, beat a drum, play a flute, and call out “Stupid third son!” Sometimes he’d say, “I beat Guannan’s drum, sing Deshan’s song.” Someone asked, “What was the intention of the founding teacher coming from the West?” Saluting with the bamboo strip, he said, “Yes.” Once he

asked Guanxi, "How are you?" Guanxi said, "No position." He said, "Isn't this the same as space?" Guanxi said, "This butcher! Where there are living beings to kill, he doesn't weary."

337. Master Jingshan Yin was asked by a monk, "How is it when shutting down to be like ashes?" He said, "This is still the work of people at the time." The monk asked, "What about after it's done?" The master said, "The plowman's field is not seeded." The monk asked, "What about the ultimate end?" The master said, "When the grain is ripe, not managing the field."

338. Master Yangqi said to an assembly,  
Snow, snow everywhere, shining bright, white and pure. The Yellow River freezes shut, stopping the slightest flow. In the light of the blazing sun it must burst out. Must burst out, chewing thorns atop the head of the three-faced spirit king, bleeding under the feet of the thunderbolt bearer.

He also said,

Treading on a balance beam, it is hard as iron. When a mute has a dream, who will he tell? On the peak of the polar mountain, waves

flood the sky; at the bottom of the ocean, one meets the heat of fire.

339. Venerable Parshva asked a boy, "Where do you come from?" The boy said, "My mind does not go." The patriarch said, "Where do you dwell?" The boy said, "My mind does not stay." The patriarch said, "Are you unsettled?" The boy said, "So are the Buddhas." The patriarch said, "You're not the Buddhas." The boy said, "The Buddhas too are not."

Dayu Zhi said, "Each question of the ancestral teacher, and each answer of the boy, all lacked understanding. Now how do you people understand?"

*Dahui said*, "Even if you can understand now, study for three more lifetimes, sixty eons."

340. Yaoshan asked Shitou, "I have a rough knowledge of the twelve part teachings of the three vehicles; I've heard that in the South they point directly to people's mind to see its essential nature and realize buddhahood. I really do not understand, and humbly hope for your compassion and guidance." Shitou said, "'Thus' won't do, 'not thus' won't do either; 'thus and not thus' won't do at all. What about you?" Yaoshan stood there thinking. Shitou said, "Your

affinity is not here. In Jiangxi there is a great master Ma; go there, and he should explain for you.” When he got there, he posed the same question as before. Ancestor Ma said, “Sometimes I have him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes; sometimes I don’t have him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes. Sometimes having him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is right, sometimes having him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is is not right.” At this, Yaoshan had insight. He thereupon bowed. Ancestor Ma said, “What principle have you seen?” Yaoshan said, “When I was at Shitou’s, I was like a mosquito on an iron ox.” Ancestor Ma said, “Now that you are like this, you should keep it well.”

One day Ma said, “How are you these days?” Yaoshan said, “Skin shed completely, only true reality remains.” Ma said, “Your attainment can be said to accord with the essence of mind and pervade your four limbs. Since you are capable of being like this, gird your belly with three strips of bamboo skin, and go dwell on a mountain wherever you are.” He said, “Who am I to presume to speak of dwelling on a mountain?” Ma said, “It’s not like that. There’s no going forever without staying, and no staying forever without going. If you want to help, yet no one’s helped; and if you want to act, nothing gets done. You should be an ark; don’t stay

here forever.” With this, Yaoshan respectfully took his leave and went back to Shitou.

One day as he was sitting, Shitou came, saw him, and asked, “What are you doing here?” He said, “I’m not doing anything at all.” Shitou said, “Then you’re sitting idly.” He said, “If I were sitting idly, that would be doing something.” Shitou said, “You say you’re not doing—not doing what?” He said, “Even a thousand sages do not know.” Shitou then composed a verse:

*All along living together, I don’t know his name.*

*Helping each other whatever happens, we go on just so.*

*Even the lofty sages since antiquity don’t know—*

*How can the hasty common type understand?*

*Dahui said, “Goods are real value; money is variable.”*

341. Master Fojian said to an assembly,  
Matters before the fifteenth day of the month—spreading flowers on  
brocade. Matters after the fifteenth day of the month are like a  
bubble in the ocean. Right on the fifteenth day is much like a one-  
foot mirror reflecting a thousand miles of forms. So even though real  
emptiness is trackless, nevertheless the oceanic reflection radiates

light. Even if the exposed pillars blossom with flowers, what hundredfold ugliness of Buddha's face do you talk about? Why is it like this? "Wherever I go, the frosty night's moon descends as it will into the valley ahead."

342. Master Dayu Zhi said to an assembly, "You swallow the ocean on your side, I carry the polar mountain on my back; tell me, how far apart are you and I? Do you understand? Where the royal rule is rather strict, it is not permitted to plunder the markets."

A monk asked, "What is your statement for people?"

He said, "Four corners, eight surfaces."

"What does that mean?"

"Eight depressions, nine protusions."

"What is Buddha in a city?"

"A stone flag at a crossroads."

"What is the Way?"

"Eight bushels, four pecks."

"How about the person on the Way?"

"Boiling gruel, cooking rice."

"What is Buddha?"



“Sawing apart a balance beam.”

“What was the intention of the founding teacher in coming from the West?”

“Burning the ground in broad daylight and lying down, burning the ground at night and sleeping.”

“People of old distinguished soil from sprouts, knew people based on their words; I come up asking the teacher to discern.”

“Flowers embellish the earth.”

“What is the meaning of the founding teacher’s coming from the West?”

“When the weather is cold, the days are short.”

“What about before Bodhidharma came?”

“He was in India.”

“What about after coming?”

“He was in China.”

343. Master Zhenjing said to an assembly,

A lion does not eat the leavings of an eagle; would a hawk attack a dead rabbit? Let out Linji’s great dragon; pull out Yunman’s glance.

(finally, holding up his staff, he said) Where dragons go, rain comes; three plants, two trees.

344. One day Guishan was standing by Baizhang. Baizhang said "Who is it?" He said, "Lingyou." Baizhang said, "Stir up the brazier to see if there is any fire or not." Guishan stirred it up and said, "There is none." Baizhang got up himself, stirred deeply, and found a little fire. Showing it to him, he said, "Is this not fire?" Guishan was thereupon enlightened. He bowed in thanks and presented his understanding. Baizhang said, "This is just a temporary byway. Scripture says, 'If you want to know the meaning of Buddha-nature, you must observe time and conditions.' When the time has come, it is like having been confused then suddenly understanding, like having forgotten then suddenly remembering. Then you realize your own thing is not gotten from another. Therefore an ancestral teacher said, 'Having become enlightened, it is the same as before enlightenment; there is no thought and no doctrine.' It is just that there is no vain thought of ordinary or holy; the original state of mind is inherently complete. Now that you are thus, carefully preserve it on your own."

Another day he accompanied Baizhang on a walk on the mountain. Coming to a woods, Baizhang said, "Cook, did you bring fire?" He said, "I did." Baizhang said, "Where is it?" Guishan then

picked up a twig, blew on it twice, and handed it to Baizhang.

Baizhang said, "Like insects eating away at wood."

*Dahui said*, "If Baizhang hadn't made that last statement, he might have been made a fool of by the cook."

345. When the master known as the Boatman parted with his fellow student Daowu, he said to Daowu, "In the future, if there is a spiritually sharp lecturer, direct one to me." Subsequently he drifted around Huading in a small boat. Hence he was called the Boatman Monk in those days. Subsequently Daowu went to Jingkou and came upon Jiashan lecturing. A monk asked, "What is the reality body?" Jiashan said, "The reality body has no form." The monk asked, "What is the eye of reality?" Jiashan said, "The eye of reality has no flaw." Daowu unconsciously let out a laugh. Jiashan then got down from the chair and asked Daowu, "There must have been something wrong with my answer to this monk to make you laugh. I hope you will not begrudge compassion." Daowu said, "You're established in a way, but you still haven't had a teacher. Go to Huading and call on the Boatman." Jiashan said, "Will I be able to find him?" Daowu said, "This man doesn't have a single tile over his head, or any ground under his feet." Jiashan then changed his

vestments and went directly to Huading. As soon as the Boatman saw him, he asked, "Great worthy, what temple do you dwell in?" He said, "If it conforms, I don't dwell; if I dwell, it doesn't conform." The Boatman said, "Where did you learn?" He said, "It's not within reach of ears or eyes." The Boatman said, "A fitting statement is a ten-thousand eon donkey tethering stake." He also asked, "Letting down a line a thousand fathoms, the intent is in the depths. Three inches away from the hook, why don't you speak?" As Jiashan was about to open his mouth, the Boatman knocked him into the water with a pole. As soon as he climbed up into the boat, the Boatman again said, "Speak, speak!" As he was about to open his mouth, the Boatman hit him again; Jiashan was suddenly greatly enlightened. He then nodded three times. The Boatman said, "You may play with the line on the pole, but the meaning is distinct of itself without invading the clear waves." Jiashan followed up with the question, "What is your intention in casting the line and hook?" He said, "The line is lowered into the clear water, the bobber is intended to tell whether anything is there or not." Jiashan said, "Speech carries with it the mystery, but has no course; the tongue speaks without saying anything." The Boatman said, "I have fished throughout the river waves; this is the first time I've come across one with golden scales." Jiashan covered

his ears. The Boatman said, “Right, right.” Finally he instructed him, “Hereafter you should just have no tracks where you hide, but do not hide where there are no tracks. In twenty years with Yaoshan, I only understood this. Now that you have attained, hereafter do not dwell in cities or villages, just seek out one or a half by a hoe deep in the mountains to continue the lineage, not letting it end.” Jiashan then took leave and went. He looked back again and again; finally the Boatman called to him, and when Jiashan turned his head the Boatman stood up an oar and said, “Do you think there’s something else?” Then he capsized the boat and disappeared into the water.

346. Master Baiyun Duan, teaching a group, cited Yunmen bringing up a verse by Sanping: “‘This very seeing and hearing is not seeing and hearing’—what do you call seeing and hearing? ‘There is no other sound and form to present to you’—what verbal sound and form are there? ‘Here, if you comprehend, there is no issue at all’—what issue is there? ‘Substance and function may be separate or not separate’—speech is substance, substance is speech (He went on to hold up his staff and say) The staff is substance, the lamps are function—are they separate or not separate? Haven’t you read the statement that omniscient knowledge is pure?’ (Baiyun said,) “Everyone, Yunmen can only draw Mt. Omei based on a likeness; I

am not this way. ‘This very seeing and hearing is not seeing and hearing; there is no other sound and form to present to you’—eyes are eyes, ears are ears. ‘Herein, if you comprehend, there is no issue at all. Substance and function may be separate or not separate’—four or five hundred rows of flowering willows, two or three thousand music pavilions.”

A monk asked, “What is Buddha?” Baiyun said, “There is no cool spot in a cauldron of boiling water.” The monk asked, “What is the great meaning of Buddhism?” Baiyun said, “Pressing down a gourd in water.” The monk asked, “What is the meaning of the founding teacher’s coming from the West?” Baiyun said, “Crows fly, rabbits run.”

347. Nanyuan asked Fengxue, “How do you evaluate the staff of the South?” Fengxue said, “I make an exceptional evaluation.”

Fengxue then asked Nanyuan back, “How is it evaluated here?”

Nanyuan picked up his staff, lay it across his shoulder, and said, “Acceptance of no origin under the staff; not seeing a teacher when facing a situation.”

*Dahui said*, “At that time Fengxue should have unrolled his seat cloth and made a prostration, or else overturned the Chan seat.” Then he

turned to Zhongmi and said, "You tell me, at that time would it have been right for Fengxue to bow, or would it have been right to overturn the Chan seat?" Zhongmi said, "The brigand in the bush is busted." Dahui said, "Look at this blind fellow," and hit him.

