

(last modification: 14 October 2014)

HEKIGANROKU

(Blue Cliff Record)

Instructions, Cases, Verses

Selection of 100 Cases with Verses

by Setchô Jûken

(Xuedou Zhongxian: 980-1052)

with

Instructions

by Engo Kokugon

(Yuanwu Keqin: 1063-1135)

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CASE 1 : Bodhidharma's "Vast and void"¹

Instruction:

When you see smoke on the other side of the mountain, you know immediately there is fire.
When you see horns on the other side of the fence, you know straight away there is an ox.
To understand three when one is raised, or to judge a minute weight at one glance: This is the every day food and drink of a patch-robed monk.
When one has cut off the myriad streams, one appears in the east and disappears in the west, opposes or complies in all directions, gives or takes away with perfect freedom.
At such time, just say, who lives and acts like this?
Observe well Setchô's entangling vines.

Case:

Emperor Bu² of Ryô asked Great Master Bodhidharma, "What is the ultimate meaning of the holy truth?" Bodhidharma said, "Vast and void, no holiness." The emperor said, "Who are you facing me?" Bodhidharma said, "I don't know."
The emperor did not understand. Finally, Bodhidharma crossed the Yangtze River and came to the Kingdom of Gi.

Later the emperor asked Shikô about it. Shikô said, "Does your Majesty know who that man is?" The emperor said, "I don't know." Shikô said, "He is the Mahasattva Avalokitesvara transmitting the Seal of the Buddha's mind." The emperor regretted what had happened and wanted to send an emissary to invite Bodhidharma back. Shikô said, "Your Majesty, don't try to send an emissary to fetch him back. Even if all the people in the land were to go after him, he would not return."

Verse:

The holy truth, vast and void:
How could you ever discern the clearest point?
"Who are you facing me?"
His answer was, "I don't know."
Thereupon he secretly crossed the Yangtze River.
How could the growth of thorns and brambles be avoided?
Even if all the people in the land went after him, he would not come back.
He yearns after him in vain for thousands and tens of thousands of years.
Give up yearning for him!
What limit is there to the pure wind circling the earth?
Looking around to the right and to the left, the master³ said,
"Is the patriarch here?"

¹ Cf. *Shoyoroku* Case 2.

² Emperor Bu reigned over the land of Ryô in 502-509.

³ Master Setchô himself.

“Yes,” he answered himself.

“Call him here! I will make him wash this old monk's feet.”

CASE 2: Jôshû's Supreme Way

Instruction:

Heaven and earth are narrow; the sun, moon, and stars are suddenly dark.

Were blows of the staff to fall like raindrops, and shouts to peal like thunder, still you would not touch the point of the supreme teaching.

Even the Buddhas of the three worlds can know it only by themselves; even the patriarchs of the successive generations cannot present it fully.

Neither can the great treasury of all the sutras expound it adequately.

Even the clearly enlightened monk is helpless.

When you are at this stage, what other instruction could you expect?

To say the word “Buddha” is to pour muddy water over yourself; to say the word “Zen” is to shame your face.

For advanced students who have been practicing for a long time, it is unnecessary to say anything more.

Recent beginners should investigate and apprehend it right away.

Case:

Jôshû, instructing the assembly, said, “The supreme way is not difficult: It simply dislikes choosing’. If even a word is uttered, it is already [an action of] choosing or [of] ‘clarity’¹. This old monk² does not dwell in clarity. Do you monks want to keep a firm hold on it³ or not?” At that time there was a monk attending who asked, “You say that you do not dwell in clarity. If so, what is there to keep a firm hold on?” Jôshû said, “I do not know, either.” The monk said, “If you say you do not know, why do you say that you do not dwell in clarity?” Jôshû said, “You have already asked fully. Bow and withdraw.”

Verse:

The supreme way is not difficult.

A little speech – that's it; a little word – that's it.

In one there are many kinds;

In two there are not two.

¹ Cf. the beginning of the *Shinjinmei* (Believing in the Mind; Poem composed by the Third Patriarch Sôsan): “The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes choosing. Only if there is no love or hatred, all is complete clarity.” Cf. also Cases 57-59 of the *Hekiganroku*.

² “this old monk” = “I.”

³ “it” = “clarity.”

On the horizon, the sun rises and the moon sets;
Beyond the balcony, the mountains are deep, the waters cold.
Where the skull's consciousness comes to an end, how could joy come up?
The withered tree is giving a dragon's groan:
Though dead, it is still not dried up.
Difficult, difficult!
Choosing or clarity?
See for yourself!

CASE 3: Master Ba Is Unwell¹

Instruction:

One movement of the mind, one movement of the body, every word and every phrase: Each is a means to lead students to enlightenment.
Yet this is nothing but gouging a wound into a healthy body; it simply creates pitfalls and ditches.
When the great activity manifests itself, there are no fixed rules.
You endeavour to have your students realize that there is yet a higher truth.
It covers up the heaven and earth. If you search for it, you will never attain it.
“Yes, yes” is right, “no, no” is right too. It is so minute and delicate!
“Yes, yes” is not right, “no, no” is not right either. It is so steep and inaccessible!
Without treading these two paths, what could be right?
I will show you an example, look!

Case:

Great Master Ba was unwell. The chief monk of the temple came to ask him, “Master, how are you feeling these days?” The Great Master said, “Sun-faced Buddha, moon-faced Buddha².”

Verse:

Sun-faced Buddha, moon-faced Buddha!
The Five Emperors and the Three Sovereigns! – what are these?
I have suffered for twenty bitter years,
Descending countless times into the pale dragon's cave for your sake.
What distress! Now I can relate it for others.
You clear-eyed monks, do not take it lightly.

¹ Cf. Shoyoroku Case 36.

² The “Sun-face Buddha” is a buddha, who is said to have a life of 1800 years, while the “Moon-face Buddha” lives only 24 hours.

CASE 4: Tokusan Carrying His Bundle

Instruction:

The blue sky, the bright sun: There is no pointing out the east and marking the west.
Time, season, karmic ties: Give the medicine according to the disease.
Just tell me, is it better to “let go,” or to “hold fast”?
I will give you an example, look!

Case:

Tokusan arrived at Isan. Carrying his bundle under his arm, he stepped into the preaching hall and walked across it from east to west and from west to east. Looking around he said, “Nothing, nothing!” Then he went out.

(Setchô¹ comments, “I have seen through him.”)

But when he got to the monastery gate, Tokusan said, “Still, I should not be so hasty.” So, he dressed formally and re-entered the hall to meet Isan. As Isan sat at his place, Tokusan held up his sitting cloth and said, “Master!” Isan was about to take up his whisk², when Tokusan suddenly shouted, “Kaatsu!” Then he flourished his sleeves and went out.

(Setchô comments, “I have seen through him.”)

Turning his back on the preaching hall, Tokusan put on his straw sandals, and left. In the evening Isan asked the head monk, “Where is the new-comer who arrived here a while ago?” The head monk answered, “At that time he turned his back on the preaching hall, put on his straw sandals, and went away.” Isan said, “One day that fellow will go up to the top of a lonely peak, build a grass hut, and scold the buddhas and abuse the patriarchs.”

(Setchô comments, “Piling frost on top of snow.”)

Verse:

Seeing through once, seeing through twice;
Piling frost on top of snow.
How dangerous it was!
The general of the Flying Cavalry entered the enemy camp;
How many could come back safe and sound?
One dashes by, but the other does not let him pass:
On a solitary mountaintop he sits in the weeds.
*Totsu!*³

¹ Setchô Zenji is the compiler of *the Hekiganroku*. Here he introduces his own comment.

² In Japanese: *hossu*, a stick with a flexible whisk on top, was traditionally used by a master when he delivered his teaching.

³ A reproachful or insulting cry, like “Ha!”

CASE 5: Seppô's Grain of Rice

Instruction:

Whosoever may sustain the principle of our school must be a person of noble and excellent spirit. Only those who are able to kill someone without blinking their eyes can become buddhas right where they stand.

Hence you illuminate and act simultaneously, you hold fast and let go at the same time.

Essence and phenomena are not two; expedients and reality are equally employed.

[Yet] you descend one grade, and adopt a secondary method.

If you cut off all complications on the spot, late-comers and beginners can hardly abide in the port.

Yesterday was this way, it could not be avoided; today is also this way, the transgressions fill up the heavens.

If it is a clear-eyed person, however, he or she cannot be fooled even a bit.

Otherwise, you are sure to put yourself in the tiger's mouth and lose your life.

I will cite an example, look!

Case:

Seppô, teaching the assembly, said, "When you pick up the whole great earth, it is as small as a grain of rice. You throw it down before you. Like in a black lacquer bucket, you don't recognize anything. Beat the drums, summon all the people, and search for it!"

Verse:

A cow head sinks, a horse head turns up.

In Sôkei's mirror no dust is found.

I beat the drums for you to look – but you don't see.

For whom do the blossoms bloom in the spring?

CASE 6: Unmon's "Good Day"

(No Instruction)

Case:

Unmon, giving instruction, said, "I don't ask you about before the fifteenth day; bring me a phrase about after the fifteenth day." Unmon himself answered in the monks' stead, "Every day is a good day."

Verse:

You throw away one, take up seven.

Above and below, in all four directions, you are peerless.

Slowly, you wade in a running brook,

Extinguishing its sounds.
Freely, you watch a flying bird,
Sketching the track of its flight.
The grass is overgrown, the mists overhang.
Subhuti sits in the rocky cave, and lo, a shower of flowers!
I snap my fingers: How lamentable is Shunyata!
Don't move! If you do, thirty blows!

CASE 7: Echô Asks about Buddha

Instruction:

The one phrase before the voice cannot be transmitted, even by the thousand holy sages.
If you haven't become familiar with it personally, it is as if you were three thousand worlds away from it.
Even if you have attained what is before the voice, and cut off the tongues of all people under heaven, you are still not that bright.
Therefore, it is said: The heaven cannot cover it, the earth cannot hold it, empty space cannot contain it, the sun and moon cannot illuminate it.
When you call yourself the only Honoured One in the Buddha-less place, then for the first time you are touching it a little.
If you haven't reached this stage yet, you must thoroughly realize it by the tip of a hair and emit a great light; in all directions, you must be completely free concerning the Dharma.
Then, no matter what you take up, there will be nothing that is unfitting.
But just tell me, by attaining what can you become so extraordinary?
Again I say: does everyone understand?
No one knows the sweat of the steeds in the past; the epoch-making victory must be well discussed once more.
Leaving aside the present matter for a moment, what about Setchô's koan?
See the writing below.

Case:

A monk asked Hôgen, "I, Echô, ask you, Master, what is Buddha?" Hôgen said, "You are Echô."

Verse:

In the land of the River, the spring wind hardly blows.
The partridges sing, deep among the flowers.
At the three-tiered waterfall, where the waves are high,
Carps turn into dragons [and soar up to heaven];
Fools still look for it in the pond water in the dark.

CASE 8: Suigan's Eyebrows

Instruction:

When you have attained realization, you can make free use [of all things] on the way, like a dragon taking to water, or a tiger roaming its mountain.

When you have not yet attained realization, you remain adrift in worldly things; [you are like] a ram [whose horns are] caught up in the hedge, or one who is watching a stump waiting for a hare.

Sometimes a single phrase is like a lion crouching on the ground; sometimes it is like the diamond treasure sword.

Sometimes it cuts off the tongues of all people under heaven; sometimes it follows the billows and chases the waves.

As for those who can make free use [of all things] on the way, when two of them meet, who are intimate friends, their states of mind correspond with each other; they mutually know what is good or bad [about each other] and attest to it respectively.

If [on the other hand] you meet someone who is adrift in worldly things, you must have the one eye to cut off the ten directions by sitting, to stand like a thousand-foot cliff.

Therefore, it has been said that when a great activity manifests itself, no fixed rules exist.

Sometimes you use a blade of grass as the sixteen-foot golden body [of the Buddha]; sometimes you use the sixteen-foot golden body as a blade of grass.

Now just tell me: What principle does this rely upon? Do you clearly understand it?

I will try to present a case, look!

Case:

At the end of the summer [practice-period]¹, Suigan instructed the assembly, saying, “All through the summer I have preached to you, brothers. Look, are Suigan's eyebrows still there²?”

Hofuku said, “The robber's heart is terrified!”

Chôkei said, “They are there!”

Unmon said, “Barrier [*kan*]³!”

Verse:

Suigan gave an instruction to his monks:

No response for thousands of years.

The word “barrier [*kan*]” answers back:

Losing money, you get punished as a criminal.

¹ Summer-sesshin for 3 months.

² According to the popular belief a great criminal should lose his eyebrows as a sign of his coming punishment in hell.

³ In those days this Chinese word colloquially meant also, “Watch out!” or “There!”

Decrepit Hofuku – did he praise, or did he reprimand?
Talkative Suigan is evidently a robber:
No flaws on the white jewel;
Who can tell whether it is genuine or false?
Chôkei knew quite well: The eyebrows are there!

CASE 9: Jôshû's Four Gates

Instruction:

The clear mirror is on its stand: beauty and ugliness are spontaneously discerned.
The sword of Bakuya is in your hand: you kill and give life, according to the occasion.
Kan leaves, Ko comes: Ko comes, Kan leaves.
In death you gain life, in life you gain death.
Just say, if you are at this point, what then?
If you don't have the eye to penetrate the barrier, or a place where you turn yourself around, it's obvious that at this point you don't know what to do.
Just tell me, what is the eye that penetrates the barrier; where is the place you turn yourself around?
I'll show you an example, look!

Case:

A monk asked Jôshû: “What is Jôshû¹?” Jôshû answered, “East gate, west gate, south gate, north gate.”

Verse:

With activity hidden in the phrase
He abruptly confronts him.
The diamond eye of perfect clarity,
Devoid of any dust:
East, west, south, and north –
All gates are shut facing each other.
Even hammers, pounding endlessly,
Can't blow them open.

CASE 10: Bokushû's “Idiot”

¹ The name of the Zen Master Jôshû is taken from the city “Jôshû”, where he resided.

Instruction:

Yes, yes; no, no.

Seen in terms of combat, each stands unconquered on his or her own pivotal point.

Therefore it is said:

If you turn upward, even Shakyamuni, Maitreya, Manjusri, Samantabhadra, the thousand and ten thousand holy ones, and all Zen masters under heaven will immediately choke back their breath, and swallow their voices.

If you turn downward, even maggots, gnats, and all creeping creatures emit a great light, each one towering like a cliff of ten thousand fathoms.

But when you turn neither upward nor downward, then how would you deal with it?

If there is a rule, follow it; if there is no rule, follow an example.

I will try to present one, look!

Case:

Bokushû asked a monk, “Where have you come from?” At once, the monk shouted, “Kaatsu!” Bokushû said, “This old monk has been scolded by you with a 'Kaatsu!'” The monk shouted again, “Kaatsu!” Bokushû said, “After three or four shouts of 'Kaatsu,' then what?” The monk was silent. Then Bokushû hit him saying, “You idiot!”

Verse:

Two “Kaatsu,” three “Kaatsu”:

The great ones know how to act freely.

If you say they ride on a tiger's head,

They both must be blind.

Who is blind at all?

I will bring forth a case for everyone under heaven to see.

