

Wumen's Gate

Translated from the Chinese
Taishō Volume 48, Number 2005

by

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Translator's Introduction

The *Wu Men Guan* (Wumen's gate, or the Barrier of the gate of nothingness) is a classic collection of forty-eight Zen "public cases" (Jp. *kōan*, Ch. *gong an*) accompanied by comments and verses, presented as teaching materials within the Zen tradition. Zen students would focus their attention on these cases and meditate via their intricate patterns of meaning. By interrupting and reshaping patterns of thought, these classic Zen cases were intended as tools to refine minds and open them to wider perspectives on reality. For those who care to follow their imagery and logic, they present timeless scenes, concentrated demonstrations of Buddhist truth, glimpses of the life of wisdom.

Over the years in Zen communities, stories of the sayings and doings of the great early masters provided themes for teaching Buddhist principles and were also used as focal points in meditation. Being widely known in the Zen communities, they were indeed "public cases." As objects of discussion and study, in time the public cases became surrounded by a rich lore of responses, verses of praise, pointers, and comments, some of which in turn became famous remarks and gestures subject to further comment.

Going on for centuries, this world of Zen koan discourse became exceedingly refined, intricate, and subtle. The classic collections of Zen public cases and commentaries like the *Blue Cliff Record* and the *Book of Equanimity* were produced in the twelfth century, and many similarly inspired collections appeared thereafter. The *Wu Men Guan* is from the mid-thirteenth century. Its many-layered meanings lie within a very highly polished and dense style that can be abrupt and unapproachable and disconcerting. The author Wumen Huikai was talking about stories his

audience knew by heart and had chewed over if not digested. Hence he could be terse and move quickly between levels.

The *Wu Men Guan* has been venerated and regarded as a masterpiece in East Asian Zen circles ever since its appearance. Many have savored its verbal brilliance, have meditated on its patterns, and have taken it as a test of their Zen insight. With this English translation we hope that interested Western readers will gain access to Wumen's Gate.

Preface by Chengsun

Explain the Path with no gate, and everyone in the world can enter. Explain the Path with a gate, and you are not qualified to be a teacher. To impose a few footnotes at the outset seems like putting on a rain hat over another rain hat. To insist that I praise [Wumen] is like trying to squeeze juice out of dry bamboo. To write out these howls is basically not worth my tossing them down. Since I have thrown them down, don't let even a drop fall into the rivers and lakes. Even the fastest jet-black steed cannot catch up.

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First year of the Shao Ding era [1228], last day of the seventh month. Written by Chengsun of Xi-an.

Preface by Huikai

On the fifth day of the first month of the second year of the Shao Ding era we respectfully observe the Imperial Birthday. On the fifth day of the twelfth month of last year, [His Majesty's] subject the monk [Wumen] Huikai had printed and circulated [a collection of] forty-eight cases citing the enlightenment stories of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. We dedicate this to extending the longevity of our present Supreme Imperial Majesty's sage person: may he live ten thousand years, and ten thousand times ten thousand years! We humbly hope that His Imperial Majesty's sagely illumination may equal the sun and moon and that his farseeing plans may equal heaven and earth. From all directions the people will acclaim their Lord for having the Path, and all the world will rejoice in his civilizing influence that has no [forced] action.

Respectfully spoken by Huikai, the monk and subject of His Majesty, who acts as abbot and transmits the Dharma at the Baoen Youci Zen Temple [founded by] the merit of the Empress Ciyi.

Preface

For the Buddha's words, the mind is the source: the gate of nothingness is the gate to truth.

Since it is the gate of nothingness, how can we enter? Surely you have read the saying, "What comes in through the gate is not the family jewels; what is gained from causal circumstances is bound to decay."

Such talk is like raising waves where there is no wind, like cutting a wound in healthy flesh. But even worse is to get stuck on words and phrases in the search for interpretative understanding: [this is like] trying to hit the moon with a stick [or] scratching an itch from outside the boot. What connection will there be?

In the summer of 1228, Huikai was head of the congregation at Longxiang at Dongjia. The patch-robed ones asked for instruction, so he took the public cases of the people of old to use as [one would use] a piece of tile to knock on a gate. He guided students according to their potentials and the potentials of the moment. Finally Huikai's remarks were copied and on the spur of the moment made into a collection of forty-eight cases, not arranged in the order he gave them. The whole collection is called *Wu Men Guan* [Wumen's barrier or The barrier of the gate of nothingness].

If you are a person [true to your real identity], you will not mind the danger; you will enter directly at a single stroke. Fear-some monsters cannot hold you back, and even the Zen Patriarchs of India and China can only beg for their lives as they look to your awesome presence. But if you hesitate, it will be like watching through a window as horse and rider go by—a blink of an eye and they've already gone past.

Verse

The Great Path, the gate of nothingness, has no gate.
Amidst the thousand differences, there is a road.
If you can pass through this barrier,
You walk alone through heaven and earth.

Case 1. Zhaozhou's Dog

A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does a dog have the Buddha nature or not?"

Zhaozhou said, "No."

Wumen said,

To study Zen you must pass through the barrier of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. For wondrous enlightenment you must get to the end of the road of the mind. If you do not penetrate the ancestral teachers' barrier, if you do not end the road of the mind, then in all that you do [seeking to follow the Buddhist Path] you are but a ghost haunting the forests and fields.

But tell me, what is the barrier of the Buddhas and Patriarchs? It is this one word "No"—this is the barrier of Zen. This is why [this collection] is called the Zen school's barrier of the gate of No. If you can pass through it, not only will you see Zhaozhou in person but you will then be able to walk together hand in hand with all the generations of ancestral teachers. You will join eyebrows with the ancestral teachers, see through the same eyes, and hear through the same ears. Won't you be happy!

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Do any of you want to pass through the barrier? Just arouse a mass of doubt throughout your whole body, extending through your three hundred sixty bones and your eighty-four thousand pores, as you come to grips with this word "No." Bring it up and keep your attention on it day and night. Don't understand it as empty nothingness, and don't understand it in terms of being and non-being. It should be as if you have swallowed a red hot iron ball that you cannot spit out. After a

long time [at this] you become fully pure and ripe; inner and outer are spontaneously fused into one. It is like being a mute and having a dream: you can only know it for yourself.