348. Master Fahua Ju went to master Dayu Zhi's place. Dayu asked, "What is the meaning of the man of old seeing peach blossoms?" Fahua said, "The crooked does not hide the straight." Dayu said, "Granting that for the moment, what about This?" Fahua said, "Having picked up gold on a big street, how can those around know?" Dayu said, "Do you know?" Fahua said, "Meeting a swordsman on the road, show your sword; do not present a poem to one who is not a poet." Dayu said, "A master poet!" Fahua said, "Two people pull a single red thread." Dayu said, "And what about Xuansha's saying, 'Right, quite right.'?" Fahua said, "When the ocean dries up, at last you see the bottom, but a person's heart is never known, even until death." Dayu said, "That's so." Fahua said, "A tower reaches the clouds; mountain peaks are piled in layers of green." He also presented a verse saying,

*A phoenix, returning, leaps spontaneously into the sky;*

*An old crow roosts in Lingyun's peach tree.*

*Past and present stop versifying the meaning of the peach blossoms;  
In heaven above or the human world, no one can add to it.*

349. Master Zhaozhou said to an assembly,  
A gold Buddha does not get through a furnace, a wooden Buddhas does not get through fire, a clay Buddha does not get through water. The real Buddha sits within—bodhi, nirvana, suchness, and Buddha-nature are all clothes sticking to the body. This is also called affliction. If you don't ask, there is no affliction. Now where is the noumenal ground of reality placed? When one mind is not aroused, myriad things have no fault. You just sit investigating the principle for twenty or thirty years; then if you don't understand, cut off my head.  
It's a waste of effort to grasp dreams, illusions, flowers in the sky. If the mind does not differ, myriad things are one. Since it is not obtained from outside, why cling anymore? You are like goats randomly putting things in your mouth. I see master Yaoshan said that if anyone posed a question he'd just have them shut their doggish mouth. I too have people shut this doggish mouth.  
Grasping self is defilement, not grasping self is purity. Like hunting dogs, you just want to eat something. Where is Buddhism? Here, a



thousand people, ten thousand people, are all seeking Buddhism—I can't find even one wayfarer. If you are a disciple of the king of emptiness, don't make your mind sick—this is most difficult to cure. Before there was the world there was already this nature; when the world disintegrates, this nature won't disintegrate. Once you have seen me, you are none other than the master; why seek this outside any further? At precisely such a time, don't turn your head around and exchange your brain; if you turn your head around and exchange your brain, you'll lose it.

At that time a monk asked, "I understand you to say that when the world disintegrates this nature does not disintegrate; what is this nature?" He said, "The four gross elements and five clusters." The monk said, "These are still subject to disintegration; what is this nature?" He said, "The four gross elements and five clusters." Fayan said, "Are these one or two? Do they disintegrate or not? How do you understand? Try to decide."

*Dahui said, "A celestial king in a military camp."*

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Note

The four gross elements and five clusters refer to the physical and mental constituents of the human being.

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350. Master Dahui Zhen said to an assembly, Fenzhou said, “If you know the staff, the task of travel is finished.” (then he raised his staff and said) This is a staff; what is the task of travel? Even if you can see here, in the school of patchrobed monks you’re just a rank novice. If you don’t know, divine this way and that in a village of three families; even if you hit upon a determination, it’s still uncertain.

351. At Zihu’s school he set up a sign saying, “Zihu has a dog that takes people’s heads on top, takes people’s hearts in the middle, and takes people’s legs below. Hesitate and you lose your body and life.” A monk asked, “What is Zihu’s dog?” The master howled. Two monks from Linji’s congregation came to call; as soon as he raised the blind, the master said, “Look out for the dog!” The monks turned and looked; the master immediately went back to his quarters.

352. In India bells and drums were prohibited, so this was called a purge (of Buddhism). After seven days, the honorable Deva used supernatural power to go up into a tower and ring the

bell. A crowd of outsiders gathered at the bell tower, and found the door locked. Then they shouted, “Who is up in the tower ringing the bell?” Deva said, “Deva.” (‘god’) The outsiders said, “Who is the god?” He said, “I” (‘Self’). They said, “Who is Self?” He said, “You.” They said, “Who is ‘you’?” He said, “Dog.” They said, “Who is a dog?” He said, “You.” They said, “Who are ‘you’?” He said, “I.” (“Self”) They said, “Who is Self?” He said, “God.” They went back and forth like this seven times; the outsiders all realized they were defeated, and petitioned the king to ring bells and sound drums again, promoting Buddhism.

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Note

This story plays on the Hindu identification of *atman* and *Brahman*, as self and deity, or individual and universal soul.

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353. Master Huayao Ying, teaching an assembly, held forth his staff and said,

I now guarantee this matter for you—it is ultimately not in vain. The great enlightened World Honored One was a speaker of truth, who told of reality, who told it like it is, not fooling, not contradicting, not cheating you people. But can you actually believe? (shouting once,

he said) Nothing to grab on to climb up above, no self below; sky and earth both emerge from within the mind. Over ten thousand miles, the eighth and ninth months; on one body, the northwest wind. (he planted the staff)

354. Datian was asked by Shitou, “What is your mind?” He said, “What manifests speech.” Shitou then shouted him out. After ten days Datian asked, “If what I said earlier was not right, other than this what is mind?” Shitou said, “Excluding raising the eyebrows and blinking the eyes, bring forth mind.” He said, “I have no mind—how can I bring it forth?” Shitou said, “You’ve always had a mind—how can you say you’ve no mind? Negating mind is just the same as slander.” At these words Datian awakened.

*Dahui said*, “Tell me, what did Datian realize?”

355. Master Ni of White Horse Mountain was asked by a monk, “What is the pure reality body?” He said, “A frog in a well swallows the moon.” “What is the true eye of White Horse?” “Facing south gazing at the North Star.”

356. Master Baoming Yong said to an assembly, “The great square has no outside, the great circle has no inside. No inside, no outside, holy and ordinary everywhere congregate. Tiles and pebbles radiate light, the polar mountain shatters into smithereens—innumerable teachings, a hundred thousand absorptions.” (raising his staff) “It’s all here—understand? Sulu sulu, sheelee sheelee.”

He also said to an assembly, “The manifestation of reality has no form; indicating form, manifesting form, a thousand oddities, ten thousand descriptions. Appearing from this, when joyful the whole face is radiant; when angry, both brows stand up. Not ordinary, not holy, sometimes so, sometimes not—humans cannot assess, no celestials can fathom. Even if one can bring it up directly, one is still not great. If one does not turn his head when called, don’t mistakenly suspect him.”

357. A monk asked Shishuang, “Why does one not see the teacher’s face close up?” Shishuang said, “I say the whole world has never hidden it.” The monk later asked Xuefeng, “What is the meaning of ‘the whole world has never hidden it’?” Xuefeng said, “What place is not Shishuang?” The monk went

back and related this to Shishuang. Shishuang said, “What is this old fellow’s rush?” Xuansha said, “The old fellow on the mountain has stumbled past.”

358. Master Yunju Ying said to an assembly,  
Those who attain aren’t flippant, those who understand don’t act meanly. Those who know don’t bemoan, those who understand have no contempt. What comes down from heaven is poverty, what springs up from the earth is wealth. Establishing oneself within the school is easy; leaving the school within oneself is hard. Move, and you bury yourself ten thousand feet deep; don’t move, and you produce sprouts where you are. Transcend to freedom at a single saying, and you stand out alone in your time. Speech should not be much; if there’s a lot, it has no use.

359. Master Jingshan Feng said to an assembly,  
Piercing the clouds not crossing waters, crossing waters not piercing the clouds, heaven and earth—holding still, not holding still; space—letting go, not letting go. Three horizontal, four vertical; now separating, now joining. It’s not that there is no using the long to make up for the short. People, ‘cooked rice is rice’ makes a

statement, but it is hard to say. (pause) Private affairs don't get official response.

A monk asked, "What is entering concentration in a single atom?"

He said, "A snake bites a rat's tail."

"What is emerging in all atoms?"

"A turtle bites a fishing pole."

The monk said, "Then east and west are not distinguished, south and north are not distinguished."

He said, "A single lamp to light the night in front of the hall, several stalks of shining green bamboo outside the blind."

"How is it before the Buddhas appear in the world?"

"Not inscribing the wine shop's sign."

"How about after they appear in the world?"

"Giving three taps aboard a fishing boat."

360. Master Deshan Yuanming said to an assembly,  
Just study the living word, don't study the dead word. If you understand from the living word, you'll never be bogged down in doubt. "Each atom is a Buddha land, each leaf is a Buddha"—these are dead words. Raising the eyebrows, blinking the eyes, raising a

finger, standing up a whisk—these are dead words. “Mountains, rivers, and earth have no further mistake”—these are dead words.

A monk then asked, “What is the living word?”

He said “A Parsi looks up.”

The monk said, “Then I’m not mistaken.”

Yuanming thereupon hit him.

361. Master Yunmen said to a newcomer, “Master Xuefeng said, ‘Clear the way—Bodhidharma’s coming!’ I ask you what you make of this.” The monk said, “Bumping into the master’s nose.” Yunmen said, “The earth spirit explodes, taking the polar mountain, leaps to the Brahma heaven, and smacks the emperor of gods in the nose; why do you hide your body in Japan?” The monk said, “Better not fool people, master.” Yunmen said, “What about bumping into my nose?” The monk had no reply. Yunmen said, “I knew you were just a literalist.”

*Dahui said*, “Carrying a load of confusion, one exchanged it for a load of curios. Weighing it out on a scale with no markers, one handed it over to a lacquer bucket of ignorance. Now tell me, what



will the lacquer bucket of ignorance use it for? If you can utter an independent living statement, I'll admit you see Yunmen in person."

362. Master Kaixian Zhi said to a group,

Aim and instruction are provisional expressions; Buddhas and patriarchs are imposed terms. Receiving instruction and communicating mind are both vanities; seeking reality and searching for truth get even further off. If you take your self and your own mind to be ultimate, there is necessarily something else and someone else in contrast.

At that time a monk asked, "What would be right?"

He said, "'Right' means there is 'wrong.'"

"How does one gain entry?"

"When were you ever outside?"

363. Master Wuzu Yan said to an assembly,

Yesterday I went into the city and saw a puppet show. I couldn't help approaching to watch, and saw some exceptionally fine looking, others unbearably ugly. Having seen them individually moving around, walking and sitting, blue, yellow, red, and white, when I

looked closely it turned out there was someone behind a blue curtain. Unable to restrain myself, I asked the puppet master's name. He said, "Old monk, just watch—why ask for a name?" At this remark of his, I simply had no reply, no reason to give. Can anyone speak for me? Yesterday I lost my reserve over there; today I pay back the principal here.

He also said,

Baiyun doesn't know how to explain Chan. The three gates open out to both sides. There is someone moving the mechanism: two sides—east flap, west flap.

He also said,

Lingyun's verse on awakening on seeing peach blossoms says, "For thirty years I've sought out a swordsman; how many times have the trees shed their leaves and again sprouted twigs! Ever since seeing peach flowers once, right up till now I've never doubted anymore."

Xuansha said, "Right, quite right, but I daresay the elder brother is not yet through." What 'right' is he talking about? It'll take thirty more years of study to get it.

364. Master Muzhou said to a group,  
Have you people found an entry yet? If you haven't found an entry yet, you should find an entry. If you have found an entry, henceforth don't let me down.

He also said,  
I tell you very clearly yet you still don't understand, let alone if I cover up.

At that time a monk came forth and bowed and said, "I would never dare let you down."

Muzhou said, "You've already let me down."