CASE 11: Ôbaku's “Devourers of Dregs”

Instruction:

The great activities of the buddhas and patriarchs are entirely within your grasp.

The life of every human or heavenly being is completely at your command.

Every casual phrase of yours perturbs the crowds and astounds the multitudes.

Every internal movement, every external action of yours shatters the chains and smashes the fetters.

You deal with people of supreme aspiration.

¹ *Ryakkotôno-kan*. Literally: a person who only superficially imitates other people's words or deeds.

You handle the matters of highest truth.
Just tell me, is there anyone who was ever like that?
Do you know the destination of such a person?
I will give you an example, look!

Case:

Ôbaku instructed the assembly saying, “You are all devourers of dregs! If you keep roaming around like this¹, when will you be able to have your 'today'? Do you know that in this great empire of Tang there is not a single Zen master?”

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

Verse:

Awesome and solitary, void of any pride;
Seated in the vast ocean, he distinguished dragons and snakes.
The Emperor of Daichû once touched him lightly,
To fall thrice into his claws and fangs.

CASE 12: Tôzan's “Masagin”²

Instruction:

The sword that kills, the sword that gives life: This has been the standard rule since of old, and is the pivotal point of today.

If you talk about killing, you don't harm even a single hair; if you talk about giving life, you lose your body and life.

Therefore it is said: The supreme one way can't be transmitted even by the thousand holy ones.

Practitioners who labour for forms are like monkeys trying to grasp reflections.

Just tell me, if it can't be transmitted, why are there so many entangling koans?

Those who have an eye to see, let them see!

Case:

A monk asked Tôzan, “What is Buddha?” Tôzan said, “*Masagin* [Three pounds' hemp].”

Verse:

The Golden Raven is quick, the Jade Rabbit is swift.
Is there any sloppiness in the marvellous response?

¹ I.e., keep visiting temples and masters here and there in a lukewarm manner.

² Cf. Case 18 of the *Mumonkan*.

If you see Tôzan as displaying something to meet his student,
You are a lame and blind turtle falling into an open gorge.
Blossoms are abundant, the foliage is colourful;
Bamboos in the north; trees in the south.
Therefore I think of Chôkei and Official Rikukô,
Who could say, “Laugh! Don't cry!”
*Ii!*¹

CASE 13: Haryô's Silver Bowl²

Instruction:

A cloud sits over the great plain; snow covers the reed blossoms; they can hardly be distinguished from each other.

As for coldness, it is colder than ice and snow; as for fineness, it is finer than rice powder.

The deepest depth cannot be penetrated even by a buddha's eyes; the densest area cannot be measured even by aggressive demons.

Let us put aside for a moment those who understand three when one is raised; what should be spoken in order to cut off the tongues of all people under heaven?

Just say, who had the capacity to achieve this? I'll show you an example, look!

Case:

A monk asked Haryô, “What is the Deva Sect?” Haryô said, “Heaping up snow in a silver bowl.”

Verse:

Old Shinkai³ is truly superb,

How wonderful he could utter,

“Heaping up snow in a silver bowl”!

Ninety-six schools must realize it by themselves.

If you don't understand it yet, ask the moon high in heaven.

Oh Deva Sect, Deva Sect!

Beneath the red flag a pure wind is blowing.

¹ A calling shout, or an exclamatory word expressing distrust or grief. It is often used by a master as an energetic shout when instructing a disciple.

² Cf. Case 22/a in the *Miscellaneous Koans*.

³ “Shinkai” is the name of the temple where Haryô resided.

CASE 14: Unmon's "A Teaching in Accordance"

(No Instruction)

Case:

A monk asked Unmon, "What is the teaching of whole lifetime of Shakyamuni?" Unmon said, "A teaching in accordance."¹

Verse:

"A teaching in accordance."
Truly solitary and absolute.
A wedge is struck into an iron hammer with no hole;
Under the Embu tree² there is loud laughing.
The black dragon had his horn broken last night.
Remarkable, remarkable!
Old Shôyô³ has [gotten] one horn.

CASE 15: Unmon's "A Reverse Teaching"

Instruction:

A sword that kills, a sword that gives life:
This is the traditional principle of old, the pivotal point of our time.
Just tell me, where at present is the sword that kills, the sword that gives life?
I will give you an example, look!

Case:

A monk asked Unmon, "What is it when *this* is not an activity [of the mind] in front of yourself, nor is it a thing in front of yourself?" Unmon said, "A reverse teaching."⁴

Verse:

A reverse teaching – dividing a tally.
Dying and living together, I will resolve it for your sake.
Eighty-four thousand⁵ were not phoenix feathers⁶;
Thirty-three persons¹ went into tigers' dens.

¹ In Japanese: *Tai-issetsu*.

² A giant tree.

³ The name of the place where Unmon was.

⁴ In Japanese: *Tô-issetsu*.

⁵ The number of people in Shakyamuni's assembly.

⁶ I.e., only Maha-Kashyapa was "a phoenix feather."

Remarkable, remarkable:
Rushing, lapping – the moon in the water.

CASE 16: Kyôsei and “Picking and Pecking”

Instruction:

The way knows no side roads; the one who stands on it is alone and lofty.
The dharma is beyond seeing and hearing; it transcends by far words and thoughts.
If you pass the jungle of thorns, untie the bonds of buddhas and patriarchs, and attain the region of secrecy, then heavenly deities find no way to offer flowers², nor will non-Buddhists see a gate to spy through.
You act all day without ever acting; talk all day without ever talking.
In complete freedom, you will be able to develop the activities of picking and pecking, and wield the sword that kills and gives life.
Even if you become like this, you must know that in guiding others, you should raise up with one hand, while pressing down with the other.
Then you will fit the matter a bit.
Yet, when it comes to the essential matter, it has nothing to do with these things.
What is the essential matter?
I will try to cite an example, look!

Case:

A monk asked Kyôsei, “I, your student, am picking from inside the shell. I beg you, Master, please peck from outside.” Kyôsei said, “But will you be alive or not?” The monk said, “If I were not alive, people would all laugh.” Kyôsei said, “You fool in the weeds!”

Verse:

The ancient buddha has his own family style;
The response led to a detraction.
Chick and hen never know each other;
Who picks and pecks at the same time?
Tap! Rap! Yet he is still inside the shell.
Once again he meets a blow.
All monks under heaven grope around in vain.

¹ The number of Patriarchs up to the 6th Patriarch Enô.

² Heavenly deities let flowers fall as a sign of praise upon Subhuti who sat in zazen. Subhuti was one of the ten disciples of Shakyamuni and is said to have captured the world of emptiness more than anyone else, which deeply impressed the deities.

CASE 17: Kôrin's "Sitting for a Long Time"

Instruction:

Only if you can cut off nails and break through iron, you are qualified as an authentic master.
If you evade arrows and hide away from swords, how can you become an adept leader?
Let me put aside the place where no needle enters.
What is it when white billows flood the heaven?
I'll try to give you an example, look!

Case:

A monk asked Kyôrin, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west?"
Kyôrin said, "Tired from sitting for a long time."

Verse:

One, two, a thousand, ten thousand:
Strip off the muzzle; take the load off the saddle!
Turning left, turning right, following from behind –
Shiko must strike Ryû Tetsuma.

CASE 18: The National Teacher's Tombstone¹

(No Instruction)

Case:

Emperor Shukusô² asked Echû³, the national teacher, "What would you wish me to do in a hundred years⁴?" The national teacher said, "Make a seamless tomb⁵ for this old monk." The emperor said, "I should like to ask you, Master, for its design." The national teacher remained silent for a long time. Then he said, "Did you understand?" The emperor said, "I didn't understand anything." The national teacher said, "I have a Dharma successor, my disciple Tangen, who knows well about this matter. Let him come to you, and ask him about it."

After the national teacher passed away, the emperor called Tangen and asked him about the meaning of this. Tangen responded:

¹ Cf. *Shoyoroku* Case 85.

² Historically speaking it was Emperor Daisô (762-779) the oldest son and successor of Shukusô (756-762).

³ Nan'yô Echû (675-775), one of the Dharma successors of the 6th Patriarch Enô.

⁴ After your death.

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

“South of the River, north of the Lake:

(Setchô commented, “The single hand does not sound without reason.”)

In between there's gold, filling the whole land.

(Setchô commented, “A staff, freshly hewn from the mountain forest.”)

Under the shadow-less tree, all people are in one boat;

(Setchô added, “The sea is peaceful, the river clear.”)

In the crystal palace, there is no knowledge¹.

(Setchô commented, “The speech is finished.”)”

Verse:

The seamless tomb – it is difficult to see it;

A clear pond does not allow the blue dragon to coil up in it.

Layer upon layer – shadows round and round;

For a thousand, ten-thousand years hence, it will be shown to people.

CASE 19: Gutei's One Finger²

Instruction:

When a particle of dust is raised, it comprises the great earth.

When a flower blooms, the world springs forth.

But when dust is not yet raised, and a flower has not yet bloomed, how can it be seen?

Therefore, I say, it is like cutting a skein of thread: with one hack, it is all cut; or like dyeing a skein of thread: with one dyeing, all is dyed.

Now, if you cut off all complications, and bring forth your family treasure, then you comply everywhere with high and low, and there is no difference between front and back; each one will be fully manifest.

If you are not yet so, look at the lines below.

Case:

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

Verse:

For the way he responds, I deeply cherish old Gutei;

Throughout the universe, is there another like him?

He cast a log adrift on the sea,

In the night of turbulence, together he attends to blind turtles.

¹ Or: “there is no one who knows.”

² Cf. Case 3 of the *Mumonkan*; Case 84 of the *Shoyoroku*.

CASE 20: Suibi and the Chin Rest ¹

Instruction:

Heaped up in mountains, piled high as peaks; striking against barriers, colliding with walls.

If you stop to think confusedly, it is a shameful matter.

But were a person to appear, who could overturn the great sea, kick over Mt. Sumeru, dissipate the white clouds with a shout shattering the empty sky and, then and there, with one latent or apparent activity cut off the tongues of everyone under heaven, you would not be able to approach that person.

Tell me, has there ever been such a person up to now?

I will try to present one, look!

Case:

Ryûge asked Suibi, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west?" Suibi said, "Bring me a chin rest²." Ryûge brought one, and gave it to him. Suibi took it and hit him. Ryûge said, "You may hit me if you like. But after all, the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west does not exist."

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

Verse 1:

In Dragon Fang Mountain³, the dragon has no eye;

In dead water, the ancient way is not made to flourish.

If you cannot use the chin rest and cushion,

Just hand them over to Rokô⁴.

Verse 2:

This old man has not yet exhausted it, and so, another verse is made.

Even if they were given to Rokô, why would he depend on them?

Stop carrying the patriarchs' lamp by sitting and leaning;

It is superb to sit facing the evening clouds,

which are on their way home, but have not yet merged.

The distant mountains are endless folds of blue.

¹ Cf. *Shoyoroku* Case 80, which adds also the 3rd paragraph.

² Literally: "Zen board." A narrow board used so as to let one sleep in the sitting posture.

³ "Ryûge" literally means "dragon fang". He lived in a mountain with this name and was consequently named after it.

⁴ Setchô himself.

CASE 21: Chimon's Lotus

Instruction:

Raising the dharma flag, and presenting the true teaching – this is covering brocade with flowers.
Taking off the muzzle, and unloading the horse's packs – this is the season of great peace.
If you can grasp the transcendent phrase, you understand three when one is raised.
However, if you are not yet that far, listen respectfully to the direction of one of old.

Case:

A monk asked Chimon¹, “What is it when the lotus has not yet come out of the water?”
Chimon said, “Lotus flowers.” The monk asked, “What is it after the lotus has come out of the water?”
Chimon replied, “Lotus leaves.”

Verse:

Lotus flowers, lotus leaves, I make it known to you.
Out of the water, and before leaving the water –
Is there any difference between them?
North of the River, south of the River; ask old Ô²;
One fox-doubt is followed by another.

CASE 22: Seppô's "Poisonous Snake"³

Instruction:

As for greatness, there is no boundary; as for minuteness, it is as if it were next to emptiness.
Grasping and setting free are not in someone else; rolling up and spreading out are in me.
If you by all means want to rid yourself of what sticks, and remove all fetters, straight off you must
erase the traces, and swallow your voice.
Each person will sever the point of essence by sitting, and each one will be a thousand-foot cliff.
Tell me, whose state of consciousness is this? I will try to present such a case, look!

Case:

Seppô, instructing the assembly, said, “There's a poisonous snake on the South Mountain.
All of you should look at it carefully!”

¹ Setchô's own master.

² A very common name in China. Otherwise it means Master Nansen, who was also called “Ô Roshi”.

³ Cf. *Shoyoroku* Case 24.

Chôkei said, “Today in the Zen hall there are many who have¹ lost their body and life.”

A monk told this to Gensha, who said, “Only Elder Brother Ryô² could say something like that. However, I wouldn't talk like that.” The monk asked, “What then would you say, Master?” Gensha replied, “Why does it have to be the South Mountain?”

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

Verse:

Elephant-bone Rock³ is too high for people to reach;
Whosoever gets there must be a skilled handler of snakes.
Master Ryô and Master Bi⁴ cannot do anything.
Is there anyone at all who has lost body and life?
Shôyô⁵ knows, and sweeps the grass again;
North, south, east, west – it is nowhere to be found.
Suddenly the staff sticks out;
It hurls itself at Seppô, mouth open wide;
It opens its mouth wide, quickly like a flash of lightning;
If you raise your eyebrows, you will not see it.
It's hidden now before the Breast Peaks⁶;
Those who come, look at each manoeuvre.
The master⁷ shouts loudly: “Look under your feet!”

CASE 23: Hofuku and Chôkei on an Outing

Instruction:

Jewels are tested by fire; gold is tested by stone;
Swords are tested by a hair; water is tested by a pole.
In the school of the patch-robed monks, it is necessary to observe a word or a phrase, a tiny action or a big action, an exit or an entry, an encounter or a response, in order to judge depth or shallowness, or to determine whether they are facing forward or backward.
Just tell me, what should you use in testing? I cite an example, look!

Case:

¹ Or: “there is a great one who has”.

² I.e., Chôkei

³ A famous rock on Mt. Seppô, where Master Seppô resided. Here it refers to Master Seppô.

⁴ Master Gensha.

⁵ Master Unmon.

⁶ It refers to Mt. Setchô where Master Setchô lived.

⁷ Setchô himself.

Once, Hofuku and Chôkei went on an outing in the hills. Hofuku, pointing with a finger, said, "Right here is the summit of Myô Peak¹." Chôkei said, "Exactly. But it's regrettable."

(Setchô commented saying, "What's the use of making an excursion with such fellows today?" He again said, "Hundreds and thousands of years from now, I don't say that there will be none, only that there will be very few.")

Later, someone reported it to Kyôsei. Kyôsei said, "If it weren't for the Reverend Son², you would see skeletons all over the field."

Verse:

On the lone summit of Myô Peak, grasses grow thickly.
It is obtained clearly – but with whom could it be shared?
If the Reverend Son had not seen the real point,
Skeletons would be all over the ground.
But how many people would know this?