Suddenly it comes forth, shaking heaven and earth. It is like taking a great commanding general's sword in your hand: you slay Buddhas and Patriarchs as you meet them. On the shore of birth and death, you find great sovereign independence; you wander at play in *samādhi* among all orders of beings in all planes of existence.

But how will you bring up [Zhaozhou's "No"] and keep your attention on it? Bring up the word "No" with your whole life force. If you do this properly without interruption, it is like a lamp of truth: once lit, it shines.

Verse

A dog . . . the Buddha nature . . .
He fully expresses the correct imperative.
As soon as you step into being and nothingness,
You lose your body and your life.

Case 2. Baizhang's Wild Fox

Every time Baizhang taught there was an old man who followed along with the congregation to hear the Dharma and left when the congregation withdrew. Unexpectedly one day he stayed behind, so Baizhang asked him, "Who is the one who stands before me?"

The old man said, "I am not human. In the time of the ancient Buddha Kāśyapa, when I was dwelling here on this mountain, a student asked me if a person of great practice still falls into cause and effect or not. I replied that he does not fall into cause and effect, and consequently I have had five hundred births in the body of a wild fox. Now I am asking you, Master, to turn a word on my behalf so that I can escape from being a wild fox." Then he asked Baizhang, "Does a person of great practice still fall into cause and effect or not?"

Baizhang said, "He is not deluded about cause and effect."

At these words the old man was greatly enlightened. He bowed in homage and said, "I have already shed the fox's body, which rests on the other side of the mountain. Please, Master, give it the funeral services due a dead monk."

Baizhang ordered the duty distributor to pound the gavel [to summon the assembly] and announced to them, "After we eat, we shall hold a funeral for a dead monk." The congregation [were puzzled] and began to discuss the matter among themselves. They went to the infirmary, but there was no one there sick. [They wondered] why Baizhang was acting like this.

After their meal, Baizhang led the congregation to a cliffside on the other side of the mountain, where he took a stick and pulled out the body of a dead fox [from a crevice in the rocks]. They then formally cremated the body.

That night Baizhang went up to the teaching hall and related the full story of what had happened.

Huangbo then asked, "One wrong reply and this man of old fell into a wild fox's body for five hundred lifetimes. If each and every reply is right, then what?" 293b

Baizhang said, "Come here and tell him." Huangbo then came up and gave Baizhang a slap. Baizhang clapped his hands and laughed and said, "I knew barbarians' beards were red, and here's another red-bearded barbarian."

Wumen said,

[When the wild fox monk asserted that the person of great practice] "does not fall into cause and effect," why did he fall into a wild fox's body?

[When he heard that such a person] "is not deluded by cause and effect," why did he shed the fox's body? If you can focus the eye [of enlightened insight] here on this, then you will know why, long ago on Baizhang Mountain, [the old man] won for himself five hundred lifetimes flowing with the wind.

Verse

Not falling into, not being deluded by—
Two faces of a single die.
Not being deluded by, not falling into—
A thousand thousand errors.

Case 3. Judi Holds Up a Finger

Whenever he was questioned, Master Judi would just hold up a finger.

Later one of the boys [in the congregation] was asked by an outsider, "What is the essential teaching of your master?" The boy also held up a finger.

When Judi heard about this, he took a knife and cut off the boy's finger. As the boy ran out howling in pain, Judi called him back. When the boy looked back, Judi just held up a finger. The boy was abruptly enlightened.

When Judi was about to die, he told the congregation, "I got Tianlong's one-finger Zen and used it my whole life without exhausting it." As his words ended, he died.

Wumen said,

Where Judi and the boy were enlightened was not on the finger. If you can see into this, then Tianlong, Judi, the boy, and you yourself are all strung through on the same string.

Verse

Judi made a fool out of old Tianlong.
Holding up the sharp blade alone to test a little boy,
The great spirit lifts his hand without much ado
And splits apart the million layers of Flower Mountain.

Case 4. The Barbarian Has No Beard

Huoyan said, "Why does the Indian barbarian have no beard?"
[Why do enlightened teachers, and the enlightened true identity

within us, have no fixed, predictable characteristics by which we may recognize them?]

Wumen said,

Study must be real study. Awakening must be real awakening. For this, you must see the barbarian in person. But when I say "see in person," it has already become dualistic.

Verse

In front of fools,
We must not speak of dreams.
"The barbarian has no beard"
Adds confusion to clear wakefulness.

Case 5. Xiangyan's Up in a Tree

Master Xiangyan said, "It's like being a man up in a tree [supporting himself by] holding a branch between his teeth, with his hands and feet not touching the tree branches. Beneath the tree there is someone who asks about the meaning of the coming from the West [the true intent of Zen]. If he does not reply, he spurns the questioner's question. If he does reply, he perishes [by falling]. At such a moment, how should he answer?" 293c

Wumen said,

Even if you have eloquence pouring out like a waterfall, it is totally useless [here]. Even if you can preach the whole great canon of teachings, this won't work either. If you can succeed in answering here, you bring back to life what before [for you] was a dead road [namely transcendental wisdom, your true identity], and you put to death what before was your life's path [the conventional world of conditioned consciousness]. If you cannot answer, wait for the future and ask Maitreya.

Verse

Xiangyan is a real phony;
His evil poison is endless.
Making the mouths of patch-robed monks go mute,
His whole body is squirting demon eyes.

**Case 6. The World Honored One
Holds Up a Flower**

In ancient times, at an assembly on Spirit Mountain, the World Honored One [the Buddha] held up a flower and showed it to those gathered there.

Everyone in the assembly was silent at that moment. Only the Venerable Kāśyapa cracked a slight smile.

The World Honored One said, "I have the treasury of the Eye of the Correct Dharma, the wondrous mind of nirvana, the real formless subtle gate to Reality, the special transmission outside the scriptural teachings that does not establish texts [as sacred]. I entrust it to Mahākāśyapa."