*Dahui said*, "Tsk! Has he complicated it or not?"

365. Master Longya said to an assembly,  
People who investigate the mystery must pass beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs before they can get it. Master Dongshan said, "Only when the verbal teachings of the Patriarchs and Buddhas are like born enemies do you have a part in study." If you cannot pass beyond, you will be fooled by the Patriarchs and Buddhas.

A monk then asked, “Do the Patriarchs and Buddhas have any intention of fooling people?”

He said, “You tell me—do rivers and lakes have any intention of obstructing people?”

He also said, “Though rivers and lakes have no intention of obstructing people, because people cannot cross them at the time, rivers and lakes turn out to obstruct people, so you can’t say rivers and lakes don’t obstruct people. Although Patriarchs and Buddhas have no intention of fooling people, because people of the time cannot pass beyond, Patriarchs and Buddhas turn out fooling people; so you can’t say Patriarchs and Buddhas don’t fool people. If one can pass beyond Patriarchs and Buddhas, this person is beyond Patriarchs and Buddhas. Only then does one realize the intent of Patriarchs and Buddhas. Then one is the same as transcendent people. If one has not passed beyond, and only studies Buddhas and seeks Patriarchs, then one will never get out in a million years.”

The monk then asked, “How does one avoid being fooled by Patriarchs and Buddhas?”

He said, “The Way must simply be realized on one’s own.”

Someone asked, "What is the meaning of the founding teacher's coming from the West?"

He said, "When a stone turtle can talk, then I'll tell you."

"The turtle is speaking."

"What does it tell you?"

"What did the ancients attain so that they came to rest?"

"It's like a thief entering an empty house."

366. Master Baoci Yu was asked by a monk, "What is it like when meeting with the mind's eye?"

He said, "What does it say to you?"

"What is true seeing?"

"Nothing interposed."

"This way it's immediate seeing."

"Southern Spring is a very good place to go."

"What is the meaning of the coming from the West?"

"Last night in the middle of the night I accompanied him across the river."

"How is it when applied as the situation arises?"

"East of the ocean is a fruit tree pith."

367. Master Xiquan Xi was asked by a monk, “Buddha was delivered by Maya; whose son are you?”

He said, “Raising a red flag over the water.”

“Of the thirty-six strategies, which way is most subtle?”

“Not making the first move.”

“What if suddenly confronted?”

“It’s not hard to put your back on the ground.”

368. Elder Taiyuan Fu was managing the bath house at Xuefeng. In the course of a visit by master Xuansha to Xuefeng, Xuefeng said, “I have an old rat here—now he’s under the bath house.” Xuansha said, “Wait till I check him out for you.” As soon as he went there, he saw Elder Fu putting in water; he said, “A new arrival has come to see you.” Fu said, “We’ve already met.” Xuansha said, “In what eon have we ever met?” Fu said, “Don’t snooze.” Xuansha went back and told Xuefeng, “I’ve checked him out.” Xuefeng said, “How did you check him out?” Xuansha related the foregoing talk. Xuefeng said, “You ran into a brigand.”

*Dahui said, “One more’s been checked out.”*

369. Zhu Shiying, Edict Attendant, once asked master Zhenjing in a letter, “Buddhism is extremely subtle—how does one concentrate in the midst of daily affairs, how does one study? Please be so kind and compassionate as to point this out.”

Zhenjing replied, “The ultimate subtlety of Buddhism is non-dual, but until you have reached the subtlety there is comparative superiority and inferiority. When one reaches the subtlety, then the person who understands mind actually knows one’s own mind is ultimately originally enlightened, is actually independent, is actually at ease, actually liberated, actually pure, and in daily affairs just uses his own mind. If you can take hold of the transformations of your own mind, then use it, without asking if it’s right or wrong. If you set your mind to thinking, already you don’t know. If you don’t take on an attitude, it is naturally real in every particular, clear and sublime in every particular, in every particular like a lotus blossom to which water does not adhere. The purity of mind transcends that, so if you’re confused about your own mind you are a common creature, while if you understand your own mind you’re a Buddha. So common creatures are Buddhas, and Buddhas are common creatures—it is due to confusion or enlightenment that they are one or the other.

“Now many people who study the Way do not trust their own mind, do not understand their own mind, and are not able to use the clarity and subtlety of their own mind, and do not attain the ease and liberty of their own mind. They mistakenly seek Chan and the Way externally, mistakenly set up wonders, and mistakenly create grasping and rejection. Even if they cultivate practice, they fall into the nihilistic states of outsiders or the two vehicles. So-called practice may fall into the pit of annihilation or eternity. Those with nihilistic views extinguish the original subtle clear nature of their own mind—they just stick to voidness outside mind, and remain in meditative stillness. Those with the view of eternity do not realize the emptiness of all things, and cling to the existents of the world as realities, considering them ultimate.”

370. Master Xitang Zang was asked by a layman, “Are there heavens and hells or not?” He said, “There are.” The layman said, “Do the treasures of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha exist or not?” He said, “They do.” The layman asked many more questions, and the master answered them all in the affirmative. The layman said, “Are you not mistaken in saying so?” He said, “Have you seen an adept?” The layman said, “I have called on master Jingshan.” He



said, "What did Jingshan tell you?" The layman replied, "He said it's all nonexistent. The master said, "Do you have a wife?" The layman said, "Yes." The master asked, "Does master Jingshan have a wife?" The layman said "No." The master said, "For master Jingshan, it's right to speak of nonexistence."

371. Prime Minister Li asked a monk, "What verbal teaching does Grand Master Ma have?" The monk said, "Sometimes he says mind is Buddha, sometimes he say it is not mind, not Buddha." Li said, "It's all beyond This Side." Li instead asked master Xitang Zang, "What verbal teaching does Grand Master Ma have?" Zang called, "Prime Minister!" Li responded. Zang said, "The drums and horns directing the army have gone into action."

372. When Nanquan Puyuan came to Letan, he saw master Letan Xing facing a wall. Nanquan patted him on the back. Xing asked, "Who are you?" Nanquan said, "Puyuan." Xing said, "How are you?" Nanquan said, "As usual." Xing said, "Why are you so busy?" *Dahui said*, "He wanted to check."

373. Chan master Yan of Oxhead Mountain had been a commandant of a Soaring Hawks garrison during the Great Works era of the Sui dynasty. He always had a water-straining bag hung from his bow, and used it to draw water wherever he went. He went on expeditions with the major general, and repeatedly served meritoriously in combat. During the Martial Virtue era of the Tang dynasty, when he was forty years old, he finally sought to become a renunciant. He went into the Huangong mountains in Shu province and followed Chan master Baoyue, becoming his disciple. Once when he was in a valley he went into concentration, tranquil and undisturbed by the rising mountain waters, and the water receded of itself.

There were two men who in the past had served in the army with him, who heard Yan had gone into seclusion, and went together into the mountains to look for him. When they found him, they said to Yan, “Commandant, are you crazy? Why are you living here?” He replied, “My madness is about to clear up; your madness is just starting. Indulging in materialism, craving glory and greedy for favor, you whirl around in birth and death—how can you get yourselves out?” The two men, edified, sighed in admiration and left.

Later Yan went into Oxhead Mountain, called on Chan master Rong, and discovered the Great Matter. Rong told him, “I received the true secret from Great Master Daoxin. Whatever I had attained disappeared. Even if there were something beyond nirvana, I’d say it too is like a dream illusion. When a single mote of dust flies, it blocks out the sky; when a single mustard seed falls, it covers the earth. You have already gone beyond this perception—what more is there for me to say?”

374. The Sixth Patriarch heard a monk quote a verse by Wolun saying, “Wolun has a skill, able to cut off a hundred thoughts; when mind is not aroused in face of objects, enlightenment grows day by day.” The patriarch said, “This verse does not clarify the ground of mind; if you practice based on this, it increases bondage.”

Accordingly he presented a verse saying, “Huineng has no skills, does not cut off a hundred thoughts. Mind is aroused repeatedly in face of objects; how can enlightenment grow?”

375. A monk came to master Sushan about building a monument. Sushan asked him, “How much money are you going to give to the builder?” The monk said, “It’s entirely up to you, Master.” Sushan

said, "Are you going to give the builder three coins, two coins, or one coin? If you can answer, build the monument for me yourself." The monk had no reply.

At that time master Luoshan was living in a hermitage on Dayu Ridge. That monk went to Luoshan, who asked him where he'd come from. He said he'd come from Sushan. Luoshan asked him what sayings Sushan had uttered recently, and the monk repeated what Sushan had said. When Luoshan heard this account, he said, "Has anyone been able to tell?" The monk said no one had been able to speak. Luoshan said, "Go back to Sushan and tell him that I heard about this on Dayu and said, 'If you give the builder three coins, the master will surely never get a monument in all his lifetime. If you give the builder two coins, the master and the builder together will put forth one hand. If you give the builder one coin, you'll burden the builder and his eyebrows and whiskers will fall out.'" The monk then went back and quoted this to Sushan. Hearing this statement, Luoshan bowed ceremoniously toward Dayu Ridge and said in praise, "I thought there was no one; on Dayu there is an ancient Buddha radiating light reaching all the way here." Then he told the monk, "Go to Dayu and say he's like a lotus blossom in winter." The

monk then took this statement to Luoshan. Luoshan said, "Turtle hair has already grown several yards."

376. Long ago a certain monk went to see Cuiyan, but he was absent at the time. So the monk saw the superintendent. The superintendent asked if he'd visited the master hitherto; he said he hadn't. The superintendent then pointed to a dog and said, "If you want to see the master, eminent, just bow to this dog." The monk was speechless. Later Cuiyan returned and heard about this. He said, "How would one avoid being speechless like this?" Yunmen said, "If you want to observe the teacher, first observe the disciple." *Dahui said*, "At that time, if I were this monk I'd have bowed to the dog."

377. The eighteenth patriarch Jayashata went to the country of Visha. He met the [future] nineteenth patriarch Kumarata, who asked, "What is this group?" The patriarch said, "Buddhist disciples." When he heard the epithet Buddha, he got scared and immediately shut his door. After a while the patriarch knocked on the door. He said, "No one's home." The patriarch said, "Who is

answering?” Hearing his words as unusual, he finally opened the door.

Fenyang Zhao said in his stead, “It just so happens I’ve forgotten.”

378. Master Sushan Ren held a wooden snake; a monk asked, “What is that in your hand?” Sushan held it up and said, “A daughter of the Cao family.”

“What is the master’s family style?”

“A foot-and-a-half turban.”

“What is a foot-and-a-half turban?”

“Inside a circle can’t be grasped.”

He also cited a saying of Xiangyan and asked Jingqing, “‘Agreement can’t be total’—how do you understand?” Jingqing said, “It totally depends on agreement.” Sushan said, “What about ‘agreement can’t be total’?” Jingqing said, “In this there is no way of agreement.” Sushan said, “You’ve finally satisfied me.”

379. When Cloth Robe Zun came to the foot of Mt. Shao, he met master Shaoshan Pu. Zun asked, “Which way is the road up Mt. Shao?” Shaoshan pointed it out and said, “Oh, it goes into that deep green darkness.” Zun went up and grabbed him and said, “Long

have I heard of Shaoshan; isn't that you?" He said, "Yes, indeed, I am; what's your business?" Zun said, "I would pose a question; will you answer?" Shaoshan said, "Considering that you aren't a master archer, how will you shoot a general?" Zun said, "A phoenix goes right into the misty sky; who's afraid of a wild sparrow in the woods?" Shashan said, "You may go ahead and beat the drum drawn in the hallway; try to set forth your way for me." Zun said, "A single statement goes beyond a thousand sages; the vines on the pines are not on the same level as the moon." Shaoshan said, "Even if you are beyond the prehistoric Buddha, you're still half a month's journey behind me." Zun said, "Where is my fault?" Shaoshan said, "Exceptional sayings, people of the time know to exist." Zun said, "So then real jade is distinct in the mud, not eliminating the dust of myriad workings." Shaoshan said, "You're exercising skills in vain at the workshop of a master craftsman." Zun said, "I am just thus; how about you?" Shaoshan said, "An immortal girl tosses a shuttlecock at night, weaving brocade in the home to the west." Zun said, "Isn't this your way?" Shaoshan said, "When a farmer makes a jade water-clock, it's not the work of a specialist." Zun said, "This is still literary talk—what is your way?" Shaoshan said, "Lying across the universe, who is it that shows up?"