CASE 24: Tetsuma, the Cow

Instruction:

Standing on the summit of the highest peak – even demons and non-Buddhist sages cannot know it.
Descending to the bottom of the deepest sea – even Buddha's eye, however hard it may try, cannot see it.

Even if your eye is like a shooting star and your activity like one who catches lightning, you cannot escape being like the mysterious tortoise who unavoidably leaves its trail.

Having arrived at this stage, what should you do? I will try to present an example. Look!

Case:

Ryû Tetsuma³ came to Isan. Isan said, "Old Cow, you have come!" Tetsuma said, "Tomorrow there will be a great feast at Mt.Tai⁴. Will you go there, Master?" Isan lay down and stretched himself out. Tetsuma left immediately.

Verse:

Riding on an iron horse, one enters a heavy fortress.
An imperial order has been issued; one hears that the six nations are pure.
Still holding the golden whip, one poses a question to the home-coming traveller.

¹ It literally means: "the Peak of Wonder."

² Namely Chôkei.

³ A famous Zen person, a nun, once a student of Isan. Her name means "Ryû, the iron grindstone." She lived about 40 km away from where Isan lived.

⁴ More exactly: "Mt. Gotai," which is about 1200 km to the north of the place where Isan resided.

In the deepest night, with whom will one walk in the royal quarter?

CASE 25: The Hermit of Lotus Peak

Instruction:

If your activity does not depart from its position, you tumble down into the poisonous sea.

If your words fail to amaze the crowd, you fall into the commonplace.

If you can distinguish black from white in the spark struck from the flint-stone;

If you can choose between killing and giving life in the flash of lightning:

Then you can cut off the ten directions by your sitting, and tower up like a wall of a thousand fathoms.

But do you know if there is such a time?

I will try to show you an example, look!

Case:

The hermit of Lotus Peak¹ took up his staff and showed it to the assembly, saying, “When the old ones² reached this point, why didn't they dare to remain here?”

The assembly was silent. He himself answered in their stead, saying, “Because that would have no power on the way.”

Again he said, “After all, how is it?” Once more he himself answered in their place, saying, “With the staff across your shoulders, and, paying other people no heed, you will immediately be gone into the thousand and ten thousand peaks.”

Verse:

His eyes are all dust and sand, his ears all dirt.

He dares not stay among the thousand and ten thousand peaks.

Falling blossoms, flowing waters – incessantly busy.

Raising his eyebrows, where is he going?

CASE 26: Hyakujô on Daiyû Peak

(No Instruction)

Case:

¹ Originally “Rengehō.” His real name was Shō, a Dharma grandson of Unmon Zenji.

² The great Zen personages of old.

A monk asked Hyakujô, “What is a matter of extraordinary wonder?” Hyakujô said, “Sitting alone – Great Peak Yû¹!” The monk made a deep bow. Hyakujô thereupon hit him.

Verse:

In the realm of the patriarch, the heavenly colt gallops freely.
The way he rolls up and unrolls in instructing people is not ordinary indeed.
In the flash of lightning, in the spark from flint, lies an outstanding activity.
How laughable!
The man is come to stroke the tiger's whiskers.

CASE 27: Unmon's “Complete Exposure”

Instruction:

Ask one and ten are answered; raise one and three are clarified.
You loosen the falcon when you see the rabbit, and fan the fire according to the wind.
You do not grudge your eyebrows, but let's leave aside that fact for a moment.
How is it when entering the tiger's cave? I will try to cite an example, look!

Case:

A monk asked Unmon, “How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?” Unmon answered, “Complete exposure of the golden wind².”

Verse:

The question already contains the essence;
The answer is also likewise.
The three phrases should be made clear;
A single arrow flies through the void.
Over the great plain, chilly whirlwinds whistle and howl;
The endless heavens are covered with drizzling rain.
Don't you see the long-sitting traveller of Shôrin, who will never return?
Quietly he lies on the grasses of Mt. Yûji.

CASE 28: Nansen's “Dharma That Has Never Been Preached”

(No Instruction)

¹ The name of the mountain, where Hyakujô's monastery was located.

² The autumn wind was also called “golden wind”.

Case:

Nansen went to see Master Hyakujô Nehan¹. Hyakujô asked, “Is there any dharma that the sages of the past have never preached to the people?” Nansen said, “There is.” Hyakujô asked, “What is this dharma that has never been preached to the people?” Nansen said, “This is not mind, this is not Buddha, this is not thing.” Hyakujô said, “You have preached like that.” Nansen said, “That’s how it is with me. How about you, Master?” Hyakujô said, “I am not a man of great wisdom. How am I to know whether there is a dharma that has been preached, or that has never been preached?” Nansen said, “I don’t understand.” Hyakujô said, “I have already preached to you fully.”

Verse:

Buddhas and patriarchs have never done anything to help others.
Patch-robed monks, now and in the past, run neck and neck.
The bright mirror on the stand clearly reflects each thing.
One by one, they face south and view the Northern Dipper.
The Dipper handle hangs down; there’s no place to look for it.
Tweak your nose, and your mouth is lost.

CASE 29: Daizui and the “Kalpa Fire”²

Instruction:

When a fish moves, the water is muddied; when a bird flies, feathers drop.
You plainly discern host and guest; clearly distinguish black from white.
It is like a clear mirror on a stand, or a bright jewel in the palm of the hand.
A man of Kan appears; a man of Ko comes.
It is shown in sound; it is revealed in colour.
Why is it like this? I will try to show you an example, look!

Case:

A monk asked Daizui, “When the great kalpa fire flames up, the whole universe³ will be destroyed. I wonder if *that* will also be destroyed or not.” Daizui said, “Destroyed.” The monk said, “If so, will *that* be gone with the other⁴?” Daizui said, “Gone with the other.”

Verse:

In the middle of the glow of the kalpa fire, raising the question,

¹ Nansen and Hyakujô Nehan were Dharma brother, Nansen being the younger one.

² Cf. Case 30 of the *Shoyoroku*.

³ Literally: “a universe as big as one billion solar systems”.

⁴ The word “the other” means “the whole universe.”

The monk is still loitering between the two barriers.
What a wonderful phrase, “Gone with the other”!
Ten thousand miles he wavers back and forth alone.

CASE 30: Jōshū's “Giant Radishes”

(No Instruction)

Case:

A monk asked Jōshū, “I've heard that you personally met Nansen. Is that true or not?”
Jōshū said, “The province of Chin¹ produces giant radishes.”

Verse:

The province of Chin produces giant radishes.
The monks under heaven take this as a model.
All too clearly one knows the past and the present;
How can one discern that the swan is white, and the crow is black?
Thief! Thief!
He wrung the nose of the monk.

CASE 31: Mayoku Circles Around the Master's Dais²

Instruction:

When it moves, a shadow appears; when it is perceived, ice forms.
Even if it neither moves nor is perceived, it is impossible to escape the fox's den.
When you penetrate to the bottom, and attain complete faith, so that there is not even a hairsbreadth of a shadow, you'll be like a dragon taking to water, or a tiger roaming its mountain.
When you release it, even a piece of rubble emits light.
When you grip it, even real gold loses its colour.
Even the koans of ancient masters cannot avoid becoming superfluous and verbose.
Tell me, then, what matter am I explaining here?
I'll give you an example, look!

Case:

¹ The province of Chin was famous for producing great radishes. Jōshū's monastery was also located in that area.

² Cf. Case 16 of the *Shoyoroku*.

Mayoku, with his ring-staff in hand, came to Shôkei. He circled around Shôkei's dais three times, shook the ring-staff and stood there bolt upright. Shôkei said, "Right, right!"

(Setchô comments, "Wrong!")

Mayoku then came to Nansen. He circled Nansen's dais three times, shook the ring-staff and stood there bolt upright. Nansen said, "Not right, not right!"

(Setchô comments, "Wrong!")

Then Mayoku said, "Master Shôkei said, 'Right, right!' Why, Master, do you say, 'Not right, not right!'" Nansen said, "With Shôkei it is right; with you it is not right. This is nothing but a whirling of the wind¹; it has already [completely] perished²."

Verse:

This "wrong!" That "wrong!" –

It is most regrettable to meddle with it.

The waves of the four oceans are calm,

And all rivers flow down into the sea.

The old staff of twelve gates is lofty;

Every gate has its own way, in empty serenity.

Not serenity!

The able man should search for medicine for non-sickness.

CASE 32: Jô and "the Essence of the Buddha-Dharma"

Instruction:

The ten directions are cut off by sitting; a thousand eyes are open all of a sudden.

One word cut through the stream; the ten thousand activities are thoroughly scraped out.

Is there anyone who dies, and comes to life in the same way?

What appears is the essence itself:

If you are not able to grasp this at one stroke, I will present a koan of an ancient. Look!

Case:

A senior monk Jô asked Rinzai, "What is the essence³ of the Buddha-Dharma?" Rinzai came down from his seat, grabbed him by the lapels, slapped him and thrust him away. Jô stood there as if rooted to the spot. A monk standing nearby said, "Senior monk Jô, why don't you make a deep bow?" As he made a deep bow, Jô suddenly attained a great enlightenment.

Verse:

¹ One of the four elements in Chinese physics (earth, air, fire, wind), wind is the element of movement.

² Another (usual) translation is: "In the end, it will perish."

³ Literally: "great meaning."

He inherited all of Dansai's¹ activities;
Then how could he just stay peaceful?
The mountain deity of Korei² raised his hand, and lo, without effort,
[Great] Mt. Ka, with its ten thousand ridges, was torn in two.³

CASE 33: Chinsô Has One Eye

Instruction:

One does not distinguish between east and west; one makes no division between north and south.
And this, from morning till evening, from evening till morning.
Will you say that one is asleep? Sometimes the eyes are like a shooting star.
Will you say that one is awake? Sometimes that one calls south, "north."
Just tell me, is this mindfulness, or mindlessness?
Is that one an enlightened sage, or an ordinary person?
If you can pass through this, and for the first time discern the ultimate place, you will truly know
the "yes" and "no" of the ancients.
But just tell me, which time is this?
I'll try to show you an example, look!

Case:

National Secretary Chinsô⁴ went to see Shifuku. When Shifuku saw him coming, he drew a circle. Chinsô said, "Your student has come, and that's already a failure. Why do you bother to draw a circle in addition?" Thereupon, Shifuku shut the door of his room.

(Setchô said, "Chinsô has but one eye.")

Verse:

Circular jewels go round,
Gems ring pure and clear.
Loaded on horses, donkeys, iron ships as well;
They are bestowed to the persons of no matter
Coming from land and sea.
Fishing for a giant tortoise,
One sometimes lowers a hook and line.
Setchô spoke again, saying,
"Not a monk under heaven can jump out."

¹ "Master Dansai" means Ôbaku Zenji, Rinzai's master.

² Literally: "giant Spirit."

³ The last two lines appear also in *Mumonkan* 3 (verse).

⁴ Chinsô was a student of Shifuku's.

CASE 34: Kyôzan's "Not Wandering"

(No Instruction)

Case:

Kyôzan asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From Mount Ro¹." Kyôzan said, "Have you wandered among the Five Elder Peaks²?" The monk said, "No, I have never been there." Kyôzan said, "Then you have never wandered in the Mountain at all."

Unmon said, "Because of too much compassion these words have fallen into grasses."³

Verse:

Entering the grasses, leaving the grasses:
Who knows how to track it down?
The white clouds piled up, the red sun shining bright.
Turn to the left, no blemishes;
Turn to the right, already grown old.
Don't you see the man of Cold Mountain⁴, who was gone so early?
He was not able to return for ten years,
And forgot the way he had come.

CASE 35: Manjusri's "Three Three"

Instruction:

You establish which is the snake, and which the dragon; distinguish stone from jewel; discern black and white; and settle all hesitancy.
If you do not have the frontal eye, and if you don't wear a talisman under your elbow, you'll easily miss a living moment.
Right now, seeing and hearing are un-obscured; sounds and colors are clear and true.
Tell me, is this black, or is it white? Bent, or straight?
Having come this far, how do you discern it?

Case:

¹ One of the most beautiful and most famous mountains in the southern part of China with many Zen monasteries.

² The Gorôhō Peak, translated as "Five Elder" Peak, is the most noted peak of Mt. Ro.

³ Cf. Unmon's own way of instructing a student in *Mumonkan* 15.

⁴ Namely, the legendary Zen man (T'ang Dynasty?) named "Kanzan."

Manjusri asked Mujaku, "Where have you come from?" Mujaku said, "From the south¹." Manjusri said, "How is the Buddhist Dharma in the south maintained?" Mujaku said, "The monks of this age of the perishing Dharma are venerating the precepts a little." Manjusri said, "How many monks are over there?" Mujaku said, "Three hundred here; five hundred there." Mujaku asked Manjusri, "How is the Buddhist Dharma maintained here?" Manjusri said, "Worldly and saints live together; dragons and snakes are mixed with each other." Mujaku said, "How many monks are here?" Manjusri said, "Three three before, three three behind²."

Verse:

Thousands of mountains range side by side; majestic blue is their colour.

Who says that he spoke with Manjusri?

How ridiculous to ask how many monks on Mt. Seiryô³!

Three three before, three three behind.

CASE 36: Chôsa Goes for a Stroll

(No Instruction)

Case:

One day, Chôsa went for a stroll in the mountains. When he returned to the gate, the head monk asked, "Where have you been, Master?" Chôsa said, "I was out walking about in the mountains." The head monk said, "Where did you go?" Chôsa said, "First, I went following the scented grass; then, I came back through the falling flowers." The head monk said, "It sounds very much like a spring mood." Chôsa said, "It's better than the autumn dew dropping on the lotus flower."

(Setchô commented, "I am grateful for these questions and answers."⁴)

Verse:

The great earth – not even a speck of dust.

Who can stay without opening the eye?

First, I went following the scented grass;

Then, I came back through the falling flowers.

A wasted crane stands on one leg, perched on a cold tree;

The crazy monkey screeches from the old foundation.

Chôsa's mind is limitless.

¹ The South of China, namely the region of Konan.

² Or: "Three three before, three three after."

³ A spiritual place for Manjusri. Literally, "seiryô" means "pure and cool."

⁴ Another possible translation: "I am grateful for that answer."

Totsu.¹

CASE 37: Banzan's "Not One Thing in the Three Realms"

Instruction:

It is futile to brood over the swiftest action that could catch the lightning; when the roaring thunder assails from the sky, you hardly have time to cover your ears.

The scarlet banner flutters over head; the twin swords are whirling behind the ears.

If you are not equipped with an able eye, and swift hands, how could you match that person?

Some people lower their heads, and keep pondering, trying to figure it out with their delusive thinking.

They scarcely know that they are seeing countless ghosts around the skull.

Now, tell me, if someone does not fall into delusive thinking, or get caught up in gain or loss, having a very clear understanding of the matter, how will you face such a person?

I will try to show you an example. Look!

Case:

Banzan, giving instruction, said, "In the three Realms², there is not one thing. Where should one seek the Mind³?"

Verse:

In the three Realms, there is not one thing.

Where should we seek the mind?

The white clouds make a covering,

The flowing spring turns into a lute.

One tune, two tunes – there is no one who understands.

The rain has passed, and the autumn waters are deep in the evening moat.

CASE 38: Fuketsu's "Mind Seal"

Instruction:

If you talk about the gradual, it goes against the normal, yet conforms to the Way.