Wumen said,

If golden-faced Gautama had had no one by his side [to understand his special meaning and smile as Kāśyapa did], he would have been forcing free men down into serfdom and selling dog meat advertised as mutton, and the assembly would have thought it was marvelous. If everyone in the assembly had smiled, how would [the Buddha] have passed on the treasury of the Eye of the Correct Dharma? If Kāśyapa had not smiled, how would [the Buddha] have passed on the treasury of the Eye of the Correct Dharma?

If you say there is transmission of the treasury of the Eye of the Correct Dharma, then old Golden-Face was lying to the ordinary people in the village lanes. If you say there is no transmission, then why did he approve only Kāśyapa?

Verse

Holding up a flower,
The tail already shows.
Kāśyapa cracks a smile,
Everyone else is helpless.

Case 7. Zhaozhou's "Wash the Bowl"

A monk asked Zhaozhou, "I have just entered the Buddhist community. I beg for your instructions, Teacher."

Zhaozhou said, "Have you eaten yet?"

The monk said, "I have eaten."

Zhaozhou said, "Then go wash the bowl." [At this] the monk had insight.

Wumen said,

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When Zhaozhou opens his mouth, we see his liver; he shows his heart and guts. This monk did not really listen to what was going on—he thought a bell was a jar.

Verse

Just because [Zhaozhou's answer] was so extremely clear,
It worked in reverse to make [the monk's] realization slow.
We already knew the lamp was fire—
The food has been cooked a long time already.

**Case 8. The Master Cartwright
Makes a Carriage**

Master Yueyan asked a monk, "Xizhong [the master cartwright] made carriages [with wheels] with a hundred spokes. We roll up the two hubs and eliminate the axle: does this explain transcendence or worldly wisdom?"

Wumen said,

If you can understand directly, your eyes are like comets,
your mental workings like a flash of lightning.

Verse

Where the wheel of mental workings turns,
Even those who comprehend are still deluded.
The four directions, up and down,
South, north, east, west.

Case 9. Great Pervasive Excellent Wisdom

A monk asked Master Rang of Xingyang, "The Buddha [called] Great Pervasive Excellent Wisdom sat at the site of enlightenment for ten eons, but the Buddha Dharma did not appear to him. How was it when he did not achieve the Buddha Path?"

Rang said, "This question is very fitting."

The monk said, "Since he sat at the site of enlightenment for ten eons, why did he not achieve the Buddha Path?"

Rang said, "Because he did not become a Buddha" [since he already was one].

Wumen said,

I'll only allow that the old barbarian knows, not that he understands. If an ordinary person knows, he is a sage. If a sage understands, he is an ordinary person.

Verse

Comprehending the body is not as good as comprehending
the mind, then resting.

If you can comprehend the mind, the body will not be sad.

If you can comprehend both body and mind,

What need is there any more for spirit immortals to
legitimize your rank?

Case 10. Qingshui, a Poor Orphan

A monk named Qingshui asked Master Caoshan, "I am a poor orphan; I beg you to succor me, Teacher."

Caoshan called to him, "Reverend Qingshui?" Qingshui responded with "Yes?"

Caoshan said, "You have drunk three bowls of our family's home-brewed Zen wine, and still you say you haven't wet your lips!"

Wumen said,

Qingshui lost the potential of the moment; what was his mind doing then? Caoshan had the eye [of enlightenment] and profoundly judged the potentials of those who came [to him to learn]. Nevertheless, tell me, where did Reverend Qingshui drink the wine?

294b

Verse

Poor as a destitute recluse [Fan Dan],
Spirited as a champion of the ancient nobility [Xiang Yu],
Though he has no way to survive,
[Qingshui] dares to contend with [Caoshan] for the riches
[of Zen].

Case 11. Zhaozhou Tests the Hermits

Zhaozhou went to a hermit's place and asked, "Is there anyone here?"

The hermit held up his fist.

Zhaozhou said, "Shallow water is not the place to moor a big ship." Then he left.

Zhaozhou went to another hermit's place and asked, "Is there anyone here?"

This hermit also held up his fist.

Zhaozhou said, "You can both capture and release, kill and bring life." Then Zhaozhou bowed to him.

Wumen said,

[Both hermits] held up their fists in the same way. Why did Zhaozhou approve one and not the other? What's so hard to understand about that?

If you can utter a turning word here, then you see that Zhaozhou's tongue is perfectly flexible. With great freedom he holds one up and puts one down. Even so, what can he do? Zhaozhou himself in his turn was exposed by the two hermits.

If you say that one hermit was better than the other, you do not have the eye to study and learn. If you say that there is no better or worse, you do not have the eye to study and learn either.

Verse

Eyes like comets,
Mental workings like lightning.
The sword that kills people:
The sword that brings people to life.

Case 12. Rui Calls His Boss

Every day Master Ruiyan would call to himself, "Boss!" Then he would answer, "Yes?" Then he would say, "Stay awake!" "I will." "From now on, don't fall for people's deceptions." "No, I won't."

Wumen said,

Old man Ruiyan is both the buyer and the seller. How many spirit heads and demon faces he brings out! Why? Away, ghosts! One that calls, one that answers, one that stays awake, one that doesn't fall for people's deceptions.

If you recognize him, you are still not right. If you imitate him, these are all wild fox views.

Verse

People studying the Path do not know the Real,
Just because they have always accepted the conscious spirit.
This, the root of birth and death for infinite eons,
Fools call the original person.

Case 13. Deshan Carries His Bowl

One day Deshan left the hall carrying his bowl. Xuefeng asked, "The bell and drum have not yet sounded; where are you taking the bowl, old man?" Deshan then returned to the abbot's quarters. 294c

Xuefeng described this to Yantou. Yantou said, "Deshan, who is supposedly so great, does not understand the Last Word."

When Deshan heard about this, he sent an attendant to call Yantou in. He asked Yantou, "So you don't approve of me?" Yantou tacitly indicated it was so. Deshan let it go at that.