Shaoshan also said, “You have a spirit soaring to the sky, I have strategy going into the earth. You swallow the ocean, I carry the polar mountain. You come on wielding a sword, I await you thrusting a spear. Hurry up and tell me the one road beyond.” Zun said, “A clear mirror is on its stand—please take a look.” Shaoshan said, “I won’t look.” Zun said, “Why not?” Shaoshan said, “In shallow water there are no fish; it’s useless effort to let down a hook.” Zun had nothing to say. Shaoshan then hit him.

*Dahui said*, “They’d make Muzhou laugh his head off.”

380. Master Langya Jiao said to an assembly,  
A monk asked Mazu, “What is Buddha?” He said, “Mind is Buddha.”  
The monk asked, “What is the Way?” He said, “Not minding is the Way.”  
The monk asked, “How far apart are Buddha and the Way?”  
He said, “Buddha is like an open hand, the Way is like a closed fist.”  
That man of old was not without expedients, but I too have a bit here. If no one buys, I’ll sell myself and buy myself. What is Buddha? There are a multitude of auspicious herbs in front of the crag. What is the Way? There are plenty of spiritual sprouts below the valley stream. How far apart are Buddha and the Way? Several



bits of white clouds enshroud an ancient temple; a single stream of aquamarine water encircles the green mountain.

He also said to an assembly,

The former Liangshan said, “Those who come from the South, I give thirty blows; those who come from the North, I give thirty blows.

Even so, this does not amount to the fundamental vehicle.”

Liangshan’s fine piece of real gold he turns into hard iron to sell off. I do not concur. Those who come from the South I give thirty blows, those who come from the North I give thirty blows; let all the patchrobed monks on earth detract.

381. Master Letan Jun said to an assembly,

“If you want to know the meaning of Buddha nature, observe time and season, causes and conditions.” As I recall, in olden times a monk asked Yunmen, “What is the song of Yunmen?” Yunmen said, “The twenty-fifth day of the last month of the year.” The monk asked, “How about the one who sings it?” Yunmen said, “Easygoing for the moment.” Chan worthies, is this not time and season? How do you understand Yunmen’s meaning? Where the clear sound of the song of Yunmen penetrates, it encompasses the ten directions. Those

who join in can hardly match; it is not the same as the six notes.

Therefore it is said, “When the family to the east sings songs, the family to the west can’t sit silent.” For me today a fleeting opportunity is hard to catch up with; I’ll sing a round to offer the community—listen clearly, listen clearly. (then, drawing out his voice, he sang) La la li li lila. It’s a cold day; for now I’ll say half—go back to the hall and have tea.

Also, on a day when the earth spirits are celebrated after the autumn equinox, he said to the assembly, Myriad kinds of setups do not compare to normalcy, which doesn’t startle people and is always as usual. It is like when the autumn wind comes it has no intention of chilling people, but people naturally feel chilly. Sweet melon is sweet to the stem, bitter gourd is bitter to the root. This morning everyone in the land pays respect to the shrine god and shrine goddess. Only the king of the entire year is totally rough in the chill.

382. The ‘Ground-Hitting Monk’ got the essence from Mazu. He concealed his name. Whenever a student posed a question, he’d just hit the ground with a stick; in his time he was called the Ground-

Hitting Monk. One day a monk hid his stick and asked him a question; he turned around looking for his stick, but didn't see it. He said, "If it were here, I'd be able to apply a stroke of the stick."

Someone asked one of his disciples what he meant when he just hit the ground whenever he was asked a question. His disciple immediately took a piece of kindling out of the stove and tossed it in the pot.

*Dahui said*, "When an adopted son is not as good as his father, the family declines in a single generation."

383. Gushan asked master Xiuqi, "Sound and form are pure reality—what is the Way?" Xiuqi said, "Why are you speaking arbitrarily?" Gushan crossed from east to west and stood there. Xiuqi said, "If you're not thus, it's a disaster." Gushan then crossed over to the east. Xiuqi then got off the Chan seat; just when he had gone one or two steps, Gushan grabbed and held him and said, "Sound and form are pure reality—what about this fact?" Xiuqi slapped him. Gushan said, "In ten years you won't even have anyone to pour tea, even if you want." Xiuqi said, "Why would I want old Gushan?" Gushan laughed aloud three times.

384. A monk came to call on master Hualin; just as he unrolled his seat cloth, Hualin said, "Slowly, slowly." The monk said, "What do you see?" Hualin said, "It would be a pity if you bumped into the bell tower." The monk became enlightened from this.

385. Master Huangbo Hui called on master Sushan Ren. When he first arrived, he found Sushan sitting in the teaching hall accepting inquiries. Hui first looked over the great assembly, then asked, "How is it when leaving instantly?" Sushan said, "Space is full; how will you leave?" He said, "If space is full, it's better not to leave." Sushan then stopped. Hui left the hall and called on the chief monk. The chief monk said, "I just watched you replying to the master; what you said was quite extraordinary." Hui said, "I just blurted it out; really it just happened that way. Please be so kind and compassionate as to instruct me in my ignorant confusion." The chief monk said, "In an instant is there any hesitation?" Hui was greatly enlightened at these words.

386. When master Panshan was in the community of Great Master Ma, he went out into the market place to preach; he happened to see a customer buying pork saying to the butcher, "Cut a pound of the

fine stuff for me.” The butcher put down his cleaver, saluted, and said, “Inspector, which is not fine?” Panshan had an insight from this. Later, one day he went out and saw a funeral procession; a cantor was ringing a bell and saying, “The crimson disc surely sinks in the west—where will the spirit go?” The pious son inside the curtains cried, “Alas, alas!” Panshan then became greatly enlightened. He went back dancing, and ancestor Ma confirmed his realization. When Panshan was about to pass away, he said to the community, “Can anyone depict my likeness?” Some of the group drew portraits of him and presented them, but none were found suitable. Then Puhua came forth and said, “I can depict the master’s true likeness.” Panshan said, “Show me.” Puhua did a somersault and left. Panshan said, “Where will this little pisser get a grip on craziness?”

387. In Jiashan’s community there was a monk who went to Shishuang; as soon as he stepped across the threshold he said, “How are you?” Shishuang said, “Not necessary, Professor.” The monk said, “If so, then good-bye.” That monk also went to Yantou’s place, and as before said, “How are you?” Yantou made a sighing sound. The monk said, “If so, then good-bye.” As the monk turned

around, Yantou sad, "Though this one is young, still he can stay focused." The monk returned and related this to Jiashan. Jiashan went up in the hall and said, "Let the monk who went to Yantou and Shishuang earlier come forth and cite it factually." When the monk had finished his recital, Jiashan said, "Everyone, do you understand?" No one in the community had a reply. Jiashan said, "If no one can say, I won't spare my eyebrows but go ahead and say. Though Shishuang has the sword that kills, still he lacks the life-giving sword. Yantou also has the killing sword, and he has the life-giving sword as well."

*Dahui said*, "Don't speak of a dream in front of the ignorant."

388. Master Wuzu Fayan said to an assembly,  
If you solely go thus, the road is cut off and the people are few; if you solely come thus, you turn against sages of the past. If you leave these two roads, patriarchs and Buddhas cannot get near. Even if you are born the same and die the same as me, that still doesn't amount to normality. Why? A phoenix is not an ordinary bird; it won't roost on any but a phoenix tree.

He also said to an assembly,

So, so—a shrimp cannot leap out of a basket. Not so, not so—  
playing at cleverness turns out clumsy. Soft as iron, hard as mud—  
twelve pairs of adamantine eyes. In the hands of a patchrobed  
monk, the balance lowers; there is a price, with no bargaining. How  
does one with no nostrils smell fragrance?

A monk asked, “What is the business of the Linji lineage?”

He said, “A criminal hears thunder.”

“What is the business of the Yunmen lineage?”

“A crimson flag flashing.”

“What is the business of the Cao Dong lineage?”

“Sending a letter, it doesn’t get home.”

“What is the business of the Gui Yang lineage?”

“A broken sign lies across an ancient road.”

The monk bowed. Wuzu said, “Why didn’t you ask about the  
business of the Fayan lineage?”

The monk said, “I leave that to you, master.”

Wuzu said, “A watchman stays up at night.”

389. Master Changqing Leng called on Lingyun. Leng asked, “What  
is the great meaning of Buddhism?” Lingyun said, “Before the

business of the ass has passed, the business of the horse comes up.” Leng went back and forth from Xuefeng to Xuansha for twenty years this way but still hadn’t understood this matter. One day as he rolled up a blind he was suddenly greatly enlightened. Thereupon he said in verse, “Wonderful, wonderful—rolling up a blind, I see the whole world. If anyone asks what religion I understand, I’ll pick up a whisk and whack him the moment he opens his mouth.” Xuefeng quoted this to Xuansha and said, “This guy has penetrated.” Xuansha said, “Not yet—this is an expression of intellectual perception; I’ll have to test him further.” In the evening when the monks came up to ask questions, Xuefeng said to Leng, “Xuansha still doesn’t approve of you; if you really have true enlightenment, bring it up before the assembly. Leng said in another verse, “In myriad forms, the body revealed alone—only when people spontaneously acknowledge it is familiar. In the past I mistakenly sought on the road—as I view it today, it’s ice within fire.” Xuefeng turned to Xuansha and said, “This can’t be another expression of intellectual perception.”

Later he dwelt at Changqing. In his community there was a superintendent in charge of buckets who was always talking to the monks. One day Leng went into the dormitory and saw him; he



asked, "What are you doing blabbering every day?" The superintendent said, "A day without working is a day without eating." Leng said, "Then draw a bow and shoot an arrow." He said, "I'm just waiting for the garrison commander to come." Leng said, "After the garrison commander has come, then what?" He said, "Wait for his tendons and bones to be strewn over the ground and his eyeballs to pop out." Leng then left.

390. Meditation master Mengshan Ming followed Workman Lu to the Dayu Ridge. When the workman saw Ming come, he placed the robe and bowl on a rock and said, "This robe represents faith—is it worth fighting over? Go ahead and take it." Ming tried to pick it up but it felt heavy as a mountain and wouldn't budge. Stymied and frightened, he said, "I came seeking the Dharma, not the robe. Please teach me." The patriarch said, "Not thinking of good, not thinking of evil, at precisely such a time what is your original face?" Ming was thereupon greatly enlightened. His whole body running with sweat, he tearfully bowed and asked, "Outside of the foregoing esoteric saying's esoteric meaning, is there any further point?" The patriarch said, "What I said to you just now is not esoteric; if you look back into your own face, the secret is in you." Ming said, "Though I

went along with the community at Huangmei, I really didn't see into my own face. Now that I've had a way in shown to me, I'm like someone drinking water who knows for himself if it's cool or warm. Now you are my teacher." The patriarch said, "If you are thus, you and I both had Huangmei as a teacher. Keep it well yourself."

391. A monk asked master Duofu, "What is the bamboo grove of Duofu like?" He said, "One or two canes slanted." The monk said, "I don't understand." He said, "Four or five canes curved."