Amid the busiest city, seven vertical and eight horizontal.

If you talk about the sudden, it leaves no tracks.

¹ A reproachful or insulting cry, like "Ha!"

² The Realm of desires, the Realm of materials, and the Realm of non-materials.

³ Jp.: "Shin" or "Kokoro". Other possible renderings would be "heart" or "heart-mind."

Even a thousand sages cannot seek it out.
If you raise neither the gradual nor the sudden, how will it be?
For the swift person, a single word; for the alert steed, one flick of the whip.
At such a time, who is the able Zen personage?
I will give you an example, look!

Case:

When he was staying at the government office of the Province Ei, Fuketsu entered the hall [to preach] and said, “The heart seal¹ of the Patriarch² resembles the activity of the iron ox³. When gone, it’s there; when there, it’s ruined⁴. If it’s neither gone nor there, would it be right to give a seal [of approval] or not?”

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

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

Fuketsu descended from the rostrum.

Verse:

He snares Rohi, and makes him mount the iron ox;
The spear and armour of the Three Profundities do not treat him lightly.
All waters heading for the castle of the So king –
At a single shout he reverses their course.

CASE 39: Unmon's “Flowering Hedge”

¹ The word “seal” [*in*] here means both the *stamp* that produces an impression and the *impression* that is produced by such a stamp. This double meaning is played upon in Fuketsu’s utterance.

² Bodhidharma.

³ In the Yellow River area in Sansei Province there was a road called Hotsu-kan. From the period of the Warring States a floating bridge was made upon the river, but every time the Yellow River flooded the bridge was washed away and had to be reconstructed. During the period of Emperor Gensô of the Tang Dynasty in 724 they constructed a floating bridge with ships, which were connected with one another through iron chains; these chains were then bound to anchors in the shape of iron oxen, iron men or iron pillars implemented in the middle of the river water. An iron ox was 1.5 meters high and 3.5 meters long, and weighed from 55 to 75 tons, according to the recent archaeological discovery.

⁴ Logically: When the *in* as the iron-ox stamp is gone, the *in* as its impression (or “seal” in the narrow sense) is there (i.e., becomes visible); when the *in* as the iron-ox stamp sits there, the *in* as its impression is ruined (, since you cannot see the impression as covered by the stamp itself).

Instruction:

One who can act freely on the road is like a tiger that has climbed to the mountains; one who flows along with worldly logic is like a monkey in a cage.

If you wish to know the truth of Buddha nature, you must take notice of times and causes.

If you wish to forge pure gold that has been refined a hundred times, it must be done with the furnace and bellows of a true master.

But tell me, when the great function is revealed, what can be taken to test it?

Case:

A monk asked Unmon, “What is the pure and clear Dharma-body¹?” Unmon said, “Flowering hedge [*Kayakuran*]²!” The monk said, “How is it when one grasps it that way?” Unmon said, “A golden-haired lion.”

Verse:

Flowering hedge: Don't look so stupid!

The pointer is on the scale arm, not on the measuring pan.

“... When one goes on that way...” – what a foolish thing to say!

A golden-haired lion: Everybody look!

CASE 40: Nansen and the Flower

Instruction:

Withdraw and cease; withdraw and give up.

Flowers bloom from the iron tree.

Is there? Is there?

The clever man suffers a failure.

Even though he is seven in length, and eight in width [completely free], he cannot avoid having his nose pierced by another.

Try to say where the error is.

As a test I quote this. Look!

Case:

High Official Rikukô, while talking with Nansen, said, “Dharma-teacher Jô³ says, 'Universe and I have one and the same root; all things and I are one single body.' How wonderful

¹ The body of the ultimate Truth (Jap. *hōshin*, sk. *dharmakaya*) or one of the three bodies of Buddha.

² It actually was a flower fence around a restroom.

³ “Jô Hosshi.”

this is!" Nansen pointed at the flowers in the garden, called to Rikukô and said, "People of our time¹ see these flowers as in a dream."

Verse:

Seeing, hearing, being aware, knowing: these are not one by one.
Mountains and rivers are as in a mirror, they are not seen.
Frosty sky; the moon has set; almost midnight.
With whom can this be tasted?
On the clear pool, reflections are shed:
How cold it is.

CASE 41: Jôshû's "Great Death"

Instruction:

Where right and wrong intermingle, even saints cannot know.
When rebellion and subservience cross paths, even Buddhas cannot speak.
Having become the one without equal and beyond compare, he reveals the ability of a great person standing out from the crowd.
He walks across icy peaks; he runs on top of swords.
Just like the head and horns of the kirin; like a lotus in fire.
Seeing another who has transcended all barriers, he knows immediately that person is of the same way.
Who is a good match for him?
To test, I cite this case. Look!

Case:

Jôshû asked Tôsu, "What is it if a man who has died a great Death comes back to life?"
Tôsu said, "I don't allow walking about in the night. Come in the daylight."

Verse:

In life there is an eye, but nevertheless it is the same as dead.
What need is there for restrictions on medicine in examining an accomplished Zen person?
The ancient Buddhas, he says, have never reached it.
Who knows how to throw dirt and sand?

¹ I.e. "you."

CASE 42: Hô Koji's "Beautiful Snow"

Instruction:

Presenting it directly, and playing alone.
Carrying water, and moving mud.
Drumming and singing occur together.
Silver mountains and iron walls.
Hesitate a moment, and you see a ghost before your skull.
Reflect an instant, and you sit under a black mountain.
It is shining under bright sunny skies.
A pure wind travels over the earth.
Just say: Did the ancients get involved in entanglements?
To test, I cite this case. Look!

Case:

Hô Koji¹ was leaving Yakusan. The latter ordered ten of his Zen students to see Koji off at the temple gate. Koji pointed to the falling snow in the air and said, "The beautiful snow-flakes don't fall on any other place." At that time there was a student named Zen², who said, "Where then do they fall?" Koji gave him a slap. Zen said, "Koji, don't be so rough." Koji said, "If you name yourself a Zen student in such a condition, Old En³ will never release you!" Zen said, "What then would you say, Koji?" Koji slapped him again and said, "You see with your eyes but you are just like a blind man. You speak with your mouth, but you are just like a dumb man."

(Setchô added his comment, "At the first words, I immediately would have made a snowball and hit him with it.")

Verse:

The snowball hits! The snowball hits!
Old Hô's activity cannot be grasped.
Neither angels nor humans know it for themselves.
In my eyes, and in my ears, an indescribable freshness.
Indescribable freshness.
Even the blue-eyed barbarian monk has trouble discerning it.

CASE 43: Tôzan's "Cold and Heat"

¹ *Koji* is an honorific for a lay practitioner of Buddhism.

² The Chinese character used for this name "Zen" (全) means "whole" or "entire"; it is different from Zen (禪) in "zazen" or "a Zen student."

³ Usually named "Emma-Daiô" (Emma, Great King of hell). He is supposed to be the fearful judge at the entrance of the realm of the dead.

Instruction:

A phrase that settles heaven and earth is obeyed by the ten thousand generations.

The activity that snares the tiger and buffalo cannot be distinguished, even by a thousand patriarchs.

At any moment, there is not the thinnest trace of shadow, and the whole activity manifests itself appropriately to the situation as well.

If you wish to make clear the tongs and hammer [of strict training] to the highest degree, you must go into the forge of a Zen master with abundant resources.

But just say have there ever been such family ways up to now?

To test, I cite this case, look!

Case:

A monk asked Tôzan, “When cold and heat come, how should one avoid them?” Tôzan said, “Why not go to a place where there is neither cold nor heat?” The monk said, “What kind of place is it where there is neither cold nor heat?” Tôzan said, “When it is cold, the cold kills you; when it is hot, the heat kills you.”¹

Verse:

When his hands hang at his sides, it is like a ten-thousand-foot cliff.

What need is there to arrange Hen and Shô² in order?

The ancient crystal palace shines in the bright moon.

The quick and clever dog of Kan³ climbs the staircase in vain.

CASE 44: Kasan's “Knowing How To Beat the Drum”

(No Instruction)

Case:

Kasan, giving instruction, said, “Practicing and learning – it is called 'hearing' (*mon*); exhausting learning – it is called 'being next [to the fact]' (*rin*). When you have passed through these two, it is called 'true *gone*-ness' (*shinka*). “

A monk stepped forward and asked, “What is the 'true *gone*-ness'?” Kasan said, “Beat the drum.”⁴ He asked again, “What is the true Reality?” Kasan said, “Beat the drum.” He asked again,

¹ It is also possible to translate: “When it is cold, kill yourself with the cold; when it is hot, kill yourself with the heat.”

² “Hen” means phenomena, while “shô” signifies essence.

³ It refers to a dog that belonged to a person called Kan.

⁴ Literally, “Knowing (how) to beat the drum.”

“I do not ask about the sentence, ‘The very Mind is Buddha.’¹ [But] What does ‘No Mind, no Buddha’² mean?” Kasan said, “Beat the drum.” He asked once more, “When someone who knows the ultimate Truth comes, how should we receive him?” Kasan said, “Beat the drum.”

Verse:

One dragged rocks; one carried dirt.
To release the activity it must be a bow of a thousand *shaku*³.
The master of Elephant-Bone Mountain⁴ once rolled balls.
How can this compare with Kasan's “Beat the drum”?
I will tell it to you and let you know.
Don't stand there in a daze!
What is sweet is sweet; what is bitter is bitter.

CASE 45: Jōshū's “Cloth Robe”

Instruction:

If he wishes to say it, he says it; and there's no one in the world who's his match.
When he has to act, he acts; and his total activity gives way to no one.
Like sparks struck from flint, like flashes of lightning.
Darting flames ride on the wind.
A raging torrent crosses knife edges.
Should even a supremely enlightened master appear, he will not escape having the tip of his sword cut off, and his tongue tied fast.
I open a narrow passageway as I test by citing this case. Look!

Case:

A monk asked Jōshū, “The ten thousand darmas⁵ come down to one. What does the one come down to?” Jōshū said, “When I was living in the Province of Sei, I made a cloth robe. It weighed seven pounds.”

Verse:

Knitting everything together, and cornering the old and ancient awl.
How many know its weight, the seven pound robe?
Right now I throw it into West Lake.

¹ Cf. Case 30 in the *Mumonkan*.

² Cf. Case 33 in the *Mumonkan*.

³ A powerful bow.

⁴ I.e., Seppō Zenji.

⁵ The word “dharma” means here “phenomenon”. “Ten thousand dharmas” means, therefore, “all things that exist in the world of phenomena”.

This fresh breeze after releasing the load—Whom can I give it to?

CASE 46: Kyôshô and the Raindrops

Instruction:

One strike of the gavel and Buddhahood is achieved, transcending the ordinary and overreaching the holy.

With half a phrase a settlement is made, undoing fetters and loosening attachments.

Like walking across icy peaks, or running over knife edges.

Though he sits within a heap of sounds and colours, he passes over the top of sounds and colours.

Putting aside for the moment the wondrous and completely free activity, what about the time when one fully realizes in an instant.

To test I bring this forth, look!

Case:

Kyôsei asked a monk, “What is that sound outside?” The monk said, “That is the sound of raindrops.” Kyôsei said, “People live in a topsy-turvy world. They lose themselves in delusion about themselves and only pursue [outside] objects.” The monk said, “What about you, Master?” Kyôsei said, “I was on the brink of losing myself in delusions about myself.” The monk said, “What do you mean, 'on the brink of losing myself in delusions about myself'?” Kyôsei said, “To break through [into the world of Essence] may be easy. But to express it in total *gone*-ness is difficult.”

Verse:

The empty hall; the sound of raindrops.

Even a great master finds it difficult to respond.

If you say that you already turned the stream within,

You still do not understand.

Understanding, not understanding.

South Mountain, North Mountain - a general downpour.

CASE 47: Unmon's “Six “

Instruction:

What does Heaven say? [Yet] the four seasons run their course.

What does Earth say? [Yet] the ten-thousand creatures are born.

Facing the direction in which the four seasons run their course, you must see the reality.

At the place where the ten-thousand creatures are born, you must see the function.

Just say now. Facing toward what place can you apprehend a patch-robed monk?

Having turned away from speaking, acting, moving, sitting and lying down; having closed up your mouth and lips; can you still speak about it?

Case:

A monk asked Unmon, “What is the Dharma-body¹?” Unmon said, “The six can’t contain it².”

Verse:

One, two, three, four, five, six.

Even the blue-eyed barbarian monk cannot count it completely.

The hermit of Shôrin³ deceptively says that he transmitted it to Shinkô⁴.

Rolling up his robe, he also says that he is returning to India.

India is endlessly distant; there is no way to find it.

As of last night, he is facing the Milk Peak⁵ and pitching his tent.

CASE 48: Tea at Shôkei Temple

(No Instruction)

Case:

Minister Ô⁶ visited Shôkei Temple, where he offered tea. The senior monk Rô took up the kettle to serve Myôshô⁷. But Rô overturned the kettle [over the tea hearth]. The minister saw this and asked the senior monk, “What is there under the tea hearth?” Rô said, “Deities holding up the hearth⁸.” The minister said, “If they are deities holding up the hearth, why did they overturn the kettle?” Rô said, “Thousand days of good service – all is lost in one morning.” The minister flourished his sleeves and went out.

Myôshô said, “Elder Rô, you have eaten plenty of rice in Shôkei Temple, and yet you are simply a [useless] stump in the field.” Rô said, “What would you have said, Master?” Myôshô said, “These non-human beings⁹ wreaked havoc.”

(Setchô said, “At that moment I would have kicked over the tea hearth.”)

¹ Cf. the note to Case 39.

² In this sentence the “six” means “six roots” (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, consciousness), “six objects” (color, voice, taste, touch, phenomenon), and/or “six consciousnesses/functions” (see, hear, smell, taste, feel, know). Or it could be any other “six”-ness. The whole sentence originally reads: *rokufushu*.

³ I.e., Bodhidharma.

⁴ The second patriarch Eka.

⁵ I.e., “Nyûhō”, the moundtain where Setchô resided.

⁶ Minister Ô was a patron of Shôkei Temple.

⁷ Myôshô was senior to Rô. He was the abbot of the neighboring temple and was apparently invited to the tea too.

⁸ The legs of the tea hearth were shaped like demi-gods.

⁹ I.e., the “deities who hold up the hearth”.

Verse:

The question which comes seems to make a sound.
The answering activity is neither good nor skilful.
How pitiful! The one-eyed dragon
Did not show his fangs and claws.
The fangs and claws open, creating clouds and thunder.
How many times have I passed through waves, reversing the river waters?

CASE 49: Sanshō's "Net"

Instruction:

Having penetrated and undermined the fortifications, he steals the drum and captures the flag.
Fortifying himself on all sides many times around, he surveys the front and observes the rear.
Even one who rides on the head of the tiger, and pulls the tiger's tail, is not an accomplished Zen person.
The ox's head disappears, and the horse's head returns.
But this is also not considered strange or special.
Tell me, how is it when one who surpasses this level arrives?
To test, I bring this up, look!

Case:

Sanshō asked Seppō, "When a fish with golden scales has passed through the net, what should it get for food?" Seppō said, "I will tell you when you have passed through the net." Sanshō said, "A great Zen master with 1500 disciples doesn't know how to speak." Seppō said, "The old monk¹ is just too busy with temple affairs."