The next day when Deshan went up to the teacher's seat, sure enough, [the way he taught] was not the same as usual. In front of the monks' hall, Yantou [was to be seen] rubbing his hands together and laughing loudly. He said, "Happily the old man does understand the Last Word. From now on, no one in the world will be able to cope with him."

Wumen said,

As for the Last Word, neither Yantou nor Deshan has ever dreamed of it. Check it out: it's like a scene in a puppet show.

Verse

If you can recognize the First Word,
Then you can understand the Last Word.
Last and First
Are not this word.

Case 14. Nanquan Kills a Cat

Once the monks from the east and west halls were arguing over a cat. Master Nanquan held up the cat and said, "If any of you can speak, you save the cat. If you cannot speak, I kill the cat." No one in the assembly could reply, so Nanquan killed the cat.

That evening Zhaozhou returned from a trip outside [the monastery]. Nanquan told him what had happened. Zhaozhou then took off his shoes, put them on top of his head, and walked out. Nanquan said, "If you had been here, you would have saved the cat."

Wumen said,

Now tell me, when Zhaozhou put his shoes on top of his head, what did he mean? If you can utter a turning word here, then you will see that Nanquan did not carry out the imperative in vain. Otherwise, danger!

Verse

If Zhaozhou had been there,
He would have carried out this imperative in reverse:
He'd have snatched the knife away,
And Nanquan would be begging for his life.

Case 15. Dongshan's Thirty Blows

When Dongshan came to study with Yunmen, Yunmen asked him, "Where have you just come from?" Dongshan said, "Chadu." Yunmen asked, "Where did you spend the summer?" Dongshan said, "At Baoci Temple in Hunan." Yunmen asked, "When did you leave there?" Dongshan said, "The twenty-fifth day of the eighth month." Yunmen said, "I forgive you thirty blows."

The next day Dongshan went back to ask about this. "Yesterday you forgave me thirty blows, but I do not know where I was at fault."

Yunmen said, "You rice-bag! [You've been through] Jiangxi and Hunan and you go on like this!"

At this Dongshan was greatly enlightened.

Wumen said,

At that moment, Yunmen immediately gave Dongshan the fundamental provisions and enabled him to come to life on another road. Yunmen would not let the Zen house be vacant.

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Dongshan spent a night in the sea of affirmation and denial. When morning came, he went again to Yunmen, who again explained it to him thoroughly. Then and there Dongshan was directly enlightened, and he was not impetuous by nature.

So I ask all of you, did Dongshan deserve the thirty blows or not? If you say he did, then all the grasses and trees and thickets and forests deserve thirty blows. If you say that Dongshan did not deserve thirty blows, then Yunmen becomes a liar. Only if you can understand clearly here can you share the same breath as Dongshan.

Verse

The lion teaches its cub a riddle.

[The cub] tries to leap forward, but already it's fallen.

For no reason, [the lion] tells it again

and scores a direct hit.

The first arrow was superficial, the second struck deep.

**Case 16. The Sound of
the Bell, the Monk's Robe**

Yunmen said, "The earth is so broad and wide—why do we put on the monk's robe at the sound of the bell?"

Wumen said,

All who learn Zen and study the Path must avoid following sounds and pursuing forms. Even if you awaken to the Path by hearing sound and illuminate the mind from seeing form, you are still an ordinary person. Little do you know that patch-robed monks ride on sound and get on top of form with wondrous illumination everywhere in everything.

But even so, tell me, does the sound come to the ear, or does the ear reach out to the sound? Even if sound and silence are both forgotten, when you reach this point, how can you understand in words? If you use the ears to hear, it is sure to be hard to understand. Only if you sense sounds with the eye will you be on intimate terms with Reality.

Verse

[For a worldly person,]

If you understand, everything is in the same family;
If you do not understand, thousands of differences and distinctions.

[For an enlightened person,]

If you do not understand, everything is in the same family;
If you do understand, thousands of differences and distinctions.

Case 17.
The National Teacher Calls Three Times

The National Teacher called his attendant three times, and each time the attendant responded.

The National Teacher said, "I thought I was turning my back on you, but actually you were the one turning your back on me."

Wumen said,

When the National Teacher called three times, his tongue fell to the ground. The attendant's three responses were

uttered in harmony with the light. The National Teacher was old and aloof; he pressed the ox's head down to make it eat the grass. But the attendant would not accept it; delicious food does not suit a man who is sated.

But tell me, where did he turn his back on him? When the public order is pure, talented children are valued. When the family is rich, the youngsters are spoiled.

Verse

295b

He makes people wear iron fetters with no openings,
Incriminating his descendants so none can be at ease.
If they want to prop open the door [to freedom],
They still must climb barefoot up the mountain of blades.

Case 18. Dongshan's Three Pounds of Hemp

When a monk asked Dongshan, "What is the Buddha?" Dongshan said, "Three pounds of hemp."

Wumen said,

Old man Dongshan had learned a bit of oyster Zen: as soon as he opens his shell, he shows his guts. Nevertheless, tell me, where will you see Dongshan?

Verse

Abruptly uttered: "Three pounds of hemp."
The words are close [to truth] and the intent even closer.
Those who come to talk of affirmation and denial
Are just affirmation-and-denial people.

Case 19. The Ordinary Mind Is the Path

When Zhaozhou asked Nanquan, "What is the Path?" Nanquan said, "The ordinary mind is the Path."

Zhaozhou said, "Can we go toward it or not?" Nanquan said, "As soon as you go toward it, you go against it."

Zhaozhou said, "If we do not try, how do we know it is the Path?" Nanquan said, "The Path is not in the province of knowing or not knowing. Knowing is false awareness. Not knowing is oblivion. If you really arrive on the Path of no trying, it is like space, empty all the way through. How can we impose affirmation and denial?"

At these words, Zhaozhou was suddenly enlightened.

Wumen said,

When Nanquan was questioned by Zhaozhou, he [disintegrated] like tiles scattering and ice melting and could not explain. But even if Zhaozhou did awaken, he still had to study thirty more years.

Verse

Spring has a hundred flowers . . . autumn has the moon.
Summer has cool winds . . . winter has the snow.
If there are no trivial things you hang your mind up on,
This is the good season in the human realm.