*Dahui said*, "Granted your 'one or two canes slanted, four or five canes curved,' give me back the bamboo grove of Duofu. And how can you understand verbally?"

392. A monk asked master Shoushan Nian, "How is it when myriad machinations die out?" He said, "Stagnant water does not contain a dragon." The monk said, "How about after activation?" Shoushan said, "The blue-eyed foreign monk smiles and nods." The monk asked, "What is the road of right practice?" Shoushan said, "A pauper doesn't eat a variety of foods." The monk said, "He lets go and returns home." Shoushan said, "Never smelled fragrance or odor." The monk asked, "What is talk transcending Buddhas and

going beyond patriarchs?” Shoushan said, “The wind and frost north of the border are intense; the snow south of the river isn’t cold.” The monk asked, “I’ve heard there’s an old saying ‘Ever since seeing peach blossoms, I’ve never had a doubt’—what does this mean?” Shoushan said, “Two people carry a three-foot staff.” The monk said, “Am I allowed to carry it?” Shoushan said, “Put it down.” The monk asked, “What is the substance of reality as such?” Shoushan said, “Knocking brick, hitting tile.” The monk asked, “What does this mean?” Shoushan said, “Avoid stepping on it.” The monk asked, “What is the student’s original body?” Shoushan said, “Not leading an ox into town.”

393. Master Zhenjing said to an assembly

In the school of Dongshan you go when you need to go, sit when you need to sit; shitting in a bowl, puking in a pitcher; cultivating practice attached to dogma is like an ox pulling a millstone.

He also said to an assembly,

Ascetic Peak is covered with moss; Pen-Toss Peak is wrapped in vines. At Arhat Cloister three workers are ordained in a year; in Guizong monastery tea is taken after inquiries.

A monk asked, "What is Buddha?" The teacher laughed out loud. The monk said, "What's there to laugh about?" The teacher said, "I'm laughing at you conceiving interpretation pursuant to words." The monk said, "I happen to have lost the advantage." The teacher said loudly, "Don't bow." The monk then went back to the group. The teacher laughed again and said, "You're conceiving interpretation pursuant to words."

394. When master Mingzhao came to Elder Tan's place in Quan province, Tan said, "For intensive study, one should go where there is even one person, and should go where there is even half a person." Mingzhao then asked, "I don't ask about where there is one person; what about where there is half a person?" Tan had nothing to say. Subsequently he sent a novice to ask; Mingzhao said, "Do you want to know where half a person is? It's just a fellow playing with a mud ball."

395. When two senior monks, Shen and Ming, came to the Huai River, they saw someone pulling in a net; there was a fish that got through and out. Shen said, "Brother Ming—how clever

—it's just like a patchrobed monk!" Ming said, "Even so, how is this as good as not getting snared in the net in the first place?"

Shen said, "Brother Ming, you still lack enlightenment." In the middle of the night Ming finally understood.

*Dahui said*, "As for what elder Ming understood, was it what was in the net or what got out of the net?"

396. Yantou took leave of Deshan along with Xuefeng and Jinshan. Deshan asked, "Where are you going?" Yantou said, "Temporarily leaving you to go down off the mountain." Deshan said, "What about after that?" Yantou said, "I won't forget you." Deshan said, "Based on what do you say this?" Yantou said, "Haven't you heard the saying that to have knowledge equal to the teacher diminishes the teacher's virtue by half; only when knowledge surpasses the teacher is one qualified for transmission?" Deshan said, "So it is. So it is. Keep it well yourself."

With this, the three men took leave. When they reached Li province, Jinshan stayed there. The other two were stopped by snow when they came to Tortoise Mountain. Yantou just slept every day, while Xuefeng just sat in meditation. Xuefeng called to Yantou, "Brother, brother! You're just sleeping." Yantou yelled at him, "Get

some sleep! Seated every day, you're like a village earth spirit; some day you'll charm other people's sons and daughters." Xuefeng pointed to his chest and said, "I'm not yet at peace here; I don't dare fool myself." Yantou said, "I had thought you'd someday build a grass hut atop a solitary peak and broadcast the great teaching, but still you talk like this. If you're really like this, tell me each of your insights." Xuefeng said, "I first went to Zhezhong and met master Yanguan; he brought up the meanings of form and emptiness, and I got an entry." Yantou said, "Avoid bringing it up for thirty years hence." Xuefeng said, "Also when I read the verse of master Dongshan on realizing the Way on crossing water, I got an insight." Yantou said, "This way you still wouldn't be able to thoroughly save yourself." Xuefeng said, "I also asked Deshan if I have a part in the business of the immemorial school of the source; Deshan hit me and said, 'What are you saying?' At this point I opened up like the bottom falling out of a bucket. Yantou shouted and said, "Haven't you heard it said that what comes in through the gate is not the family treasure?" Xuefeng said, "What would be right?" Yantou said, "Later on, if you want to broadcast the great teaching, let every particular flow from your own chest, covering heaven and earth for me." At these words Xuefeng was greatly enlightened. He jumped

down, prostrated himself, then rose and shouted repeatedly, “Elder brother, today on Tortoise Mountain I’ve finally attained the Way! Today on Tortoise Mountain I’ve finally attained the Way!”

397. When National Teacher Shao was still a householder he asked Longya, “How is it when the sky cannot cover you and the earth cannot support you?” Longya said, “A wayfarer ought to be like this.” Shao asked seventeen times. Longya said, “Wayfarer, if I told you, afterward you’d revile me.” Later, when Shao was dwelling on the Mastering Mysteries peak of Mt. Tiantai, he suddenly had an insight into this previous conversation as he was taking a bath. He then ceremoniously lit incense and bowed toward Longya at a distance and said “If he had explained it all to me at that time, today I would surely revile him.”

*Dahui said*, “Right now you’re doing it quite a bit.”

398. When meditation master Da bowed to the sixth patriarch, his head did not touch the ground. The patriarch scolded him, “How is bowing without touching the ground as good as not bowing at all? There must be something in your mind—what have you been practicing?” He said, “I recite the Lotus of Truth scripture; I’ve

already done it three thousand times.” The patriarch said, “If you recite it ten thousand times and get the meaning of the scripture, and yet don’t consider that excellent, then you go along with me. Now you are taking pride in this practice, totally unaware of your error. Listen to my verse:

*Bowing is basically to break the flagstaff of pride—*

*Why should your head not go to the ground?*

*When you are egotistic, fault then comes to be,*

*Nullifying merit incomparably.”*

The patriarch also said, “What is your name?” He said, “Fada (‘Attainment of Dharma’).” The patriarch said, “Your name means Attainment of Dharma—when have you ever attained the Dharma?”

He again uttered a verse, saying

*You’re now named Attainment of Dharma;*

*You recite diligently, never ceasing.*

*Vain repetition just follows sound;*

*When clarifying mind one is called a bodhisattva.*

*You now have a chance; that’s why I’m talking to you.*

*Just believe Buddha has no words;*

*Lotuses will spring from your mouth.*



When Fada heard the verses, he repented of his error and said, “From now on I will humbly respect everyone. I only pray you will be so kind as to briefly explain the principles in the scripture.” The patriarch said, “You recite this scripture—what do you take to be its aim?” Fada said, “I am stupid; all along I’ve just recited it literally; how would I know its aim?” The patriarch said, “Recite it for me, and I’ll explain it to you.” Fada then recited the scripture out loud; when he came to the chapter on expedients, the patriarch said, “Stop—this scripture basically has causal emergence in the world as its aim. Even if it tells many sorts of similes, none go beyond this. What is the cause? Just one great matter. The one great matter is the knowledge and vision of Buddhas. Be careful not to misinterpret the meaning of the scripture. Where you see it speaking of demonstration and realization, since it is the knowledge and vision of Buddhas, you think you have no part in it—if you interpret it this way, that is slandering the scripture and destroying the Buddhas. Since they are Buddhas, they already have knowledge and vision—what would be the need to reveal it any more? Now you should trust that the knowledge and vision of Buddhas is just your own mind—there is no other entity. It is because all sentient beings shroud their light themselves, greedy for sense objects, getting involved outwardly and

agitated inwardly, accepting compulsion, that trouble Buddhas to rise from concentration and take the trouble to encourage them to stop; don't seek outside, and you are no different from Buddhas—so this is called revealing the knowledge and vision of Buddhas. You just labor to keep reciting, considering this a meritorious exercise—how is that different from a long-haired ox admiring its tail?”

Fada said, “Then should I just understand the meaning and not trouble to recite the scripture?” The patriarch said, “What’s wrong with the scripture? What would prevent you from reciting it? It’s just that delusion and enlightenment are in the individual; loss and gain depend on you. Listen to my verse:

*When the mind is deluded, the Lotus of Truth repeats;  
When the mind is enlightened, it repeats the Lotus of Truth.  
If you recite for a long time without understanding yourself,  
You become an enemy of the meaning without thoughts;  
When recitation is correct, with thoughts recitation becomes wrong.  
When neither existence nor nonexistence are thought up,  
You always ride the white ox cart.”*

Fada, having heard this verse, went on to declare, “The scripture says that even if the great listeners, and even the bodhisattvas, all used all their thinking to assess it, they still could

not fathom of the knowledge of Buddhas. Now you would have ordinary people just understand their own minds, and call this the knowledge and vision of Buddhas; one who does not have superior faculties will still not avoid doubt or denial. Now, the scripture speaks of an ox cart among three carts as well as a white ox cart—how are they distinguished? Please explain further.”

The patriarch said, “The meaning of the scripture is clear; you miss it by yourself. As for the fact that the people of the three vehicles cannot fathom Buddhas’ knowledge, the trouble is in trying to measure. Even if they use all their thinking collectively to try to figure it out, they get further and further away. Buddhas basically teach for ordinary people, not for Buddhas. Those who will not believe this principle are allowed to leave the audience; what they don’t realize is that they are sitting in the white ox cart yet still seek the three carts outside the door. Indeed the text of the scripture clearly tells you there is no second, and no third; why don’t you see that the three carts are artificial, for the past, so the one vehicle is real, for the present. So it just teaches you to leave the artificial and resort to the real. After resorting to the real, even the real has no name. You should know that all the valuable assets belong to you; once you get to use them, you don’t conceive of father, and don’t

conceive of son, and have no conception of use. This is called holding the Lotus scripture, never letting go from age to age, always keeping it in mind day and night.”

Having been thus instructed, Fada jumped for joy and celebrated with a verse saying,

*Three thousand recitals of the scripture*

*Have disappeared at one statement from Caoqi.*

*As long as one hasn't understand the meaning of appearance in the world,*

*How can one stop the madness of multiple lifetimes?*

*The goat, deer, and ox carts are provisional setups;*

*Beginning, middle, and final are expedient propositions.*

*Who knows that inside the burning house*

*Has been the king of Dharma all along?*

The patriarch said, “From now on you can finally be called a monk who recites the scripture.”

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#### Notes

The goat, deer, and ox carts represent the Buddhist vehicles of hearers, who strive for nirvana, pratyekabuddhas, who enlighten themselves, and bodhisattvas, who strive for universal enlightenment. The symbolism comes from a story in the Lotus sutra: a man finds his house is on fire, and urges his children to get out. The children, however, preoccupied with their playthings, don't listen. As an expedient, the man tells them he has

carts outside for them; because he knows they have different inclinations, he offers three kinds of carts to suit each one. When they finally leave the burning house, they find there is only one kind of cart, here referred to as the white ox cart, symbolizing the Ekayana or One Vehicle, the way to the knowledge and vision of Buddhas.