Verse:

The golden scales have passed through the net.
Don't say you're still in the water.
He shakes the heavens, and sweeps the earth.
Wiggling his fins, and wriggling his tail.
A thousand-foot whale sends up a spout, and a great downpour occurs.
A peal of thunder and a fresh wind arises.
A fresh wind arises.
Of heavenly and earthly beings, how many are they that know?

¹ I.e., "I".

CASE 50: Unmon's and the "Dust-Dust Samadhi"

Instruction:

Passing beyond gradations and totally transcending skilful means,
activity and activity mutually mingle, while phrase fits with phrase.

If you do not enter the gate of great freedom, and gain the activity of great freedom, what will you
take to weigh Buddhas and Patriarchs, or to divine and mirror the fundamental vehicle?

Just tell me: When one can directly cut upon meeting the activity, and act with total freedom with
both the rebellious and submissive, how will one be able to say the word to leave the body?

To test, I bring this up, look!

Case:

A monk asked Unmon, "What is the dust-dust samadhi¹?" Unmon said, "Rice in the bowl,
water in the pail."

Verse:

Rice in the bucket, water in the pail.

Even loquacious monks find it hard to put in a word.

Northern Dipper and Southern Cross.

There is no vying for position.

White waves billow up to the heavens, and fall upon flat land.

Trying, not trying.

Stopping, not stopping.

Each one is the rich man's son who lacks a shirt for his back.

CASE 51: Seppô's "What Is This?"²

Instruction:

If there is even a bit of right and wrong, the mind is lost in confusion.

If you do not descend to gradations, there will be no searching.

Just say, is "letting go" right or is "holding fast" right?

If there is even an infinitesimally narrow road of understanding here,

One is still stuck in words.

Moreover, if you are caught up in hidden and apparent actions,

Each of them is hanging onto grasses and clinging to trees.

¹ The word "dust" comes from the expression "six dust particles", which means the same thing as the "six objects" (cf. note to Case 47).

² Cf. *Shoyoroku* Case 50.

Even if you have reached the point of solitary liberation,
You will not escape longing for the far-away gates of home.
Have you grasped it yet?
If not, just understand this totally revealed public case.
To test, I bring this up, look!

Case:

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

Later, the monks came to Gantô. He asked them, "Where have you come from?" The monks said, "From Reinan¹." Gantô said, "Did you ever visit Seppô?" The monks said, "Yes, we visited him." Gantô said, "What did he say?" The monks related what had happened. Gantô said, "What else did he say?" The monks said, "Not a word; he hung his head and retired into his hermitage." Gantô said, "Ah, how I regret now that in those days I did not tell him the last word! If I had told it to him, no one under heaven could do anything against him."

At the end of the summer practice period the monks came back to this conversation and asked him about its meaning. Gantô said, "Why didn't you ask me about it sooner?" The monk said, "We could not dare to ask you about it." Gantô said, "Seppô was born on the same stem as I², but he will not die on the same stem. If you want to know the last word, it is just this."

Verse:

The last word, I will it tell it for you.
The season when both bright and dark are of a pair.
Born of the same branch, they mutually know each other.
Not dying on the same branch, they are completely separate from each other.
Completely separate.
Yellow Head³ and Blue Eyes⁴ must also distinguish clearly.
South, North, East, West – let us return.
The night grows late and we both see the snow of a thousand crags.

CASE 52: Jôshû's Stone Bridge

(No Instruction)

¹ A region in the south, where Seppô was living at that time.

² Seppô and Gantô were both students of Tokusan; cf. Case 13 in the *Mumonkan*.

³ I.e., Shakyamuni Buddha.

⁴ I.e., Bodhidharma.

Case:

A monk asked Jôshû, “For a long time, the stone bridge of Jôshû¹ has echoed in my ears. But now that I've come here, I just see a log bridge.” Jôshû said, “You simply see a log bridge; you don't see the stone bridge yet.” The monk said, “What is the stone bridge?” Jôshû said, “It lets donkeys cross, it lets horses cross.”

Verse:

Not setting up the solitary and dangerous, his way is truly high.
Having entered the sea, you must catch a giant turtle.
How laughable! His contemporary, Kankei the Elder².
Although he knew how to say “a flying arrow,” it was wasted effort.

CASE 53: Hyakujô and the Wild Ducks

Instruction:

The entire universe has never hidden [anything];
The total activity reveals itself alone.
Touching the way, there is no stagnation;
Action by action, it possesses the activity which goes beyond the common level.
In each phrase there is no “I”;
In each word there is the intensity to kill people.
Just say, where did the ancients find rest and peace after all?
To test, I cite this, look!

Case:

When Great Master Ba was walking with Hyakujô, he saw wild ducks flying by. The Great Master said, “What is that?” Hyakujô said, “Wild ducks.” The Great Master said, “Where did they go?” Hyakujô said, “They flew away.” The Great Master twisted Hyakujô's nose tip. Hyakujô cried out in pain. The Great Master said, “How could they ever have flown away?”

Verse:

¹ Cf. the note to Case 9.

² Kankei Shikan (? -895) belonged to the Dharma line of Rinzai. There is a dialogue reported between him and a monk:

Monk: “For a long time, the deep pond of Kankei has echoed in my ears. But now that I've come here, I just see a tiny puddle.”

Kankei: “You simply see a tiny puddle; you don't see the deep pond yet.”

Monk: “What is the deep pond?”

Kankei: “It's as swift as a flying arrow.”

Wild ducks.
Do you know how many?
Baso sees it and talks about it together.
He has exhausted expounding on the sentiments of the mountain clouds and the ocean moon.
Still he¹ didn't understand and said, "Flew away."
He² wanted to fly away.
But he³ held him fast:
Speak! Speak!

CASE 54: Unmon Stretches His Arms

Instruction:

Passing beyond life and death, he freely brings forth the hidden activity.
With utter ease, he cuts through iron and nails.
Wherever he may be, he covers heaven and covers the earth.
Just say, whose life is this?
To test, I cite this, look!

Case:

Unmon asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From Saizen." Unmon said, "What words does Saizen say lately?" The monk stretched out his arms. Unmon slapped him. The monk said, "I have something to say about it." Unmon then stretched out his own arms. The monk remained silent. Then Unmon hit him.

Verse:

He simultaneously takes hold of the tiger's head and its tail.
His harsh dignity extends through the forty provinces.
You may wonder, "I don't know why it is so severe!"
The master⁴ says, "I'll spare one hand."

CASE 55: Dôgo's Condolence Visit

Instruction:

¹ Hyakujô.

² Hyakujô.

³ Master Ba.

⁴ I.e., Setchô Zenji himself, the compiler of the *Hekiganroku*.

Calm and intimate, the totally revealed truth is realized on the spot.
Following the stream and turning things around, it is understood in that instant.
In sparks struck from flint, in a flash of lighting, he sits and cuts off all delusions. While riding on
the tiger's head and grasping its tail,
He is a wall towering up a thousand feet.
But putting this aside for the moment,
Is there a way of teaching others while allowing a narrow road?
To test, I cite this, look!

Case:

Dôgo and Zengen came to a house to express condolences. Zengen tapped on the coffin and said, "Is this life or death?" Dôgo said, "I don't say life, I don't say death." Zengen said, "Why don't you?" Dôgo said, "I won't say, I won't say."

On the way back Zengen said, "Master, please say it to me right away. If you don't, I shall hit you." Dôgo said, "If you want to hit me, you can hit me. But I will never say." Thereupon Zengen hit him.

Some time later Dôgo passed away. Zengen went to Sekisô and told him what had happened. Sekisô said, "I don't say life, I don't say death." Zengen said, "Why don't you?" Sekisô said, "I won't say, I won't say." With these words, Zengen came suddenly to an insight.

One day, Zengen took a hoe and walked in the Dharma-hall from east to west and west to east. Sekisô said, "What are you doing?" Zengen said, "I am seeking the sacred bones of the late master." Sekisô said, "Giant billows far and wide; whitecaps swelling up to heaven. What sort of sacred bones of your late master are you searching for?" (Setchô commented, "Alas! Alas!") Zengen said, "That was very good for me in order to gain power."

Taigen Fu² said, "The sacred bones of the late master are still there."

Verse:

Rabbits and horses have horns;
Oxen and rams have no horns.
Extinguished is even the most minute hair, even the finest tuft;
It is like a mountain, it is like a peak.
The golden bones are here right now;
Giant billows far and wide, whitecaps swelling up to heaven—
Where can one put them at all?
There is no place to put them.
With one sandal he³ returns to the West and is lost forever to view.

¹ Literally: "Pale heavens! Pale heavens!"

² He stood in the Dharma line of Seppô.

³ Bodhidharma.

CASE 56: Kinzan and the "Arrow"

Instruction:

The myriad Buddhas have never come into the world;
There is no Dharma to be given to the people.
The patriarch has never come from the West;
There has never been a transmission of Mind.
As a matter of course, the people of this time do not understand;
They continue to run toward the outside looking for it.
They do not know that the single great matter lying beneath their feet
Has never been found by the thousand sages.
Right at this very moment: Seeing and not seeing, hearing and not hearing,
Speaking and not speaking, knowing and not knowing.
Where do they come from?
If you have not perceived, then go into the cave of entanglements and understand. To test, I cite
this case, look!

Case:

A Zen devotee named Ryô asked Kinzan, "What is it when one single arrow breaks through three barriers?" Kinzan said, "Drive out the master from behind the barriers, so that I may see him." Ryô said, "If so, I will acknowledge my failure and correct it." Kinzan said, "Till when do you want to wait?" Ryô said, "I made a nice shot, but no one could see the arrow," and he went out. Kinzan said, "Wait, sir." Ryô turned his head. Kinzan grasped him and said, "Let's put aside the story of the arrow which breaks through three barriers. Just shoot an arrow for me, so that I may see it." Ryô hesitated. Kinzan hit him seven times with a stick and said, "I will allow this fellow to keep puzzling for thirty years."

Verse:

I have brought him out for you, the master of the barrier.
Those who let loose arrows, don't be careless.
If you take this eye, the ears will surely become deaf;
If you take this ear, both eyes will go blind.
It is greatly to be admired, breaking through three barriers with a single arrow.
Distinct and clear, the path of the arrow.
Don't you see? Gensha¹ had something to say:
"The outstanding student precedes heaven in becoming the mind's patriarch."

¹ Master Gensha Shibi (835-908, disciple of Seppô).

CASE 57: Jôshû and the "Bumpkin"

Instruction:

Before passing through, it's all like silver mountains and iron walls.
After passing through, the self is intrinsically iron walls and silver mountains. Should there be someone who asks how it is,
I would turn to him and say, "If, right here, you can reveal an activity,
See a circumstance, sit and cut off the main crossing,
Thereby preventing passage to ordinary and holy,
This is not yet beyond your inherent capability."
If, however, it is not like this, observe the form of the ancients.

Case:

A monk asked Jôshû, "The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes choosing'¹. What is non-choosing?" Jôshû said, "Above the heavens and under the heavens I am the only one, alone and exalted." The monk said, "That is still choosing." Jôshû said, "You stupid bumpkin, where is the choosing?" The monk remained silent.

Verse:

It's as deep as the ocean; it's as hard as a mountain.
Mosquitoes and gnats play against a fierce wind in the emptiness;
Ants and termites shake an iron pillar.
Picking and choosing, a cloth drum hanging under the eaves.

CASE 58: Jôshû and the "Pitfall"

(No Instruction)

Case:

A monk asked Jôshû, "The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes choosing.' Isn't that the pitfall of the people of our time²?" Jôshû said, "Once someone asked me like that. I am sorry that even after five years I still can't give an answer to it."

Verse:

The elephant king bellows, the lion roars.
Talk with no flavor blocks up the mouths of the people.

¹ Cf. Case 2.

² Cf. note to Case 40.

South, North, East, West—
The crow flies, the rabbit runs.

CASE 59: Jôshû's "Supreme Way"

Instruction:

It includes all of heaven and ties up the earth in a bundle;
It transcends the holy and goes beyond the ordinary.
He plucks forth the Wondrous Mind of the Nirvana from the tips of a hundred weeds;
In the midst of a pile of shields and spears
 he establishes the life pulse of patch-robed monks.
Just tell me, whose power of kindness is called upon to attain such things as this?
To test, I cite this case, look!

Case:

A monk asked Jôshû, "The supreme way is not difficult, it simply dislikes choosing. But even if a word is uttered, it is already an action of 'choosing.' – Then how can you, Master, try to lead other people?" Jôshû said, "Why don't you quote the sentence to the end?" The monk said, "I just had this much in my mind." Jôshû said, "Just: 'The supreme way is not difficult; it simply dislikes choosing.'"

Verse:

Even though water is poured on, it does not get wet.
Even though the wind blows, it does not enter.
He walks like a tiger, he moves like a dragon.
Spirits howl and gods weep.
His head is three feet high; who is this?
He is facing us wordlessly while standing on one leg.

CASE 60: Unmon's Staff

Instruction:

The myriad Buddhas and sentient beings are intrinsically not different;
How could there be any difference between mountains-and-rivers and myself?
Why is it, then, that everything goes and forms two?
Even if you can skillfully unwrap the koan and thereby block up the main harbor,
 if you leave it as is, that will not do.
If you do not leave it as is,

it will be nothing at all to pick up the entire universe between your fingers. Where is the place where you can do this unwrapping?

To test, I'm citing this case, look!

Case:

Unmon showed his staff to the assembly and said, “This staff has changed into a dragon and has swallowed up the heaven and the earth. Where do mountains, rivers and the great earth come from?”

Verse:

A staff swallows up the universe.

In vain one tells about peach blossoms whirling on the waves¹.

Those who have their tails burned off² do not [always] grasp clouds
and take hold of mist;

Those that lie spreading their gills³ should not necessarily lose guts
and lack inner spunk.

I have finished grasping it.

Are you listening or not?

You must be smooth and flowing.

Moreover, you must stop scrupling over details.

The seventy-two blows are too little for you;

It would be difficult to spare you one-hundred and fifty.

The master⁴ suddenly picks up his staff and descends from the rostrum.

The multitudes scatter at once.

CASE 61: Fuketsu's “House and Nation”

Instruction:

To raise the Dharma flag and establish the sect essentials
should be left to those who are skilled at it.

To distinguish between dragons and snakes and to separate black and white
must be the ability of an accomplished Zen person.

¹ In the ancient China, a man named To split up a mountain in order to avoid floods; he made a gigantic three-step waterfall to guide the water. In the peach blossom season, the carps would come to swim up the “Three-step Waterfall of To”; those carps which successfully climbed up the waterfall are said to have changed into dragon, to soar up to heaven.

² The carps that succeeded in swimming up the Waterfall would get their “tails burned off” by the thunder and thus soar up to heaven.

³ The carps that could not climb up the waterfall and therefore hit their bodies on the rock and

⁴ Setchô himself.

To speak about killing and giving life on the edge of a sword,
to judge the activity with a staff – these I will leave aside for the time being.
Just tell me, how will you speak a word about being alone
within the imperial precincts?
To test, I cite this case. Look!

Case:

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

(Setchô held up his staff and said, “Is there anyone who lives and dies with this?”)