Case 20. The Person of Great Power

Master Songyuan said, "Why can't the person of great power take a step?" He also said, "Speaking the truth is not a mechanical act."

Wumen said,

It could be said that Songyuan spilled his guts, but there was no one to take up [the challenge he posed].

295c Even if you take it up, you should come to my place for a sound beating. Why so? "If you want to know true gold, observe it in fire."

Verse

He lifts his foot and kicks over the fragrant ocean.
Bowling his head, he looks down upon the four heavens of

meditative concentration.
One whole body . . . no place to put it.
Please fill in the line yourself.

Case 21. Yunmen's Piece of Shit

When a monk asked Yunmen, "What is the Buddha?" Yunmen said, "A dry piece of shit."

Wumen said,

What can be said about Yunmen? When the family is poor, even a simple meal is hard to manage. When things are busy, there is no time for even a hastily written letter. When he moves, he takes the piece of shit and props open the door with it, so that the rise and fall of the Buddhist Teaching can be seen.

Verse

Like a flash of lightning,
Or sparks struck from stone,
In the blink of an eye,
It's already gone.

Case 22. Kāśyapa's Temple Flagpole

Ānanda asked Kāśyapa, "Besides the golden robe [emblematic of successorship], what did the Buddha pass on to you?"

Kāśyapa called to him, "Ānanda!" Ānanda answered, "Yes?" Kāśyapa said, "Take down the temple flagpole in front of the gate [you are ready to take my place]."

Wumen said,

If you can utter a turning word here, you see in person the assembly on Spirit Peak in full array, still in session.

Otherwise, though Vipāśyin [earliest in the line of ancient Buddhas] already gave a care for you, up till now you still have not found the subtle wonder [of the Buddhas' message].

Verse

The question is not as intimate as the answer.

How many people will develop the means to see truth
from this?

Elder brother calls, younger brother responds—exposing
the family's ugliness.

This is a separate spring, that does not belong to [the
cycles of natural polarities] *yin* and *yang*.

Case 23. Without Thinking of Good or Evil

[Intending to seize the robe and bowl emblematic of the Zen succession from Huineng, whom he regarded as a usurper] the monk Ming [a former military man] pursued the Sixth Patriarch Huineng [as he headed south from the Fifth Patriarch's place Huangmei in central China]. He overtook him in the Dayu Range [on the way to Guangdong].

When the Sixth Patriarch saw Ming coming, he threw the robe and bowl down on a rock and said, "This robe represents faith. Can it be taken away by force? I'll let you take it."

Ming went to pick it up, but it was as immovable as a mountain. Ming was alarmed and hesitated. He said, "I have come to seek the Dharma, not the robe and bowl. Please instruct me, workman." [Huineng had been a lowly workman at the Fifth Patriarch's place.]

The Sixth Patriarch said, "Without thinking of good, without thinking of evil, at just such a time, what is your original face?"

At this, Ming was greatly enlightened. His whole body was dripping with sweat. In tears, he bowed and asked, "Do you have

any other intimate message beyond the intimate words and intimate meaning you have just communicated?"

The Sixth Patriarch said, "What I just told you is not intimate. If you reflect back on the face of your true self, what's intimate is within you." 296a

Ming said, "Though I followed along with the congregation at the Fifth Patriarch's place, I never really had insight into the face of the true self. Today I have met with your instructions and gained entry. I am like a person drinking water who knows for himself whether it is cold or warm. Now you are my teacher, workman."

The Sixth Patriarch said, "If you are like this, then you and I both have the Fifth Patriarch as our teacher. Let us preserve [his teaching] well."

Wumen said,

Regarding the Sixth Patriarch, one can say that this deed came from a house in a state of emergency. In his grandmotherly kindness, it was as if he peeled a fresh lichee, removed the pit, and put it in your mouth. All you have to do is swallow it.

Verse

It cannot be described, it cannot be pictured,
It cannot be praised enough—stop trying to sense it.
There is no place to hide the original face;
When the world crumbles, it does not decay.

Case 24. Apart from Words and Speech

A monk asked Master Fengxue, "Both speech and silence are involved with transcendent detachment and subtle wisdom. How can we pass through without error?"

Fengxue said, "I always remember Jiangnan in May; where the partridges call, the hundred flowers are fragrant."

Wumen said,

Fengxue's potential is like a flash of lightning: he finds a road and goes. But what can he do?—he cannot cut off the tongues of those who went before him.

If you can see on an intimate level here, then you naturally have a road on which to appear in the world.

As for the *samādhī* that is apart from words and speech, why don't you say something about it?

Verse

It is not revealed, the prime quality phrase;
Before it is spoken, it is already imparted.
When you step forward babbling,
We know you are totally at a loss for how to act.

**Case 25. The Third-Ranked Monk
Preaches the Dharma**

Master Yangshan dreamed that he was at Maitreya's place as the third-ranked monk. One of the venerable ones there beat the gavel and announced, "Today the third-ranked monk will preach the Dharma."

[In his dream] Yangshan then got up, beat the gavel, and said, "The Mahayana Dharma is apart from all the permutations of propositional logic. Listen carefully, listen carefully!"

Wumen said,

Tell me, did he preach the Dharma or not? If he opens his mouth, he fails. If he keeps his mouth shut, he has also lost. Not opening, not shutting—one hundred eight thousand [possibilities].

Verse

White sun, blue sky,
Speaking of a dream in a dream,

Concocting strange apparitions,
Deceiving the whole congregation.

Case 26. Two Monks Roll Up a Curtain

Once the great Fayán of Qingliang was with some monks in front of his studio. When Fayán pointed to a curtain, two of the monks went to roll it up. 296b

Fayán said, "One gains, one loses."

Wumen said,

Tell me, who gained and who lost? If you can focus the eye of enlightenment on this, you will know where Fayán met defeat. Nevertheless, you must not assess this in terms of gain and loss.

Verse

Roll it up: the illuminating light permeates space;
Even empty space does not suit our Zen school.
Far better, from emptiness, to abandon everything
For a close continuity that does not let the wind through.