The image of the father and son and valuable assets is also from the Lotus sutra. A rich man's son leaves home and falls into destitution. After long wandering, he happens to come to the estate of his father, now in another land. He doesn't recognize his father, but his father recognizes him; in disguise, the father approaches his long-lost son and offers him a job cleaning a cess pit on the estate. After twenty years of diligent labor, the son is given the position of steward, yet maintains humility and returns to his bed of straw each night. Finally, on the father's death bed, he reveals that the steward is actually his son, and bequeaths his entire fortune to him. This story symbolizes progression from delusion to purification to enlightened knowledge.

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399. Master Xuansha asked Xuefeng, "Now I am totally functional—how about you?" Xuefeng tossed out three wooden balls. Xuansha then made a gesture of chopping down a signpost. Xuefeng said, "You can only be like this if you were personally on Spiritual Peak." Xuansha said, "It's only my business."

*Dahui said, "I only allow the old foreigner's knowledge; I don't allow the old foreigner's understanding."*

In Chan mythology, Spiritual Peak was where the Buddha passed on to Kasyapa the “special transmission outside doctrine” identified with Chan.

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400. Jianyuan accompanied Daowu to a funeral. Jianyuan patted the coffin and said, “Alive? Dead?” Daowu said, “I won’t say alive, and I won’t say dead.” Jianyuan said, “Why won’t you say?” Daowu said, “I won’t say, I won’t say.” Halfway back, Jianyuan said, “Tell me right away, teacher; if you don’t say, I’ll hit you.” Daowu said, “Hit me if you will, but I won’t say.” Jianyuan then hit him. When they got back to the monastery, Daowu said, “You’d better leave here—you’ll be inconvenienced if the superintendent finds out.” Jianyuan went to Shishuang, where he cited the foregoing story and asked for help. Shishuang said, “I won’t say alive, and I won’t say dead.” Jianyuan said, “Why won’t you say?” Shishuang said, “I won’t say, I won’t say.” With this, Jianyuan had an insight. After Daowu passed away, Jianyuan took a hoe and crossed the teaching hall west to east and east to west. Shishuang said, “What are you doing?” Jianyuan said, “I’m looking for the sacred relics of the late teacher.” Shishuang said, “The enormous waves are huge; the white-capped billows flood the sky—what sacred relics of the late teacher are you looking for?” Jianyuan said, “Just right for applying effort.” Shishuang said, “Here

even a needle won't go in—what effort will you apply?" Jianyuan left with the hoe over his shoulder.

Master Baoning Yong versified,

*Waiting by the door all day, leaning on the building;*

*How many times has the clear mirror reflected combing the head?*

*Once you've been in the service of a celebrity,*

*You can be shameless in front of others.*

401. Master Huitang said to an assembly,  
Not being companion to myriad things is absorption in  
noncontention. When you go right on this way, unavoidably when  
the strings of a musical instrument are too tight, the sound is  
shortened. If you can scatter pearls inside a violet gauze curtain,  
you will not necessarily bring on a bad result from a good cause.

He also said to an assembly,

Where there is impediment is not a wall; where there is free passage  
is not empty space. If you can understand this way, mind and matter  
are fundamentally one. The whisk is matter—what is mind? As  
soon as a spiritually sharp fellow hears it brought up, seeing horns  
on the other side of a fence he already knows it's an ox. If you

hesitate any more thinking, white clouds extend for a thousand miles, ten thousand miles.

402. Master Lingyun was asked by Changsheng, “How is it when primordial chaos is not yet differentiated?” He said “The exposed pillars get pregnant.” Changsheng said, “How about after differentiation?” Lingyun said, “Like a fleck of cloud dotting the clear sky.” Changsheng said, “But is the clear sky subject to being dotted?” Lingyun didn’t reply. Changsheng said, “Then life does not come about.” Again Lingyun didn’t reply. Changsheng said, “How is it when absolutely clear and spotless?” Lingyun said, “This is still the real eternal flowing.” Changsheng said, “What is the real eternal flowing like?” Lingyun said, “Like a mirror always being clear.” Changsheng said, “Is there anything beyond?” Lingyun said, “There is.” Changsheng said, “What is beyond?” Lingyun said, “Break the mirror and I’ll meet with you.”

403. Master Yunmen once said, “The lamp is yourself. Take a bowl and eat food; the food is not yourself.” A monk then asked, “How about when the food is oneself?” Yunmen said, “This wild fox spirit, a fellow in a three-family village.” He also said, “Come on, come on



—you’re not saying food is yourself.” He said, “I am.” Yunmen said, “You’ll see in a dream in the year of the ass, a fellow in a three-family village.”

*Dahui said*, “Using his own mind to the full, he laughs off another person’s mouth.”

404. Shimen Cong said to an assembly,  
If you can say the first statement, you burst forth from within a rock.  
If you can say the second statement, you press on ahead. If you can  
say the third statement, you cannot even save yourself.

He also said to an assembly,  
Five white cats have sharp claws; when you raise them, there are no  
pests running around the house. Clearly climbing trees is a way of  
safety; avoid last words accepting forgetting life. What is an  
expression of forgetting life? Don’t misquote.

A monk entered the room and said, “At precisely ‘such’ a time, is  
there still a teacher?” Shimen said, “The lamp shines all night—what  
place is not illumined?” The monk said, “What is the ultimate  
concern?” He said, “Tomorrow is the Cold Food holiday.”

“What is the meaning of a burr on a rapids?”

“When the roof is wrecked, you see the sky.”

“What is the meaning of seeing the sky when the roof is wrecked?”

“All the way above and below.”

405. Baoci, hearing the coo of a pigeon, asked a monk, “What is that sound?” He said, “A pigeon.” Baoci said, “If you want to avoid committing a crime with immediate consequences, don’t slander the Realized One’s wheel of true teaching.”

406. Master Dongshan Chu’s verse on an ox says,

Tending an ox by myself,

It has no corral to go out and in.

Released into the fragrant grasses

Its color can then show.

Going in the morning, no one chases it;

Returning in the evening, no one calls it.

Its strength cannot be matched;

It has horns, but no tether.

Without being driven, it goes free.

When driven, it goes along;

There are no ruined fields in the land.

These are all developments of the ox.

If anyone looks for it,

It runs to the horizon.

Led back, It resembles you all;

I ask you—do you see or not?

407. Master Yunfeng Yue said to an assembly,  
In the teachings it says, “This perception and objects are fundamentally the body of sublime pure light of enlightenment.” It also says, “Forests, trees, lakes, and wetlands all broadcast the sound of Dharma. Interlacing lights weave together like a network of jewel threads.” Wondrous, Chan worthies—this kind of talk of ancient sages is called turning to objects of sense to open up expedients indirectly. So it says, “It is like my pressing the symbol of the ocean with my finger, radiating light. The moment you arouse your mind, toil over sense objects arises first.” Understand? The whisk is temporarily used to direct the world; the staff is provisionally for people who respond. (He gave a whack with the whisk)

He also said to an assembly,

The basis of sentient beings rests on the ocean of knowledge as its source. The stream of conscious creatures has the whole body of reality as its substance. It’s just that knowledge is blocked when feelings occur and substance differs when conceptions change.

When you arrive at the basis feelings disappear, and when you know the mind substance is collective. Do you understand? The ancient Buddhas and exposed pillars merge; the Buddha shrine and celestial kings bump heads. If you don't understand, the single and the multiple cancel each other.

408. Layman Pang asked Mazu, "Without obscuring the original human, please set your eye on high." Mazu looked straight down. The layman said, "One kind of stringless lute—what master can play it beautifully?" Mazu looked straight up. The layman then bowed. Mazu went back to his room. The layman followed him in and said, "Playing at being clever turns out clumsy."

409. Master Yaoshan said to an assembly, The ancestral teachers only taught preservation; if greed or hostility arise, it is imperative to ward them off and not let them touch you. If you want to know how to do this, you must bear up like dead wood or stone. There really are no ramifications to attain. Even so, you still must see for yourself. Don't eliminate speech entirely. I am not speaking these words to you to reveal the unspoken. That originally has no features such as ears or eyes.

At that time a monk asked, “How is it that there are six courses of mundane existence?” The teacher said, “Although I am within this circle, I am basically not affected.”

Someone asked, “How about when one does not comprehend the afflictions in one’s person?” The teacher said, “What are afflictions like? I want you to consider. There is even a type who just memorize words on paper; most are confused by scriptures and treatises. I have never read the books of scriptures and treatises. You have fluctuating minds simply because you are confused by things and go through changes, at a loss, inwardly unstable. Even before you have learned a single saying or half an expression, a scripture or a treatise, already you talk this way about ‘enlightenment,’ ‘nirvana,’ the mundane and the transmundane; if you understand this way, then this is birth and death. If you are not bound by this gain and loss, then there is no birth and death. You see teachers of rules talking about stuff like ‘naihsargika’ and ‘dukkata’—this above all is the root of birth and death. Even so, when you examine birth and death thoroughly, it cannot be grasped. From the Buddhas above to insects below, all have these differences

of excellence and inferiority, good and bad, big and small. If it doesn't come from outside, where is there some idler digging hells to await you? Do you want to know existence in hell? It is boiling and broiling right now. Do you want to know existence as a hungry ghost? It is presently being more false than true, so people can't trust you. Do you want to know existence as an animal? It is presently disregarding justice and humanity and not distinguishing friend from stranger—isn't this wearing fur and horns, being butchered and hung upside down? Do you want to know humanity and divinity? It is present pure conduct. You should guard against falling into these states. First of all, don't abandon this. This is not easily attained: you must stand atop the peak of the highest mountain and walk on the bottom of the deepest ocean. This is not easy to practice, but only then will you have some accord. Those who come forth now are all people with many issues. I'm looking for a simpleton but cannot find one. Don't just memorize sayings in books and make them out to be your own perception and knowledge, looking with contempt upon those who don't understand—people like this are all incorrigible heretics. This mentality simply doesn't hit the mark—you must examine carefully and understand thoroughly. This kind of talk is still within the bounds of the world.

Don't waste your lives under a patch robe. At this point there is even more subtlety and detail. Don't consider it idle, for you should know it. Take care."



410. A monk asked master Cuiyan, “Whenever there are verbal statements, they’re all defilement; what is the actuality beyond?” He said, “Whenever there are verbal statements, they’re all defilement.” “When the ancients raised a gavel or stood up a whisk, what was the meaning?”

“A false teaching is unsupportable.”

“Why couldn’t Sengyao depict Mister Zhi’s true likeness?”

“How could it be matched absolutely?”

“In dangerous bad paths, what serves as a bridge?”

“Yaoshan told of it repeatedly.”

411. Master Guanghui Zhen was asked by a monk, “What is the realm of Guanghui?” He said, “In front of a mountain temple, after providing for a celebration.”

“What is the master’s family style?”

“A spade holding a hoe.”

412. One day Fengxue asked gardener Zhen, “At the time of the persecution of Buddhism, where did the good spirits protecting the

Dharma go?” He said, “They were always in the streets, but no one saw them.” Fengxue said, “You have penetrated.”

*Dahui said*, “You tell me—has Fengxue himself penetrated or not?”

413. Master Huanglong Ji was asked by a monk, “What is your family way?”

He said, “The crystal bowl has no bottom.”

“What is the sword of a ruler?”

“It does not wound myriad species.”

“How about the one who carries it?”

“Blood sprays the heavens.”

“A fine ‘not wounding myriad species’!”

Ji hit him.

“A hair engulfing an ocean and a mustard seed containing a mountain is not the proper business of a student; what is the proper business of a student?”

“Stamping a prognostication chart and holding it up to view in the marketplace.”

“I come to you urgently requesting the teacher to communicate some information.”

“Fire burns the undergarment belt.”

“What is someone with great doubt like?”

“Sitting face to face in a circle, a bow falls into a wine cup.”

“What about someone who doesn’t doubt?”