Verse:

The old ones out in the field might raise their eyebrows;
For the time being one wishes to establish a firm foundation for the nation.
Bright ministers and brave generals, where are they now?
The pure wind of ten thousand miles, I alone know.

CASE 62: Unmon's “One Treasure”

Instruction:

Using the wisdom of no-teacher, he reveals the wondrous activity of non-doing;

Using the compassion of no-relationships,

he becomes the outstanding friend whom no one asks for.

In one word there is killing, there is giving life;

In the midst of a single activity there is letting go and holding fast.

Just tell me. Who formerly came in this way?

To test, I cite this case, look!

Case:

Unmon, instructing the assembly, said, “Within heaven and earth, in the midst of the universe, there is one treasure hidden in a body.¹ You take up the lantern and go to the Buddha Hall; you take the temple gate and put it on the lantern.”

Verse:

Look, look! Who is holding a fishing pole on the ancient river bank?

The clouds roll on; the waters stretch out endlessly.

In the bright moon the white reed-flowers – see for yourself.

¹ A sentence from the *Hôzôron* by Monk Jô (? -414).

CASE 63: Nansen Kills a Cat¹

Instruction:

The roads of thought go no further – here is truly good teaching.
Words and letters do not reach it – you should quickly fasten your eye upon it.
If lightning should dart and stars fly by,
 you will overturn the ocean and knock down the mountains.
Is there anyone in the assembly who can say it?
To test, I cite this, look!

Case:

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

Verse:

The monks of both halls are careless good-for-nothings.
Stirring up smoke and dust – to what avail?
Fortunately Nansen was able to carry out the order.
With one sword stroke, he cut it in two,
Leaving narrow-minded critics to say what they will.

CASE 64: Jôshû and the Sandals²

(No Instruction)

Case:

Nansen told Jôshû what had happened, and asked him for his view. Jôshû thereupon took his sandals, put them upon his head and went away.

Nansen said, “If you had been there, I could have spared the cat.”

Verse:

The koan reaches completion upon his asking Jôshû.

¹ Cf. Case 14 in the *Mumonkan*, Case 9 in the *Shoyoroku*.

² Cf. Case 14 in the *Mumonkan*, Case 9 in the *Shoyoroku*.

Within the city of Chôan¹, one is free to wander at leisure.
Putting the sandals on his head – no one understands.
Returning he reaches his home and rests there.

CASE 65: A Non-Buddhist Questions Buddha²

Instruction:

While having no form it forms itself;
It is complete emptiness which stretches out in all directions.
While having no mind it responds;
It spreads out through the universe with no difficulty.
In holding up one, he clarifies three;
His eye immediately discerns pennyweights and ounces.
Even if the blows of your stick fall like rain and your shout is like rolling thunder,
You have yet to gain the behavior of the truly outstanding person.
Just tell me, what is the affair of the truly outstanding person?
To test, I cite this case, look!

Case:

A non-Buddhist asked Buddha, “I do not ask about words, I do not ask about no-words.” Buddha remained still. The non-Buddhist praised him and said, “The great benevolence and great mercy of the World-Honored One have opened the clouds of my delusion and enabled me to enter the Way.”

After the non-Buddhist took his leave, Ananda asked Buddha, “What did the non-Buddhist realize so that he said you had enabled him to enter the Way?” Buddha said, “He is like a fine horse that runs even at the shadow of a whip.”

Verse:

The wheel of activity has never yet turned;
If it were to turn it would definitely run into two.
A bright mirror is suddenly put on the stand;
It instantaneously discerns the beautiful and the ugly.
When the beautiful and ugly are discerned, the clouds of delusion open;
Where is there any place for dust to appear on the gate of compassion?
Therefore I think of the good horse discerning the shadow of the whip.
The “Wind”³ that runs a thousand *li* [a day] is called and turned back;

¹ The capital city of the ancient China.

² Cf. Case 32 in the *Mumonkan*.

³ The name of the excellent horse owned by the Emperor Shi.

If he is called and turned back, I snap my fingers three times¹.

CASE 66: Gantô and the "Sword"

Instruction:

When facing the student in a win-or-lose situation, he sets a tiger trap.

He attacks from the front and from the side,

spreading a scheme to catch the bandit;

Responding to the bright, responding to the dark,

releasing both and gathering both in.

Knowing how to play with a dead snake is a matter for an outstanding master.

Case:

Gantô asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From Saikyô²." Gantô said, "After Kôsô³ was gone, did you get his sword?" The monk said, "Yes, I got it." Gantô stuck out his neck, approached the monk, and said, "Ka!" The monk said, "The Master's head has already fallen." Gantô laughed loudly.

Later, the monk came to Seppô. Seppô asked, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From Gantô." Seppô asked, "What did he say?" The monk told him what had happened. Seppô gave him thirty blows with his stick and drove him away.

Verse:

After Kôsô passed away he picked up the sword.

Great laughter! – a great Zen person should appreciate it.

Thirty blows with a mountain staff, but this was still a mild show of anger.

Making a profit is losing the profit.

CASE 67: Fu Daishi Expounds the Sutra

(No Instruction)

Case:

¹ A sign of rejection, as "Go back!" or "Get out of here!"

² The western capital of the Tang Dynasty.

³ A rebel who – according to a legend – received a sword from heaven on which it was inscribed, "Heaven gives Kôsô this sword." He conquered Saikyô in 880, but was killed four years later.

Emperor Bu of Ryô¹ invited Fu Daishi² and asked him to lecture on the Diamond Sutra. Daishi thereupon mounted the rostrum, struck the lectern once and descended. Emperor Bu was astounded. Shikô³ asked him, “Did Your Majesty understand it?” The emperor said, “I don’t understand it.” Shikô said, “Daishi has already finished his Sutra lecture.”

Verse:

Facing Sôrin⁴, he does not lay down this body [there].
On the contrary, [coming to] the land of Ryô he stirred up dust.
If Old Shikô hadn’t been there at the time,
He, too⁵, would have been one who left the country with hasty steps.

CASE 68: Kyôzan and “Your Name”

Instruction:

In overturning the North Star, upsetting the axis of the earth,
Catching tigers and rhinos, or distinguishing between snakes and dragons:
There must be an extremely sharp fellow for each phrase to match
and for each activity to correspond with one another.
But has there been anyone up to now who was truly like this?
I ask to bring this up, look!

Case:

Kyôzan asked Sanshô, “What’s your name?” Sanshô said, “Ejaku⁶.” Kyôzan said, “Ejaku – that’s me.” Sanshô said, “My name is Enen⁷.” Kyôzan laughed loudly.

Verse:

Gathering in both and letting go of both – what is the principle?
Riding a tiger has always required supreme skill.
Having stopped laughing, you don’t know where the laughter has gone to.
Yet it should stir the sad wind a thousand years old.

¹ Cf. Case 1.

² “Daishi” means Bodhisattva.

³ Cf. Case 1.

⁴ The place where Fu Daishi lived (lit.: “double forest”).

⁵ That is, like Bodhidharma.

⁶ The complete name of Kyôzan is “Kyôzan Ejaku”.

⁷ The complete name of Sanshô is Sanshô Enen.

CASE 69: Nansen Draws a Circle

Instruction:

Where there is no chewing and pecking,
the patriarchs' heart-seal resembles the activity of the iron ox.
Patch-robed monks who have passed through the forest of prickly briars
are like snow on a red hot oven.
Putting aside for a while the ability
to pass through seven loops and eight holes on level ground,
How is it when one does not fall into entangling relationships?
To test, I bring this up, look!

Case:

Nansen, Kisu and Mayoku set out together to pay their respects to the National Teacher Chû¹. On their way Nansen drew a circle on the ground and said, "If you can say something, then let's go farther." Kisu seated himself² in the circle. Mayoku made an informal bow. Nansen said, "If it is so, then let's not go any farther." Kisu said, "What is this all about?"

Verse:

Yûki's³ arrow hit the monkey;
Although it spins circles around the tree, how straight it flies!
There are a thousand, there are ten-thousand;
How many have ever hit the mark?
Calling mutually and responding mutually – let us go home.
On the road to Sôkei⁴, you should stop climbing.
He also said, "The road to Sôkei is completely flat;
Why do you stop climbing?"

CASE 70: Isan's "Speak, Master"

Instruction:

For the quick man, one word;
For the quick horse, one crack of the whip.
Ten-thousand years is an instant;
An instant is ten-thousand years.

¹ His full name is Echû.

² I.e., in Zazen posture.

³ A legendary master of archery.

⁴ The mountain where the Sixth Patriarch resided. Here it means the National Teacher Echû.

If you want to know directly, it is the matter before it is brought up.
But just say, before it is brought up how can it be looked for?
I beg to bring this up, look!

Case:

Isan, Gohô and Ungan were all attending upon Hyakujô. Hyakujô asked Isan, "How does one speak with one's lips and throat closed?" Isan said, "I'd rather have you speak, Master." Hyakujô said, "I might as well speak to you, but then, I would lose my Dharma descendants."

Verse:

"I'd rather have you speak, Master."
Horns grow on the tiger's head as he emerges from the weeds.
In the ten provinces, spring ends and the flowers fade away;
Over the coral forest the sun shines brilliantly.

CASE 71: Gohô's "Close!"

(No Instruction)

Case:

Hyakujô said to Gohô, "How does one speak with one's lips and throat closed?" Gohô said, "You too, Master, should close your lips and throat." Hyakujô said, "Where there is no one, I will shade my eyes with my hand¹ and look up to you respectfully."

Verse:

"You, too, Master, should close your mouth."
In the dragon and snake battle formations, he² sees the plot.
He³ reminds people of General Li⁴.
Over the horizon, ten-thousand miles high, he⁵ brings down an osprey.

CASE 72: Ungan's "Can You?"

¹ A gesture expressing admiration.

² Hyakujô.

³ Gohô.

⁴ A great master of archery, who fled successfully from a devastating battle through a cunning device.

⁵ Hyakujô.

(No Instruction)

Case:

Hyakujô said to Ungan, “How does one speak with one's lips and throat closed?” Ungan said, “Can you, Master, do such a thing?” Hyakujô said, “Now I will lose my Dharma descendants.”

Verse:

“Master, can you do such a thing?”
The golden-maned lion does not crouch [yet].
By twos and threes they walk the old road.
He¹ snaps his fingers in vain below Daiyû Peak.

CASE 73: Ba and “One Hundred Negations”²

Instruction:

Preaching the Dharma means no preaching and no showing;
Hearing the Dharma means no hearing and no gaining.
Preaching is already neither preaching nor showing;
How can it be better than not preaching?
Hearing is already neither hearing nor gaining;
How can it be better than not hearing?
Furthermore, not-preaching and not-hearing correspond a little bit [to the real fact].
Still, you people here and now are listening to what I am saying.
How is it possible to avoid this error?
For those who have an eye after having passed the barrier, I bring this up, look!

Case:

A monk asked Great Master Ba, “Apart from the Four Phrases, beyond one hundred Negations³, please tell me directly, Master, the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West.” Master Ba said, “I am tired today, I can't explain it to you. Go and ask Chizô.” The monk asked Chizô about it. Chizô said, “Why don't you ask our master?” The monk said, “He told me to ask you.” Chizô said, “I have a headache today, I can't explain it to you. Go and ask Brother Kai.” The monk asked Brother Kai about it. Kai said, “I don't understand anything about that question.” The monk told Great Master Ba about it. Great Master said, “Chizô's head is white, Kai's head is black.”

¹ Hyakujô. Here, the snapping of the fingers means, “Go away!”

² Cf. Case 6 in the *Shôyôroku*.

³ I.e., free from all theories and concepts.

Verse:

“Chizô’s head is white, Kai’s head is black” –
Even the clear-eyed patchrobed monks do not understand.
The horse¹ tramples to death all people under heaven.
Not even Rinzai is yet a thief in broad daylight.
Apart from the Four Phrases, beyond one hundred Negations –
In heaven and among humans, I alone know.

CASE 74: Kingyû’s Rice Bucket

Instruction:

Holding the sharpest sword straight out before him,
He cuts through the nests of entanglements before its point.
He hangs the bright mirror high
And in the midst of a phrase he brings forth the seal of Vairocana.
Where the field-ground² is most intimate and peaceful,
He dons his robes and eats his food.
Where heavenly powers have free play, how could ships get together?
Have you understood well?
Look at the words below.

Case:

At each meal, Master Kingyû himself would bring the rice bucket to the front of the Zen hall, dance there and laugh loudly, saying, “Dear Bodhisattvas, come and eat rice!”

(Setchô said, “Although he behaved that way, he was not being kind.”)

A monk asked Chôkei, “An ancient worthy said, ‘Dear Bodhisattvas, come and eat rice.’ What does it mean?” Chôkei said, “That is exactly like praising and giving thanks at the midday meal.”

Verse:

In the shadow of the white clouds – great laughter!
He takes it with both hands and gives it to others.
If they were cubs of the golden-maned lion,
They would see what he was doing three thousand miles away.

¹ I.e., Great Master Ba, the word “ba” meaning a horse.

² Another expression for the “heart.”

CASE 75: Ukyû's Blind Stick

Instruction:

The jeweled sword with the subtle tip is constantly revealed before us.
It can kill and it can give life;
It is there and it is here.
Both gaining and both losing.
If you want to hold it tight, I allow you to hold it tight;
If you want to loosen it, I allow you to loosen it.
Just tell me:
How is it when one does not fall into guest or master
And does not get caught up when mutually interacting?
To test, I am citing this, look!

Case:

A monk came from Master Jôshû¹ to Ukyû. Ukyû asked, "What is the difference between Jôshû's Dharma-way and the Dharma-way here?" The monk said, "There is no difference." Ukyû said, "If there isn't any difference, return to him again," and hit him. The monk said, "Your stick should have an eye. You should not hit a person so recklessly." Ukyû said, "Today I hit a right man," and he hit him three more times. The monk went out immediately. Ukyû said, "There is a fellow who well deserves a blind stick." The monk turned and said, "What shall I do, as the stick is in your hand?" Ukyû said, "If you need it, I will give it to you." The monk approached him, snatched the stick from his hand and hit him three times. Ukyû said, "Blind stick, blind stick!" The monk said, "There is a fellow who well deserves it." Ukyû said, "I have hit a real man quite wantonly." Then the monk promptly made a bow. Ukyû said, "Master, is that the way you want to finish it?" The monk laughed loudly and went away. Ukyû said, "You got it, you got it."²

Verse:

To call [the snakes] is easy but to send [them] away is difficult.
Observe carefully how they mutually exchange the tips of their activity.
The kalpa rock is hard, but it, too, will be pulverized;
Even in the deepest place in the ocean, it will quickly dry up.
Old Ukyû, old Ukyû! How many maneuvers did you have at all?
There was indeed no need to give him the stick.

CASE 76: Tanka's "Eating Rice"

¹ This is not the famous master Jôshû Jûshin in the *Mumonkan*, etc., but Master Jôshû Sekizô (718-800).

² Another rendering would be: "Is that right, is that right!"

Instruction:

Fine as rice powder, cold as ice and frost:
It completely fills the universe, leaving bright and transcending dark.
If you look at a very low place, there is [still] something excessive;
If you look at a very high place, you cannot level it enough.
Holding fast and letting go – all are within his reach.
Is there, however, a place to completely come out of the body¹ or not?
To test, I bring this up, look!