Case 27. Not the Mind, Not the Buddha, Not Things

A monk asked Master Nanquan, "Is there a truth that has not been told to people?"

Nanquan said, "There is."

The monk asked, "What is the truth that has not been told to people?"

Nanquan said, "It is not the mind, not the Buddha, not things."

Wumen said,

When Nanquan was hit with this question, he totally hid away the family secret, acting rather shabby and decrepit.

Verse

Repeated admonitions would detract from your virtue;
Wordlessness is what is really effective.
Even if the blue sea itself were to change,
It still would never convey the message to you.

Case 28. Long Have We Heard of Longtan

Once when Deshan was getting instruction from Longtan, he stayed on into the night. Longtan said, "It's late—why don't you go?" Deshan said goodbye and lifted up the curtain [to go]. He saw it was dark out, so he turned back [to Longtan] and said, "It's dark outside."

Longtan then lit a candle and handed it to Deshan. As Deshan was about to take it, Longtan blew the candle out. At this Deshan suddenly had an insight. Then he bowed to Longtan. Longtan said, "What truth have you seen?" Deshan said, "From this day forward I shall no longer doubt the tongues of all the world's enlightened teachers."

The next morning Longtan went up to the teaching hall and said, "There's a guy here with teeth like a forest of swords and a mouth like a bowl of blood. Hit him a blow and he doesn't turn back. Someday in the future he will go to the summit of a solitary peak and establish our Path there."

Deshan then took all the commentaries he had written and brought them, along with a torch, to the area in front of the teaching hall. He held up the commentaries and said, "To plumb the depths of all the abstruse mystic theories is like placing a single hair in the void of space. To investigate to the end the workings of the world is like throwing a drop of water into a great abyss." Then he took his commentaries and burned them. After that he paid homage to Longtan and said farewell.

296c

Wumen said,

Before Deshan left [his home area in] Guangzhong [in north-west China], his heart was burning with zeal and his mouth

was full of things to say. He travelled south intending to wipe out the [Zen] message of a special transmission outside the scriptural teachings.

When he reached Lizhou, he asked an old woman selling refreshments by the road if he could buy some. The old woman asked him, "What are those writings you have in your cart, Virtuous One?" Deshan said, "This is a commentary on the *Diamond Sutra*." The old woman said, "As it says in the Sutra, the past mind cannot be found, the present mind cannot be found, and the future mind cannot be found. Which mind do you wish to refresh, Virtuous One?"

When Deshan heard this question, his mouth sagged down into a frown. Nevertheless, he was still unwilling to die under the [impact of the] old woman's words. So he went on to ask the old woman, "Are there any Zen teachers around here?" The old woman said, "A couple of miles from here there is Master Longtan."

When Deshan got to Longtan, he incurred total defeat. We could say that his previous statements did not match his later words. Longtan acted as if unaware of the ugliness of a beloved child. When Longtan saw that Deshan had a bit of the spark [of arrogance] within him, he doused him over the head with some dirty water, totally drowning it out. If we look at their interaction with cold indifference, it was a good laugh.

Verse

[When seeking out an enlightened teacher,]
 Hearing the name is not as good as seeing the face.
 [From the viewpoint of the false expectations of the
 teacher that the student brings,]
 Seeing the face does not match hearing of the repute.
 Though [Longtan] could save [Deshan's] nostrils,
 What could he do?—he blinded his eyes.

Case 29. Not the Wind, Not the Flag

Once at the Sixth Patriarch's place, the wind was blowing and the [temple] flag was moving.

There were two monks arguing over this. One said it was the flag that was moving. One said it was the wind that was moving. They argued back and forth without reaching the truth.

The Sixth Patriarch told them, "It is not the flag moving, and it is not the wind moving; rather it is your minds that are moving." The two monks were startled.

Wumen said,

It is not the flag moving. It is not the wind moving. It is not the mind moving. Where will you see the Sixth Patriarch?

If you see intimately here, then you realize that the two monks were in the market for iron, but got gold. The Sixth Patriarch could not keep from laughing at this scene of indulgence.

Verse

Wind, flag, and mind moving—

The crimes are included in a single indictment.

They just knew how to open their mouths;

They were not aware their words fell.

Case 30. The Mind is the Buddha

When Damei asked, "What is the Buddha?" Mazu said, "The mind itself is the Buddha."

Wumen said,

If you can comprehend the total picture directly, then you are wearing a Buddha's clothes, eating a Buddha's food, speaking a Buddha's words, and carrying out a Buddha's practice. Then you *are* a Buddha.

297a

Even though this is the way it is, Damei has led a lot of people into accepting the calibrations on the balance beam [as a fixed standard]. Little do they know that anyone who says the word "Buddha" should wash out his or her mouth for three days.

If you are a person [in touch with your real identity], when you hear it said that the mind is the Buddha, you cover your ears and run out!

Verse

Blue sky, white sun—Don't seek!
If you're still asking what it's like,
You are crying out that you've been robbed,
But you have the loot in your hands.

Case 31. Zhaozhou Tests the Old Woman

[In the vicinity of Zhaozhou's place] a monk asked an old woman [whom he met along the road], "Which way is the road to Mount Taishan?" The old woman said, "Straight ahead." As soon as the monk walked on a few steps, the old woman said, "Such a fine monk, and still you go on like this?"

Later the monk brought this up to Zhaozhou. Zhaozhou said, "Wait until I go and check this old woman out for you." The next day Zhaozhou went [to where he could meet the old woman] and asked the same question as the monk. The old woman answered as she had before.

When Zhaozhou returned [to the monastery] he said to the assembly, "I have exposed the old woman of Taishan for you."

Wumen said,

The old woman only knew how to sit within her headquarters tent and launch her strategem to catch thieves [self-absorbed, self-styled "seekers"]. She did not know that old

man Zhaozhou was good at using devices to steal into forts and seize defended strongpoints, and that he did not have the [outward] marks of a great man.

When we check them out, both [Zhaozhou and the old woman] had faults. But tell me, where did Zhaozhou expose the old woman?

Verse

The questions were the same,
And so were the answers.
In the cooked rice there is sand;
In the mud there are thorns.