“Sitting again in a circle, a bow falls into a wine cup.”

“How is it when the wind is quiet and the waves are stilled?”

“Atop a hundred foot pole, five ounces hang down.”

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#### Note

A bow falling into a wine cup alludes to a famous simile for mistaking mental construction for objective reality. A bow hung on a wall reflected in a cup of wine appears to the drinker as a snake in the wine; the drinker becomes sick to his stomach, thinking he has swallowed a snake. When he looks up and sees the bow hung on the wall and realizes the “snake” was a reflection of the bow in the wine, his stomach upset disappears.

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414. Ministry president Li Ao admired the way of Yaoshan, and made a special trip to the mountain to pay his respects, punctiliously observing the courtesies of a guest. He went straight up to the seat; Yaoshan, reading a scripture in a dignified manner, didn’t even look at him. Li then said, “Seeing the face is not as good as hearing the name,” and brusquely left. Yaoshan then called, “Ministry President!” Li turned his head. Yaoshan said, “How can you value ears and devalue eyes?” Li then made a prostration; rising, he asked, “What is the Way?” Yaoshan pointed to the sky and pointed

to a water pitcher. Li said, "I don't understand." Yaoshan said, "Clouds are in the sky, water is in the pitcher." Li then bowed in thanks. He presented a verse saying,

*He's refined his physical form like the body of a crane;*

*Under a thousand pines, two boxes of scriptures.*

*I came to ask the Way, nothing else;*

*Clouds are in the sky, water is in the pitcher.*

415. Master Shoushan Zhi asked master Nian, "What is the meaning of Deshan's cane and Linji's shout?" Nian said, "You try to say." Zhi immediately shouted; Nian picked up a cane. Zhi pointed to the cane and said, "Don't act at random." Nian threw down the cane and said, "Someone with clear eyes is impossible to fool." Zhi said, "The brigand is busted."

A monk asked, "What was the purpose of the founding teacher's coming from the West?"

The master said, "A three-foot staff breaking an earthenware bowl."

"What is Buddha?"

"The bottom of a bucket falling out."

"What statement have the sages since time immemorial had?"

"Thus have I heard."

“I don’t understand.”

“Believing, accepting, putting into practice.”

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Note

“Thus have I heard” is the standard introduction to Buddhist scripture; “believing, accepting, putting into practice” is the standard conclusion.

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416. Master Baishui of Jiazhou was asked by a monk, “What was the meaning of the coming from the West?”

He replied, “There is no abode in the four seas; one drop moistens heaven and earth.”

“On the one road of Caoqi, what is to be discussed?”

“Thousand year old cranes come and gather in the valley pines; phoenixes return to the fragrant cassia on the moon.”

*Dahui said*, “And you say Caoqi has no mundane talk.”

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Note

Caoqi refers to the sixth patriarch of Chan, from whom most Chan masters traced their spiritual descent, hence emblematic of Chan teaching.

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417. National Teacher Gushan Yan said to an assembly,

If the spiritually sharp stop as soon as they're challenged, folks like this are thousands of miles away—what salvation is there for them? Going ahead and falling back, taking in a 'how?' they are like drunks. What breath of patchrobed monks do people like this have? This being so, then what about the business in the school of the source? Here you must be suitable people—it's really not easy. Brethren, I'm not sparing words to tell you it doesn't depend on memorizing a single letter, and doesn't need any effort; you don't need to blink, and don't need to puff: sitting massively, you succeed to it right away. But tell me, what do you succeed to? Do you consider it succeeding to the Buddha, succeeding to the Dharma, succeeding to the Way, succeeding to what is beyond Buddha, the expression after nirvana? If you succeed to this expression, it can be considered a great delusion; this is called the mind looking upward not ceasing. It is irrelevant to you brethren. For your part, how do you succeed? I invite everyone to try to see: what is this? Is it ordinary? Is it holy? Is it the teacher of Vairocana, master of the reality body? Where does it abide? For how long? Is there any square or round to it, broad or narrow, long or short, large or small? Try to say. Is there anything as big as a thread or a hair that can cover it? Is there the slightest gap? Where is it copied, where is it written? It is so

evident, so basic, why don't you get it right away? Instead you stick your heads into the statements of others, studying in intellectual consciousness. What connection is there? Haven't you seen the saying that intellect is a thief and consciousness is waves? Running off in search, you'll never have any rest. If you have no eyes yourself, you go to others, selectively excerpting and copying from books. Even if you take in the oceanic canon with its billion statements at once, this is all others' and has nothing to do with your self. This is also called dependent understanding through conceptual learning. This is like jellyfish depending on shrimp for eyes—there's no independence. It's also like the blind distinguishing colors based on what other people say, therefore not being able to discern the true characteristics of color. If you study the scriptures, codes, and treatises, there are already people for that; this is why I always say the scriptures have teachers of scriptures, the codes have teachers of codes, the treatises have teachers of treatises. They are organized, categorized, and classified, and there are already people who transmit and memorize them day and night, at bright windows and by lamplight. What about Chan masters? Can anyone say? Try to come forth and speak.

At that time a student asked, “What is the presently evident potential?”

The master said, “What are you saying?”

The monk asked again; the master shouted him out.

418. Ehu asked some distinguished clerics, “Walking, standing, sitting, lying down, ultimately what do you consider the Way?” They answered, “The knower is it.” He said, “‘It cannot be known by knowledge, cannot be recognized by cognition’—how can the knower be it?” Some replied, “Nondiscrimination is it.” He said, “‘Be able to distinguish the characteristics of things without moving from the highest truth’—how can nondiscrimination be it?” Some replied, “The four meditations and eight concentrations are it.” He said, “‘The body of Buddha is not constructed and doesn’t fall into any categories’—how can it be in the four meditations and eight concentrations?” Now the whole group shut their mouths.

*Dahui said*, “‘When we’re reviling each other, you may lock beaks; when we’re spitting at each other, you may spray water.’”

419. Master Yangshan asked a monk, “Where are you from?” He replied, “From Yu province.” Yangshan said, “Do you still think of



that place?” He said, “I’m always thinking of it.” Yangshan said, “That place is full of buildings, woods, gardens, people, and houses—think back to what thinks; are there so many kinds of things there?” The monk had an insight at these words; he said, “Here I don’t see that any of it is there.” Yangshan said, “Your understanding is still in an object; it is right at the stage of faith, but not at the stage of personality.” The monk said, “Don’t you have any other instructions?” Yangshan said, “Whether there is any in particular or not misses the mark. According to your view, you only attain one mystery, getting the seat and wearing the robe—hereafter, see for yourself.”

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Note

The “seat” and “robe” are symbols from the Lotus sutra, representing emptiness and forbearance.

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420. Panshan said to an assembly, “The one road beyond has not been transmitted by a thousand sages; students toil over forms like monkeys grabbing at reflections.” Langya Jiao said, “He has come forth and extolled a boundless sound basis.”

421. When Wuyi first went to Shitou's place, he said, "If we agree in a single statement, I'll stay; if we don't agree, I'll leave." Shitou remained seated. Wuyi then left. Shitou called to him. Wuyi turned his head. Shitou said, "From birth to death, it's just this; why are you turning your head and revolving your brain?" Wuyi was greatly enlightened at these words; he then broke his staff.

422. Master Yunju You said to an assembly,  
People engaged in study need to attain the basis of enlightenment, discovering the ground of mind. If you realize the master of the reality body, then the whole earth, plants and trees, take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. If you realize the teacher of Vairocana, the realm of space takes refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. But tell me, what do you call the master of the reality body? What do you call the teacher of Vairocana? Do you want to understand directly? Radiate light in your eyes, manifesting auspicious signs; turn the great wheel of Dharma in your ears.

He also said to an assembly at the commencement of a summer retreat,

In formless light there is a real human with no status appearing and disappearing in the triple world, whirling in the five courses of existence, not abandoning the ten bad actions, not realizing the heart of nirvana, not hating breaking precepts, not respecting keeping precepts, not passing winter, not passing summer. Do you know where this goes? [pause] In the sun's flames for ninety days the spiritual body is completed.

423. Duan Shizi's two verses on reading the Heroic Progress scripture:

*Looking for the mind in seven places, the mind does not finish;*

*Befuddled Ananda does not get a glimpse.*

*Even if by seeking you see no mind,*

*This is still washing a clod of earth in mud.*

*The teaching of eight backtracks was delivered long ago;*

*Since ancient times teachers of the school have each analyzed it.*

*Even if you can backtrack to what is not backtracking,*

*This is still a shrimp leaping not getting out of the basket.*

Looking for the mind in seven places is an exercise given by Buddha to his disciple Ananda in the *Heroic Progress* scripture. The seven places are: inside, outside, hidden in the sense faculties, in darkness, wherever encountered, in between sense faculties and sense data, nonattachment.

The eight backtracks are another *Heroic Progress* exercise, examining the nature of perception: light is traced back to the sun, darkness is traced back to the new moon, transparency is traced back to doors and windows, obstruction is traced back to walls and roofs, objects are traced back to discrimination, indistinguishability is traced back to space, density is traced back to sense data, pure light is traced back to clarity.

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424. Master Yaoshan asked Yunyan, “Where have you come from?” He said, “From Baizhang.” Yaoshan asked, “What sayings does Baizhang have?” he said, “Sometimes he says to the assembly, ‘I have a statement containing a hundred flavors.’”

Yaoshan said, “Salty is salty, bland is bland—neither salty nor bland is normal flavor. What is the statement containing a hundred flavors?” Yunyan had no reply. Yaoshan laughed and said, “What can you do about present birth and death?” Yunyan said, “There is no birth and death present.” Yaoshan said, “You were with Baizhang for twenty years and still haven’t gotten rid of mundanity.” The next day Yaoshan also asked, “What else does Baizhang teach?”

Yunyan said, “Sometimes he says, ‘Understand outside the three statements; realize outside the six statements.’” Yaoshan said,

“Happily there is no connection.” He again asked, “What else does he teach?” Yunyan said, “Sometimes he goes up in the hall, then when the assembly has gathered, he chases them out with his staff; then he calls to them, and when they turn their heads he says, ‘What is this?’” Yaoshan said, “Why didn’t you say so before?” Yunyan had insight at these words.

*Dahui said*, “It’s not that he didn’t get an insight, but he still didn’t get out of the cave of complications.”

425. Liangya Jiao said to an assembly,  
You people are here with me passing the summer; I will point out five kinds of sickness to you. One, don’t go to where there isn’t so much as an inch of grass for myriad miles. Two, don’t lodge alone on a solitary peak. Three, don’t draw a bow and nock an arrow. Four, don’t settle yourself outside of things. Five, don’t get stuck in enlivening and killing. Why? If there is lingering in any one place, it’s impossible to save yourself. If you pass through all five states, only then are you called a guide. If you people go to other places and meet clear-eyed adepts, pass on a message for me, so that the ancestral way will not fall. If they are ordinary followers, then you

should snooze. Why? If you take pride in dressing up in a country where people go naked, I think you really don't know timing.

Also, in a verse on the story of the cypress tree, he said,

*Zhaozhou's cypress tree in the yard—*

*No patchrobed monks can fathom it.*

*The whole hall of itinerant monks*

*Are all visitors of the ten directions.*

426. Emperor Zhongzong of the Tang dynasty sent court attendant Xue Jian to deliver an imperial summons inviting the sixth patriarch, hoping the teacher would be so kind as to hasten to the capital. The patriarch offered up an excuse of illness, wishing to end his days in the forest at the foot of the mountain. Jian said, "The Chan worthies in the capital city all say that if we want to get understanding of the Way we need to sit and meditate and practice concentration, that no one has ever attained liberation but by means of meditation concentration. What about the teaching you expound?" The patriarch said, "The Way is realized by mind—how could it be in sitting? Scripture says, 'If you see the Realized One as sitting or lying down, you are going on a false path.' Why? Because there is

no whence or whereunto—if there is neither production nor destruction, this is the pure meditation of the realized. The emptiness of all things is the pure sitting of the realized. Ultimately there is no realization, how indeed in sitting!” Jian said, “When I return to the capital, the emperor will surely question me—please be so kind and compassionate as to point out the essentials of mind.”