Case:

Tanka asked a monk, “Where have you come from?” The monk answered, “From the foot of the mountain.” Tanka said, “Have you eaten your rice?” The monk said, “Yes I have eaten it.” Tanka said, “The one who brought rice and gave it to you to eat – did he have an [enlightened] eye?” The monk said nothing.

Chôkei asked Hofuku, “Surely it is an act of thanksgiving² to bring rice and give it to the people to eat. How then is it possible not to have an [enlightened] eye?” Hofuku said, “Server and receiver are both blind.” Chôkei said, “Even if one has done everything, does one still remain blind, or not?” Hofuku said, “Do you call me blind?”

Verse:

If the activity is completely exhausted, it does not become blind;
[But it was like] pushing down the head of an ox and forcing it to eat grass³.
Four times seven and two times three⁴ – all the patriarchs,
Bringing out the jeweled receptacles, creating errors.
The error is deep; there is no place to find it.
Both heavenly beings and humans drown on dry land.

CASE 77: Unmon's “Rice Cake”

Instruction:

If he turns to the highest, he ties up the nostrils of all people under heaven.
He is like a falcon catching a dove.
If he turns to the lowest, his own nostrils are in the hands of others.
He is like a turtle in its shell.

¹ Virtually, it means to transcend satori.

² That is, for the guidance already received from buddhas, patriarchs and masters.

³ There is a story in a sutra in which a man takes up the head of a dead cow and pushes grass into its mouth, saying, “Eat it, eat it!”

⁴ There are 28 Indian patriarchs (4x7) and 6 Chinese patriarchs (2x3).

If, in the midst of this, someone should suddenly come forth and say,
“There is intrinsically no highest and no lowest; what will you do by turning?”
I would tell him, “Now I know: you too make a living in the cave of devils.”
Just tell me: How do you distinguish between black and white?
He was silent for a moment and said, “If there is a clause, you follow that clause;
If there is no clause, follow an actual example.”
I will try to bring it up, look.

Case:

A monk asked Unmon, “What is meant by the expression ‘to go beyond the Buddha and the Patriarchs’?” Unmon said, “Rice cake¹.”

Verse:

Many are the Zen students who ask about the expression to “go beyond.”
Do you see the rent, so big and wide?
Even cries of “Kobyô” do not mend the holes.
Up until now there have been mistakes under heaven.

CASE 78: The Bodhisattvas Take a Bath

(No Instruction)

Case:

In the old days there were sixteen bodhisattvas. When the monks took a bath, they too entered the bath according to their custom. At once they realized the cause of water.

Now, my Zen friends, how do you understand this?² The bodhisattvas said, “Wonderful feeling! Perfectly clear! We have attained the dwelling place of the children of Buddha.”

You can attain it – only by breaking through seven times and digging through eight times.

Verse:

A patch-robed monk who has finished the practice solves one matter;
He can lie down with his legs stretched out on the zazen floor.
Earlier, in a dream, you once spoke about realizing perfect freedom;
Even though you have washed with perfumed water, I will spit in your face.

¹ In Japanese: *kobyô*. Cheap and unrefined rice cake, made with sesame.

² It is Setchô who speaks here.

CASE 79: Tōsu and “the Buddha’s Voices”

Instruction:

In revealing the great activity there are no set rules;
In catching alive, there is no wasted energy.
Just tell me, what person is this who formerly came this way?
To test, I bring this up, look!

Case:

A monk asked Tōsu, “It is said, ‘All voices are the voices of the Buddha.’¹ Is it true or not?” Tōsu said, “It is true.” The monk said, “Master, don’t fart around so loudly.” Thereupon, Tōsu hit him. He asked again, “It is said, ‘Rough words and gentle phrases return to the first principle.’ Is this true or not?” Tōsu said, “It is true.” The monk said, “May I call you, Master, a donkey?” Thereupon, Tōsu hit him.

Verse:

Tōsu! Tōsu! The wheel of activity has no obstruction.
Casting one down, he gains two.
It is the same with that, it is the same with this.
What a pity, a man playing without end in the tide;
In the end he falls into the tide and dies.
But if he is suddenly brought to life,
A hundred rivers reverse their course with a great surge.

CASE 80: Jōshū and a “Newborn Infant”

(No Instruction)

Case:

A monk asked Jōshū, “Does a newborn infant have the Six Consciousnesses² or not?” Jōshū said, “Throwing a ball³ on the swift current.”

The monk asked also Tōsu, “What does ‘throwing a ball on the swift current’ mean?” Tōsu said, “Thought by thought, it flows without ceasing.”

Verse:

The sixth consciousness, devoid of merits: [there] a question is posed.

¹ Citations are from the Nirvana-Sutra.

² I.e., “see, hear, smell, taste, feel, know.” Cf. the note to Case 47.

³ Or: “balls”.

The adepts both knew where it was coming from.
Bouncing a ball upon vast swift waters:
Where it ends – it never stops – : who could ever see it?

CASE 81: Yakusan's "Look! The Arrow!"

Instruction:

Taking the banner and stealing the drum:
Even a thousand sages cannot discern it.
Cutting through complications through sitting:
Ten-thousand activities do not reach it.
But these are not extraordinary feats or wondrous deeds.
It is also not innate ability.
Just tell me: what does he take hold of to attain such wondrous things?

Case:

A monk asked Yakusan, "On the grassy plain there gather great and small deer. How can one shoot the greatest deer of them all?" Yakusan said, "Look! the arrow!" The monk threw himself on the floor. Yakusan said, "Attendants! Carry this dead fellow out of here." Thereupon, the monk ran away. Yakusan said, "This fellow will keep playing with mud balls for ever and ever."

(Setchô took up this story and said, "He is alive for three steps, but he should die with five steps.")

Verse:

The elk amidst the elks:
You must see him yourself.
An arrow is shot:
He runs three steps;
If he is brought to life with five steps, he will form a herd and meet the tiger.
The true eye has always belonged to the hunter.
Setchô raises his voice and says, "Watch the arrow!"

CASE 82: Dairiyû and the "Dharma-Body"

Instruction:

The line on the fishing pole: those who have an eye know it.
The activity beyond the bounds: the Zen adept discriminate it.
But tell me:

What is the line on the fishing pole? What is the activity beyond the bounds?
To test, I am citing this, look!

Case:

A monk asked Dairyû, “The phenomenal body perishes. What is the Dharma-body which remains solid?” Dairyû said, “The autumn foliage of the mountains spreads like brocade; the water in the valley remains blue as indigo.”

Verse:

Not knowing one asks a question;
In answering one does not understand.
The moon is cold, the wind is high;
On the ancient crag sits the cold cypress tree.
How laughable: meeting a person who has accomplished the Way upon the road,
And responding with neither words or silence.
Holding a whip of white jade in one’s hand,
One pulverizes the jewel of the black dragon.
If it had not been pulverized, flaws would have been increased.
The nation has a constitution; three thousand crimes against the Law.

CASE 83: The Old Buddha and a Pillar

(No Instruction)

Case:

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

Verse:

Clouds on South Mountain, rain on North Mountain:
Four times seven¹, two times three² – they all see it right before them.
In the Kingdom of Silla one ascends the preaching seat;
In the Kingdom of T'ang they have not yet struck the drum.
Pleasure amid suffering, suffering amid pleasure.
Who says that gold is like excrement?

¹ I.e., 28 patriarchs in India.

² I.e., 6 patriarchs in China.

CASE 84: Vimalakirti and “Not-Two”

Instruction:

Even when you say “yes,” there is nothing which is “yes.”

Even when you say “no,” there is nothing which is “no.”

“Yes” and “No” are already gone; gain and loss have both been forgotten.

Completely exposed, perfectly naked.

Just tell me: What is it that is in front and in the back?

A patch-robed monk may appear and say,

“In front is the Buddha hall and the main gate; behind is the sleeping hall and the master's cottage.”

But tell me: Does this person have an eye or not?

If you can discern him, I will allow you to be on intimate terms with the ancients.

Case:

Vimalakirti¹ asked Manjusri, “What does it mean that the Bodhisattva enters the Dharma-gate of Not-Two?” Manjusri said, “I see it like this: in all phenomena, there are neither words nor explanations, neither presentations nor knowledge; it is beyond all questions and answers. That is what I understand with ‘to enter the Dharma-gate of Not-Two.’”

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

(Setchô said, “What did Vimalakirti say?” Again he said, “Seen through!”)

Verse:

*Totsu*²! This old Vimalakirti.

Feeling sorry for living beings, he suffers in vain.

He was lying ill in [a city called] Vaisali;

And his entire body was extremely wasted and thin.

“The teacher of the seven Buddhas”³ came,

The single room had been swept free of all dust.

He asked about the gate of “Not-Two.”

¹ An excellent lay disciple of Shakyamuni. He is said to have had the same degree of enlightenment as Shakyamuni himself. Once he became very ill, and Shakyamuni wanted to send someone out of his disciples to go and pay a visit to Vimalakirti in bed. But no one wanted to go, because they knew they would be severely checked in their Dharma eye by Vimalakirti. At last, Shakyamuni sent Manjusri. Then, unexpectedly, a big group of Shakyamuni's disciples wanted to accompany Manjusri, so they all came to Vimalakirti. The koan starts from there.

² A reproachful or insulting cry, “Ha!” etc.

³ I.e., Manjusri.

At that time he pushed him down;
But he was not pushed down.
There is no place to find the golden-haired lion.

CASE 85: Tôhô and the "Tiger"

Instruction:

To grasp and fix down the entire universe without letting go of the finest hair;
To cause everyone in the world to lose their spear-tips and have their tongues tied: This is the true command of patch-robed monks.
To release light from one's forehead and let it shine through the four heavens:
This is the diamond eye of patch-robed monks.
To touch iron and produce gold; to touch gold and produce iron;
To suddenly gather in and suddenly release:
This is the staff of patch-robed monks.
To cut off¹ the tongues of all people under heaven,
And make them lose their spirit and retreat three thousand miles:
This is the spirited activity of the patch-robed monk.
Just tell me: When it is not like this at all, what kind of person is this?
To test, I cite this case, look!

Case:

A monk came to the hermit Tôhô and asked, "What if you suddenly faced a tiger here?" The hermit roared like a tiger. Thereupon the monk pretended to be frightened. The hermit laughed loudly. The monk said, "You old robber!" The hermit said, "What can you do to me?" The monk said nothing further.

(Setchô said, "They are certainly right, but these two evil robbers only know how to steal a small bell while they stop their ears.")

Verse:

If you do not pounce upon it when you see it,
You will be regretting it for the next thousand miles.
Nice-looking stripes, but they do not yet have claws and teeth.
Didn't you see how they suddenly met under the Peak Daiyû?²
With great light and sound the earth trembled.
Do outstanding Zen persons see it or not?

¹ Literally: cut off through sitting.

² The mountain where Hyakujô resided. "They" means Master Hyakujô and his great disciple Ôbaku, who had a very powerful dharma combat concerning a lion.

He pulls the tiger's tail and strokes the tiger's beard.

CASE 86: Unmon's "Bright Light"

Instruction:

One has the world firmly in one's grasp without a hairsbreadth of space;

One cuts off the myriad streams, leaving not a drop.

If you open your mouth it is already an error;

If you have a doubt it is already off the mark.

Just tell me: What is the eye which has passed the barrier?

To test I am citing this, look!

Case:

Unmon, giving instruction, said, "Everyone has his or her own bright light. When you look at it, you can't see it; it is complete darkness. Now, what is the bright light of you all?" He himself answered on behalf of the monks, "The kitchen and the entrance gate." Again he said, "It would be better not to have even the best things."

Verse:

Shining on its own, the solitary light in a row.

I open up a single way for you.

The flowers fall; the tree has no shadow.

When seeing, who does not see?

Seeing, not seeing.

Riding backwards on the bull and entering the Buddha hall.

CASE 87: Unmon's "Medicine and Disease"

Instruction:

For the clear-eyed person there are no holes to fall into.

Sometimes on the summit of a lonely peak the grass grows in profusion;

Sometimes in the middle of the bustling marketplace he is naked and exposed. Suddenly the angry

Nada reveals his three heads and six arms;

Suddenly Sun-face Buddha and Moon-face Buddha

release their all-embracing merciful light.

The entire body is revealed in a speck of dust.

Becoming ordinary people, one blends with mud and mixes with water.

If one were suddenly to reveal the opening of the highest realization,
even the eye of a Buddha could not see it.

Even if a thousand sages were to appear,
they would have to retreat three thousand miles.

Is there anyone who has attained and realized to this state?

To test, I cite this, look!

Case:

Unmon, instructing the assembly, said, “Medicine and disease correspond to each other.
The whole earth is medicine. What is your true self?”

Verse:

The whole earth is medicine.

Formerly and nowadays, why do they err on this point?

One closes the door and does not make a cart;

If one opens the way, it is naturally vast and void.

Wrong, wrong!

Although the nostrils touch the sky, they can still be pierced.

CASE 88: Gensha's "Three Diseases"

Instruction:

As for skillful means used to teach students, one breaks two into three;

Profound talks which enter the truth must be completely free and unfettered.

At every moment and in every place, one responds to any questions appropriately,
thereby pulverizing both golden chains and subtle barriers.

Acting according to the command, one sweeps straight away all traces
and obliterates all tracks.

Just tell me: Where is there any entanglement?

To those who have an eye in the middle of their forehead,

I beg to bring this up, look!

Case:

Gensha, instructing the assembly, said, “All old masters said, 'Attend to the living beings and save them.' Suppose you faces three people with different diseases, how would you attend to them? The blind person can't see, even if you take up a gavel or raise a whisk. The deaf person can't hear, even if you speak beautiful phrases. The dumb person can't speak, even if you ask him to speak up. How would you attend to them? If you cannot attend to these people, Buddhist Dharma has no true efficacy.”

A monk asked Unmon about this. Unmon said, "Make a deep bow." The monk made a deep bow and stood up. Unmon poked his staff at him. The monk retreated. Unmon said, "So you are not blind." Further he said, "Come here." The monk came closer to him. Unmon said, "So you are not deaf." Then he said, "Have you understood?" The monk said, "No." Unmon said, "So you are not dumb." With that, the monk came to an insight.

Verse:

Blind, deaf, mute:

There are neither means nor opportunities to approach them at all.

Above and below the heavens, it is most laughable, it is most sad.

Riro¹ cannot discriminate the true color;

How can Shikô² know the profound sound?

How can these compare to sitting in solitude beneath the empty window,

Where the leaves fall and the flowers bloom when their time comes?

[Setchô] says again, "Do you understand or not?"

An iron head of a hammer lacking a hole.

CASE 89: Ungan's "Hands and Eyes"

Instruction:

The entire body is an eye; there is no seeing.

The entire body is an ear; there is no hearing.

The entire body is a mouth; there is no speaking.

The entire body is a mind; there is no thinking.

Putting aside for the time being the matter of the entire body,

If you suddenly do not have eyes, how do you see?

If you do not have ears, how do you hear?

If you do not have a mouth, how do you speak?

If you do not have a mind, how do you think?

If you are able here to freely produce a single way,

You practice together with the ancient Buddhas.