Case 32. An Outsider Questions the Buddha

An outsider [a non-Buddhist] asked the World Honored One [the Buddha], "I do not ask about the verbal, and I do not ask about the nonverbal."

The World Honored One sat in his seat.

The outsider exclaimed in praise, "The great merciful compassion of the World Honored One has opened up the clouds of delusion for me and enabled me to enter [the truth]." Then he bowed in homage with full ceremony and left.

Later Ānanda asked the Buddha, "What realization did the outsider have that he went away praising you?"

The World Honored One said, "Like a good horse, he moved when he saw the shadow of the whip."

Wumen said,

Ānanda was the Buddha's disciple, yet he did not match the outsider in understanding. Tell me, how far apart are outsiders and the Buddha's disciples?

Verse

Walking on a sword's edge,
Running up a hill of ice,
Not touching steps or a ladder,
Hanging from a cliff, let go.

297b

Case 33. Not the Mind, Not the Buddha

Once when a monk asked, "What is the Buddha?" Mazu said, "Not the mind, not the Buddha."

Wumen said,

If you can see into this, your task of learning is complete.

Verse

When you meet a swordsman on the road, show him
[your sword].
If you do not meet a poet, do not display [your verses].
If you meet someone [with potential], tell three-fourths
[of the truth];
You should not give the whole of it.

Case 34. Wisdom Is Not the Path

Nanquan said, "The mind is not the Buddha. Wisdom is not the Path."

Wumen said,

We could say that Nanquan, though an old man, had no sense of shame. As soon as he opened his stinking mouth, he exposed his family's ugliness to the outside world. Even so, few appreciate his benevolence.

Verse

The sky clears, the sun comes out;
The rain falls, the ground is wet.
He fully explained the whole situation,
But I'm afraid you won't be able to believe him fully.

**Case 35. When a Beautiful
Woman's Spirit Departs**

Wuzu asked a monk [at a funeral], "This beautiful woman has died and her spirit has departed. Which is the real person?"

Wumen said,

If you can awaken to the real person here, then you realize that both leaving and entering the shell [of worldly existence] is like sojourning in a travellers' inn.

If you cannot awaken to the real person here, don't go running around in confusion. When the physical elements that comprise your body suddenly disperse, you will be flailing around miserably like a crab dropped into boiling water. When that time comes, don't say I didn't tell you.

Verse

Clouds and moon are the same,
Streams and mountains all differ.
Myriad blessings, myriad blessings!
Are [we and they] one or two?

**Case 36. If You Meet a Person
Who Has Consummated the Path**

Wuzu said, "If on the road you meet someone who has consummated the Path, don't use words or silence to reply. Tell me, how will you reply?"

Wumen said,

If you can reply on an intimate level here, how joyous! If not, you still must look everywhere.

Verse

297c

If on the road you meet a person who has consummated
the Path,
Don't use words or silence to reply.
A pinch on the cheek, a punch in the face,
If you understand directly then you understand.

Case 37. The Cypress in the Garden

[In nature the cypress is an evergreen tree, tall, straight, fragrant, and long-lived.] Once when a monk asked Zhaozhou, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch coming from the West?" Zhaozhou said, "The cypress tree in the garden."

Wumen said,

If you can see intimately into Zhaozhou's answer, then there's no Śākyamuni before and no Maitreya after.

Verse

Words cannot relate this matter [of enlightenment];
Speech cannot bring about the meeting of potentials.
Those who accept and serve words perish;
Those stuck on phrases are lost in delusion.

**Case 38. A Water Buffalo
Passing through a Window Frame**

Wuzu said, "It's like a water buffalo passing through a window frame. Its horns and hooves have all passed through. Why can't the tail pass through?"

Wumen said,

If you can turn upside down here, focus the enlightened eye, and utter a turning word, then you will be able to repay the benevolence of all those who have protected and nurtured you and offer sustenance to [those in] the three realms [of desire, form, and the formless]. If not, you still have to pay attention to the tail to succeed.

Verse

If it passes through, it falls into a pit.
If it turns back, it is still ruined.
This bit of tail
Is indeed very strange.

**Case 39. Yunmen's "You Have Said
Something Improper"**

As a monk was questioning Yunmen, "The light shines quiescent throughout countless worlds. The one phrase is not cut off... ", Yunmen interrupted, "Aren't these the words of the distinguished literatus [of the Tang period, an adept in Buddhism] Zhang Zhuo?"

The monk admitted, "They are."

Yunmen said, "You have said something improper."

Later Sixin cited this and said, "Tell me, where did the monk say something improper?"

Wumen said,

If in this case you can see that Yunmen's functioning was solitary and dangerous, and why the monk said something improper, then you are fit to be a teacher of humans and devas. If you are not yet clear about these points, then you cannot even save yourself.

Verse

A hook hangs down in a swift flowing stream;
 Those who crave the bait are caught.
 As soon as they open their mouths a crack,
 Their lives and true identities are lost.

298a

Case 40. Kicking Over the Water Jar

When Master Weishan was still in Baizhang's congregation, he served as an administrator. Baizhang was about to select someone to be the master on Mount Dawei. He invited Weishan and the head monk forward in front of the assembly and said, "The one who goes beyond patterns can go [be the Zen master on Mount Dawei]."

Baizhang then took out a water jar and set it on the ground, posing the question, "If you could not call it a water jar, what would you call it?"

The head monk said, "It cannot be called a tree trunk."

Then Baizhang asked Weishan. Weishan kicked over the water jar and left.

Baizhang laughed and said, "The head monk has lost the mountain." Then he dispatched Weishan to open [the center at] Dawei.

Wumen said,

Weishan was one of the bravest people of his time, but even he could not jump clear of Baizhang's trap. When we check this case out, Weishan should have taken things more seriously, rather than make light of it. Why? Away with evil spirits! He managed to take off his cloth head-wrap, but he loaded an iron cangue onto his shoulders.

Verse

Tossing off the water scoop and the dipper,
 A direct burst cuts off all roundabout measures.

Baizhang's double barrier cannot hold him back;
The point of his foot leaps over countless Buddhas.