The patriarch said, “The Way has no light or dark; light and dark mean alteration. An endless succession of lights still has ending.” Jian said, “Light symbolizes wisdom, dark symbolizes affliction. If people who practice the Way don’t use wisdom to shine through affliction, how can beginningless birth and death be escaped?”

The patriarch said, “If you use wisdom to shine through affliction, this is a small view of the two vehicles, potentials for the goat and deer carts. Those of higher knowledge and great potential are not like this at all.” Jian said, “What is the understanding of the great vehicle?”

The patriarch said, “Enlightenment and ignorance are essentially nondual. Nondual essence is true essence. True essence is not less in the ordinary and ignorant, and not more in the wise and sagacious. It is not destroyed in the midst of afflictions, and not at rest in meditation concentration. It does not end or persist, does not go or come, is not in the middle, or inside or outside. Not born, not

passing away, essence and characteristics as such, always abiding unchanging—this is called the Way.” Jian said, “How is ‘not born and not passing away’ different from outsiders?” The patriarch said, “The ‘not born and not passing away’ preached by outsiders means using extinction to stop production, using birth to show annihilation. Even annihilation is not extinguished; birth explains non-production. The ‘not born and not passing away’ that I teach means there is fundamentally no origination of itself, and presently no annihilation. Therefore it is not the same as outsiders. If you want to know the essence of mind, just do not think of any good or bad, and you will naturally gain entry into the pure essence of mind. It is calm, always quiet, with countless wondrous functions.” Having received this teaching, Jian was greatly enlightened.

427. Master Xiangyan said, “Suppose someone is up in a tree, holding onto a branch by his mouth, his hands not gripping any branch, his feet not set on the tree; someone asks him the meaning of the coming from the West; if he doesn’t reply, he’s evading the question, but if he does reply he loses his life. At such a time, what would be right?”



A certain elder Hutou said, "I don't ask about climbing up a tree; please tell us about before climbing the tree." Xiangyan laughed out loud.

Xuedou said, "It's easy to talk about up in the tree, hard to talk about under the tree. I'll climb the tree; bring on a question."

Baoning Yong said in verse,

*The old awl sets up many methods indirectly;*

*Moreover, he produces branch upon branch.*

*Best be like a good horse seeing the shadow of the whip;*

*One who chases a clod isn't a lion cub.*

Dahui said, "Even having swallowed a thorny chestnut and passed through an unbreakable enclosure, when you look at this kind of talk you're still a Confucian seeing a legendary sage ruler."

428. When two monks came calling on Chan master Yongming Shou, he asked the first inquirer, "Have you ever been here?" He said, "Yes." Then he asked the second monk if he had been there, and he said he hadn't. Shou said, "One gain, one loss." In a while, an attendant asked, "Of the two monks who just came, which one lost and which one gained?" Shou said, "Have you ever known

these two monks?” The attendant said, “Never.” Shou said, “In the same pit there’s no different dirt.”

429. Master Luohan Nan said to an assembly,  
‘The very wise appear to be ignorant, the very skillful appear to be inept.’ Don’t say today, mid-autumn, is an auspicious day, the same air in all quarters, the same moon in a thousand ponds, for thirty years white flowers have reflected snow; if you understand this way, your brain will shatter.

He also said to the assembly,  
It’s windy, and the chrysanthemums at the foot of the fence are now yellow; their subtle talk of the western patriarch’s meaning tinkles like jewels. I don’t know who can hear this speech—it can set the standard for the school. Then you see my whisk displaying great spiritual powers, turning into (the supernal bodhisattvas) Manjusri, Samantabhadra, Avalokitesvara, and Mahasthamaprapta, piercing your skulls. Surely if you thoroughly know the source, you can be said to provide support for countless Buddhas in exhaling and inhaling. If you don’t know, I’ll turn it over to Deshan and Linji to strike a blow.

430. Changqing said, "It's better to say that saints have the three poisons than to say the Realized One has two kinds of speech. I don't say the Realized One says nothing, only that he doesn't have two kinds of speech." Baofu said, "What is the Realized One's speech?" Changqing said, "How can a deaf man hear?" Baofu said, "I knew for sure you were speaking of the secondary." Changqing said, "What is the Realized One's speech?" Baofu said, "Go have some tea."

431. Master Jinfeng Zhi held up a head rest and said, "Everyone calls it a head rest; I say it is not so." A monk said, "What do you call it?" Zhi held up the head rest. The monk said, "Then you act accordingly." Zhi said, "What do you call it?" The monk said, "A head rest." Zhi said, "You've fallen into my pit."

432. When master Xuansha wanted to travel around to call on teachers, he took his bag to leave the mountain. He stubbed his toe, drawing blood and causing intense pain. He lamented, "This body is not existent; where does the pain come from?" So he then returned to Xuefeng. One day Xuefeng asked him, "What are you?" He said,

“I’ll never dare deceive people.” Another day Xuefeng called him and said, “Why don’t you travel around to study?” He said, “Bodhidharma didn’t come to China, the second patriarch didn’t go to India.” Xuefeng approved of this. Xuansha also read the Heroic Progress scripture and discovered the ground of mind. Henceforth his response to potentials was swift, in subtle accord with the scripture. Xuefeng praised him, calling him a reincarnation.

433. One day the sixth patriarch said to his students, “I want to return to Xinzhou; prepare a boat at once.” His students said, “After you leave here, when will you come back?” The patriarch said, “Fallen leaves return to the root; when I came I had no mouth.” Fayun Xiu said, “Not only did he have no mouth when he came; when he left he had no nostrils either.”

434. When Zhaozhou heard a novice announce his arrival, he told an attendant, “Have him leave.” As soon as the attendant told him to leave, the novice said goodbye. Zhaozhou said to a monk standing by, “The novice has entered the gate; the attendant is outside the gate.”

435. Master Guanghui Lian asked master Nian, “The student having personally arrived at a mountain of jewels, how is it when he returns empty-handed?” Nian said, “A torch in front of the door of every house.” Lian was greatly enlightened at these words; he said, “I do not doubt what the old masters all over the land say.” Nian said, “How would you explain your understanding to me?” Lian said, “Panning on the ground.” Nian said, “You understand.” Lian then bowed.

*Dahui said*, “Tell me, did master Nian agree with Guanghui or not? If you say he agreed with him, why didn’t he hit him? If you say he didn’t agree with him, why didn’t he hit him? If anyone can say, I’ll hit you.”

436. Master Yongguang Zhen said to an assembly,  
If the point of speech misses, you’re myriad miles from home. You simply must let go over a sheer cliff, allowing yourself to accept it, and come back to life after annihilation—then you can’t be fooled. How can people hide an extraordinary message?

437. When master Jishan Zhang was with Touzi, he was in charge of firewood. As he was drinking tea, Touzi said to him, “All forms are

in this cup of tea.” Zhang then turned over the tea and said, “Where are myriad forms?” Touzi said, “What a waste of a cup of tea.” Later Zhang called on Xuefeng. Xuefeng asked, “Aren’t you Zhang the superintendent of firewood?” Zhang made a chopping gesture. Xuefeng approved of this.

438. When master Xiangcheng first called on master Tong, he asked, “How is it when one seems like two?” Tong said, “One fools you.” Xiangcheng thereupon had an insight. A monk asked, “How is it when there is not a thread to tie an ant in a bag, and not enough meat and rice in the kitchen to gather flies?” Xiangcheng said, “Daily relinquishment, not seeking; craving comes from confusion.”

439. Master Mingzhao asked Sushan, “A tiger sires seven cubs—which one has no tail?” Sushan said, “The seventh one has no tail.”

440. As Yaoshan was roaming in the mountains with Daowu and Yunyan, they saw two trees, one dead and one flourishing. Yaoshan asked Yunyan, “Is the withered one right, or is the flourishing one right?” He said, “The flourishing one.” Yaoshan said, “Then clearly light will blaze everywhere.” He also asked Daowu; Daowu said,

“The withered one is right.” Yaoshan said, “Then clearly everywhere will be austere.” In a little while novice Gao came; Yaoshan also asked him. Gao said “Let the withered one be withered, let the flourishing one flourish.” Yaoshan turned and looked at Yunyan and Daowu and said, “Not right, not right.”

441. When master Nanyue Rang first called on the sixth patriarch, the patriarch asked, “Where have you come from?” He said, “From Mount Song.” The patriarch said, “What thing has come this way?” He said, “To speak of it as a thing would not be accurate.” The patriarch said, “Does it take cultivation and realization?” He said, “It’s not that there is no cultivation or realization, but if defiled it can’t be successful.” The patriarch said, “It is just this nondefilement that the Buddhas keep in mind. You are now like this; I too am like this.”

442. Master Zhimen Zuo said to an assembly, Xuefeng’s rolling balls, Luohan’s writing, Guizong’s cutting a snake, Dasui’s burning off a field—tell me, what do they illustrate? Can anyone clarify? Try to say. If you cannot clarify, this is why it is said that to cut a snake you need to be able to cut a snake, to burn off a field you need to be able to burn off a field. As soon as subjective

data arise, that produces false views. If you have no sinew in your eyes, you'll be poor all your life.

A monk asked, "What is the Buddha Victorious by Great Penetrating Knowledge?"

He said, "Speech has no second echo."

The monk asked, "What is sitting at the site of enlightenment for ten eons?"

He said, "Calamities do not occur alone."

The monk asked, "What is the state of Buddhahood not manifesting?"

He said, "Though gold dust is precious..."

The monk said, "What is not managing to attain Buddhahood?"

He said, "...it cannot stick in the eyes."

443. Master Puhua used to go to town ringing a bell and saying "Come in light and I'll strike in light; come in darkness and I'll strike in darkness. Come in all directions and I'll strike like a whirlwind. Come in space and I'll flail around."

One day Linji had a monk grab him and say, "When not coming any such way, then what?" Puhua pushed him away and said,



“Tomorrow there’s a ritual feast in the monastery of Great Compassion.” The monk returned and told Linji about this. Linji said, “I had doubted this fellow hitherto.”

444. A monk traveling to Taishan asked a woman, “Which way is the road to Taishan?” The woman said “Right straight ahead.” As soon as the monk had gone a few paces, the woman said, “A fine monk; and so he goes.” Someone told Zhaozhou about this. Zhaozhou said, “Wait till I go check out this woman.” The next day he went and questioned her the same way; and the woman answered the same way. Zhaozhou went back and said to the group, “I’ve checked out the woman of Taishan for you.”

Dagui Zhe said in verse,

*The old adept of the community has no peer;*

*His awesome dignity affects the four hundred princes.*

*At one blow the barrier has been shattered;*

*His benevolence is so great it can hardly be repaid with rain and dew.*

445. A monk asked Fayan, “What is one drop of water from the wellspring of Chan?” Fayan said, “It is one drop of water

from the wellspring of Chan.” When National Teacher Yuan heard this, he had insight at these words. Later, when he dwelt on Lotus Peak, he composed a verse saying,

*The peak of penetrating mystery*

*Is not in the human world;*

*Outside mind there are no things.*

*Filling the eyes, green mountains.*

When Fayen heard this verse, he said, “It just takes this one verse to naturally continue our school.”

*Dahui said*, “The extinction of Fayen’s school was just caused by this one verse.”