Leaving aside matters of practice, just tell me, who will you practice under?

Case:

Ungan asked Dôgo, "What does the Bodhisattva of the Great Mercy use so many hands and eyes for?" Dôgo answered, "It is like a person in the middle of the night reaching with his hand

¹ A legendary man who had an extremely good eyesight.

² A court musician who could hear the slightest sound.

behind his head groping for his pillow.” Ungan said, “I get it.” Dôgo said, “How do you get it?” Ungan said, “The whole body is hands and eyes.” Dôgo said, “You said it very well. But you expressed only eight-tenths of it.” Ungan said, “How would you say it, Elder Brother?” Dôgo said, “The entire body is hands and eyes.”

Verse:

“The whole body,” that's it – “The entire body,” that's it.
Although you may have brought something forth,
It is still a hundred thousand miles removed.
Beating its wings, the Roc¹ disperses the clouds in the six directions,
Driving the wind, it blows away the waters of the four seas.
What is this dust that has suddenly appeared?
Have those fine hairs not yet stopped?
Don't you see how the jeweled net is let down to produce endless reflections?
Where do the hands and eyes at the top of the stick come from?
*Totsu*²!

CASE 90: Chimon and the “Prajna Wisdom”

Instruction:

The word before any sound – the thousand sages cannot transmit it.
The single thread before your eyes – it continues on without ending.
Completely naked, perfectly revealed.
The hair grows in natural profusion, the ears are sharp.
Just tell me. What is this about?
To test I am citing this, look!

Case:

A monk asked Chimon, “What is the substance of Prajna Wisdom?”
Chimon said, “The clam swallows the bright moon.”³ The monk asked, “What is the use of Prajna Wisdom?” Chimon said, “A female rabbit becomes pregnant.”⁴

Verse:

A single piece of solid nothingness transcends all words and intellection.
As a result of this, both humans and heavenly beings see Subhuti¹.

¹ A gigantic legendary bird.

² A reproachful or insulting cry. “Ha!” etc.

³ A Chinese metaphor expressing how a pearl is formed.

⁴ According to a Chinese legend, a female rabbit becomes pregnant when it swallows the light of the full moon.

The profound meaning of the oyster swallowing the wondrous rabbit:
This was given to Zen students in the past in order to cause a great battle.

CASE 91: Enkan and the “Rhinceros”²

Instruction:

It transcends feelings and is removed from personal views.
It breaks free of fetters and loosens all that is sticking.
To bring forth the highest truth of the essential, t
To uphold the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye,
You must be able to respond appropriately in the ten directions,
You must be completely transparent wherever you are.
This is the state you must directly attain to.
Just tell me: Is there anyone of the same attainment and same realization,
Anyone who dies together and lives together with this?
To test, I am citing this, look!

Case:

One day, Enkan called to his attendant, “Bring me the rhinceros fan³.” The attendant said, “It is broken.” Enkan said, “If the fan is already broken, bring me *that* rhinceros⁴.” The attendant gave no answer.⁵

Tôsu said, “I wouldn't mind bringing that, but the horn on its head would not be complete.” (Setchô said, “I need to see that incomplete horn.”)

Sekisô said, “If I brought it back to you, nothing would remain [for me].” (Setchô said, “That rhinceros is still there.”)

Shifuku drew a circle and wrote the ideograph “ox (牛)”⁶ in it. (Setchô said, “Why didn't you bring it out sooner?”)

Hofuku said, “Master, you are so advanced in years. Please engage someone else⁷.” (Setchô said, “Regrettable! All efforts have proved fruitless!”)

Verse:

The rhinceros fan has been used for a long time;

¹ One of the disciples of Shakyamuni. He grasped the reality of nothingness more than anyone else.

² Cf. *Shoyoroku* Case 25.

³ A fan made of rhinceros bones and paper (or a fan with a picture of rhinceros on it).

⁴ If the fan is made of rhinceros bones and paper, “*that* rhinceros” can mean the remaining rhinceros bones/skeleton of the fan.

⁵ To this episode the following Zen personalities give their answers on behalf of the attendant.

⁶ The Chinese character for “ox” (*gyû*, 牛) is one of the two characters for “rhinceros” (*saigyû* = sai + gyû).

⁷ [Since the task you give me is too harsh.]

If you ask about it, you never know it.
The clear wind and rhinoceros horns are without end.
But they are difficult to chase after as the rain that has just passed.
Setchô spoke again:
“If you want the clear wind and the horns to appear again,
I ask that each of you Zen students produce a turning word.”
He asked, saying, “If the fan is already broken, bring me *that* rhinoceros.”
At that time there was a monk who stepped out and said,
“All of you, go to the Zendo!”
Setchô cried out “Kaatsu!” and said,
“I let down my hook hoping to fish up a whale, and only brought up this little frog.”
Thereupon he descended the rostrum.

CASE 92: The Buddha Ascends to the Rostrum¹

Instruction:

One brush of the strings and one knows the song:
Even in a thousand years, it would be hard to find such a one.
Seeing the rabbit, one lets loose the falcon,
Acting all at once with complete swiftness.
Lining up words in their entirety, one fashions a single phrase;
Gathering up the myriad worlds, one produces a grain of dust.
Living together and dying together;
Completely free to go this way or that.
Is there anything which can act as proof of this?
To test, I bring this up, look!

Case:

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

Verse:

Among the ranks of the sages, the adept knows well:
The Dharma-command of the Dharma king would not be like this.
If there were a person of saindhava² in the assembly,

¹ Cf. *Shoyoroku* Case 1.

² “Saindhava” (jpn.: *sendaba*) stands for an extremely agile response by the pupil to his master.

What need would there be for Manjusri to strike the gavel?

CASE 93: Taikô Dances

(No Instruction)

Case:

A monk asked Taikô, “Chôkei said, ‘That is exactly like praising and giving thanks at the midday meal.’¹ What did he mean?” Taikô danced. The monk made a deep bow. Taikô said, “What have you seen that makes you bow like that?” The monk danced. Taikô said, “You stupid fox!”²

Verse:

The former arrow was light, but the latter went deep.
Who says that yellow leaves are gold?
If Sôkei's waves were similar,
An endless number of ordinary people would have drowned on dry land.

CASE 94: “No-Seeing” in the Ryôgon Sutra³

Instruction:

The word before any sound – the thousand sages cannot transmit it.
The single thread before your eyes – it continues on without ending.
Completely naked, perfectly revealed; a white ox on bare ground.
Eyes are sharp and ears are sharp.
Leaving aside for now the matter of the golden-haired lion,
Just tell me: What is the white ox on bare ground?

Case:

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

Verse:

The whole elephant and the whole ox –

¹ Cf. Case 74.

² Cf. the term “fox Zen”, which means mere imitation (cf. Case 2 in the *Mumonkan*)

³ Cf. *Shoyoroku* Case 88.

they aren't different from people with cataracts.
From of old, Zen adepts have all been groping it and naming it.
Do you want to see the yellow-headed old guy¹ right now?
“The whole land is in each grain of dust” – that is only halfway.

CASE 95: Chôkei's "Three Poisons"

Instruction:

Do not stay where there is Buddha;
If you stay, horns will grow from your head.
Run quickly past where there is no Buddha;
If you do not run past, the grass will be ten feet high.
Even if you are completely naked and perfectly revealed
So that there is no activity outside of the matter and no matter outside of the activity,
You will not avoid looking at a stump waiting for a rabbit.
Just tell me: When you are not any of these, how will you act?
To test, I bring this up, look!

Case:

One day Chôkei said, “Even if you argue that an arhat² [still] possesses 'the three poisons', don't argue that the Tathagata has two sorts of language. I do not say the Tathagata has no words. I only say he does not have two kinds of language.” Hofuku said, “What are the words of the Tathagata?” Chôkei said, “How can a deaf man hear?” Hofuku said, “Now I know that your language belongs to the second level.” Chôkei said, “What are the words of the Tathagata?” Hofuku said, “Have some tea.”

Verse:

The first head, the second head:
A reclining dragon does not prefer stagnant water.
Where there is nothing, there is the moon and the waves are clear;
Where there is something, there is no wind and the waves rise up.
Elder Ryô³, Elder Ryô!
In March at the waterfall of U-Gate, you failed hitting your forehead onto the rock⁴!

¹ I.e., Shakyamuni Buddha.

² An arhat is a sacred person who has reached the spiritual dimension without any traces of “the three poisons”: covetousness, anger, folly.

³ Chôkei.

⁴ It is told in an ancient story in China that there were three-grade waterfalls of U [=rabbit]-Gate in the Yellow River. In March, carps tried jump up the waterfalls in order to turn into dragons to soar up toward heaven. But the failing carps hit their heads with the rocks and die.

CASE 96: Jôshû's Three Turning Words¹

(No Instruction)

Case:

Jôshû showed the assembly three turning words:

Verse:

“A Buddha of mud does not pass through water.”
A Divine Light² illumines the heavens and earth.
If he had not attained great peace of mind after standing in the snow,
Who would not have carved an imitation?

Verse:

“A Buddha of metal does not pass through the furnace.”
People came calling on Shiko³:
The many characters on the plate⁴.
Where does the clear wind not blow?

Verse:

“A Buddha of wood does not pass through the fire.”
I always think of Hasôda⁵:
The staff hit suddenly.
I realize now that I have turned my back on my self.

CASE 97: “Getting Despised” in the Diamond Sutra⁶

Instruction:

¹ Cf. Case 19 in the *Miscellaneous Koans*.

² Jpn. *Jinkô*, the original name for the 2nd Patriarch Eka.

³ Master Rishô who lived in Mt. Shiko.

⁴ Master Rishô wrote on the plate: “There is a dog in Shiko. He bites off your head, your body and your legs. If you wonder about it, your life is already lost.”

⁵ Master Hasôda was an illustrious monk (a grandson-disciple of the 5th Patriarch) who, with his staff, destroyed a deified oven which had been spreading misfortune in a village, thus delivering the people. “Hasôda” literally means “Oven-destroying”.

⁶ Cf. *Shoyoroku* Case 58.

Freely handling one while releasing two:
This is not yet a true adept.
Realizing three when one is held up:
This still goes against the principle of the School.
Even if you can directly upend heaven and earth
 while cutting off voices in the four directions,
Even if thunder rumbles and lightning streaks
 while clouds move and rain pours down,
Even if you upset ponds and turn over cliffs
 so that water gushes forth as from a jug or from an overturned bowl,
This still does not hold up the other half.
Is there anyone who knows how to turn the Northern Dipper
 and move the earth's axis?
To test, I am citing this, look!

Case:

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

Verse:

The bright jewel is in the palm of the hand;
It will be awarded to those who have distinguished themselves.
Neither barbarians nor Chinese come.
It is completely without skill;
All skills are already gone.
The evil one has lost the way.
Gautama!¹ Gautama!
Do you know me or not?
Again I say, "Seen through!"

CASE 98: Tempyô's Two "Wrong"s

Instruction:

For the whole summer once has been loquaciously creating entanglements,
Confusing almost all the monks of the Five Lakes.
But when the diamond sword cuts right through,

¹ The real name of Shakyamuni.

One realizes for the first time that it has all been totally in vain.
Just say: What is the diamond sword?
Lifting up the eyebrows, I will expose the sword-tip to test you, look!

Case:

Master Tempyô was on an angya¹ and visited Sai'in. (He was always saying, "Don't say you have understood Buddhism. I have sought after someone who could give correct explanations, but in vain.")

One day, Sai'in saw him at a distance and summoned him, "Jyûi!²" Tempyô raised his head. Sai'in said, "Wrong!" Tempyô went on a couple more steps. Sai'in said again, "Wrong!" Tempyô came closer. Sai'in said, "I have just said, 'Wrong!' twice. Does it mean that it is I who am wrong, or it is you?" Tempyô said, "It is I." Sai'in said, "Wrong!" Tempyô said nothing. Sai'in said, "Please stay here for the summer³. I'll examine the two 'Wrong!'s with you." However, Tempyô immediately left him.

Later he was the abbot of his own temple and said to his assembly, "As I was once on an angya, I was driven by the wind of fate and came to Elder Shimyô⁴, who cried to me, 'Wrong!'. Moreover, he demanded that I stay with him for the summer to examine this matter with him. I didn't believe I had done anything wrong then. But when I was on my way down south, I realized quickly that I had done something entirely 'wrong!'."

Verse:

Those of the Zen family love to skim along;
Coming to practice with a full belly would be of no use.
It is most sad, most laughable, Old Tempyô!
Well said: "It was regrettable that I went on pilgrimage at all then."
Wrong, wrong!
Sai-in's clear wind immediately dies away.
I say again: If a patch-robed monk should suddenly appear and say, "Wrong!"
Is Setchô's "wrong" the same as Tempyô's "wrong"?

CASE 99: Shukusô and the "Buddha with the Ten Bodies"

Instruction:

When the dragon bellows, mists rise;
When the tiger roars, winds arise.

¹ A traditional pilgrimage in order to deepen the practice.

² Tempyô's personal name.

³ I.e., a summer sesshin for three months.

⁴ I.e., Sai'in.

A teacher of the Zen School emerges in the world;
Gold and jade make harmonious sounds with each other.
The activity which pervades in all directions;
Arrow tip hits arrow tip.
Throughout the universe it is not hidden;
Both far and near, it is equally evident;
In former times and now it is clearly spoken.
Just say: Whose state of consciousness is this?
To test I bring up this case, look!

Case:

Emperor Shukusô asked the National Teacher Echû, “What is the Buddha with the ten bodies who guides the living beings?” The National Teacher said, “Sir! Step on the head of Vairocana¹ and go beyond it.” The emperor said, “I don't understand it.” The National Teacher said, “Never consider yourself to be even the pure Dharma-body.”

Verse:

The name “teacher of the nation” was forced upon him,
But it was Nanyô² himself who caused his fame to resound.
He helped the Emperor of Great T'ang to become a true “son of heaven,”
When he had him step on the head of Vairocana Buddha.
The iron hammer completely pulverizes the bones of gold;
What is left between heaven and earth?
Throughout the three-thousand worlds it is dark and silent;
I do not know who will enter the cave of the blue dragon.

CASE 100: Haryô and the “Sharpest Sword”³

Instruction:

Gathering the cause, collecting the effect;
Exhausting the beginning, exhausting the ending.
Facing each other with out “I”;
Nothing has been ever preached.
If someone appears and says,
“All through the summer you have given us sermons;
How could you say that you have never preached?”

¹ The Buddha of the pure Dharma-body.

² The name of the mountain where Echû originally lived.

³ Cf. Case 22 (c) in the *Miscellaneous Koans*.

[I will say to him,] “I will tell you after you have attained realization.”
Just say: Do I not say it because I hate to say it,
Or is there a good reason not to say it?
To test I am citing this, look!

Case:

A monk asked Haryô, “What is the sharpest sword?” Haryô said, “Each coral branch reflects the moon.”

Verse:

It is necessary to smooth out that which is uneven.
The most skilful seems like lack of skill.
Sometimes it's a finger, sometimes a fist;
Leaning on heaven and shining on the snow.
A master blacksmith cannot beat it down;
A great craftsman cannot finish polishing it.
Each is different:
“Each coral branch reflects the moon.”