Case 41. Bodhidharma Pacifies the Mind

Bodhidharma sat facing a wall. Huike [who would be his successor] stood in the snow and cut off his arm, saying, "My mind is not at peace. Please, Teacher, pacify my mind."

Bodhidharma said, "Bring out your mind and I will pacify it for you."

Huike said, "When I search for my mind, ultimately it cannot be found."

Bodhidharma said, "I have already pacified your mind for you."

Wumen said,

The gap-toothed old barbarian sailed thousands of miles to come to China on a special mission. This could be called "raising waves where there is no wind." At last he accepted a single disciple, but even he was missing an arm.

Alas for the people in ordinary worldly life who are illiterate [towards the mystic tradition]!

Verse

Bodhidharma came from the West, directly pointing [to the inherent real mind];

This business [Zen] arose from what he imparted.

He grated on the ears of the [would-be] Buddhist community,

[Telling them] "It's been you all along."

Case 42. The Girl Comes Out of Samādhi

In ancient times Mañjuśrī [the great Bodhisattva who represents transcendent wisdom] was present where all the enlightened ones

were assembled with the World Honored One. When the time came that all the enlightened ones were returning to their own countries, there was a girl [left behind] sitting in *samādhi* near the Buddha.

Mañjuśrī then asked the Buddha, “How is it that a girl may sit so close to the Buddha but I may not?”

The Buddha told Mañjuśrī, “Just arouse this girl from her *samādhi* and ask her yourself.”

Mañjuśrī circled three times round the girl and snapped his fingers; then he took her into all the heavens of sublime form and of meditative bliss. Mañjuśrī used up all his spiritual powers without being able to bring her out of *samādhi*.

298b

The World Honored One said, “Even hundreds of thousands of Mañjuśrīs could not bring this girl out of her *samādhi*. But if you go down past twelve hundred million worlds, there is a Bodhisattva [called] Ignorance who can bring this girl out of *samādhi*.”

At that instant the Mahāsattva Ignorance welled up from the ground and bowed in homage to the World Honored One. The World Honored One directed Ignorance [to arouse the girl from *samādhi*], so he went over to the girl and snapped his fingers once. At this the girl came out of *samādhi*.

Wumen said,

When old man Śākyamuni staged this play, it was not to convey something trivial. But tell me, Mañjuśrī was the teacher of seven Buddhas; why couldn’t he bring the girl out of *samādhi*? Ignorance was only a Bodhisattva in the first stage [which is joy brought on by faith in the Dharma]; why then could he bring her out of it? If you can see on an intimate level here, then the frantic haste of karmic consciousness is the great *samādhi* of the dragon kings, the Nāgas, the keepers of wisdom.

Verse

Whether [Mañjuśrī] can bring you out or not,
She and you are on your own.

Spirit heads and demon faces
Meet defeat in the flowing wind.

Case 43. Shoushan's Bamboo Comb

Master Shoushan held up a bamboo comb and showed it to the assembly saying, "If you call it a comb, you trespass on it. If you do not call it a comb, you turn your back on it. Tell me, all of you, what will you call it?"

Wumen said,

If you call it a comb, you trespass on it. If you do not call it a comb, you turn your back on it. You cannot say anything, and you cannot say nothing. Quickly, speak!

Verse

Holding up a bamboo comb,
Carrying out the imperative to kill and bring to life,
Turning away and trespassing gallop together,
Buddhas and Patriarchs beg for their lives.

Case 44. Bajiao's Staff

Master Bajiao taught the assembly, "If you have a staff, I will give you a staff. If you have no staff, I will take your staff away."

Wumen said,

It supports you as you cross Broken Bridge River and accompanies you as you return to No-Moon Village. If you call it a staff, you enter hell like a shot.

Verse

Everyone everywhere, deep and shallow—
They are all within his grip.

He props up heaven and supports the earth,
Energizing the wind of Zen [its transformative influence]
wherever he is.

298c

Case 45. Who Is *He*?

Master Yan of East Mountain said, “Even Śākyamuni and Maitreya are *his* slaves. Tell me, who is *he*?”

Wumen said,

If you see *him* clearly, it is like meeting your father at a cross-roads; you don’t have to ask anyone else if it’s him or not.

Verse

Don’t grasp anyone else’s bow [but *his*; *he* is the real you];
Don’t ride anyone else’s horse;
Don’t commit anyone else’s misdeeds;
Don’t mind anyone else’s business.

Case 46. Step Forward from the Top of the Pole

Master Shishuang said, “At the top of the hundred foot pole, how will you take a step forward?”

Another ancient worthy said, “Though the person sitting on top of the hundred foot pole has found entry, it is still not real. At the top of the hundred foot pole you must step forward and make manifest the complete body [of Reality] throughout the worlds of the ten directions.”

Wumen said,

If you can advance a step and transform your being, then there is no place to shun because you cannot act enlightened there.

But tell me, how do you step forward from the top of a hundred foot pole? With an exclamation of surprise?

Verse

Blinding the eye of enlightenment,
Wrongly accepting [as absolute] the calibrations on the
scale,
Staking their bodies and lives and throwing them away,
One blind person leading a blind crowd.

Case 47. Tuṣita's Three Barriers

Master Yue of Tuṣita Temple posed three barriers to question students: "You push aside the crude superficialities, the weeds, to study the hidden truth, in order to see your real nature. But right now where *is* your real nature?

"Only after you recognize your real nature do you escape from birth and death. But when your eyesight fails [with physical death], how *do* you escape?

"When you have escaped from birth and death, you know where you are going. When the physical elements [that comprise your body] disperse, where *will* you go?"

Wumen said,

If you can use these three turning words, then you can act the master wherever you go and merge with the source [of Reality] while encountering causal circumstances.

Otherwise, it is easy to fill up on coarse food; chew it fine and it is hard to go hungry.

Verse

In a single moment of mind, observing from a universal
viewpoint countless eons,
The task of these infinite eons is right now.
Right now see through this one moment,
See through the person now observing.

Case 48. Qianfeng's One Road

A monk asked Qianfeng, "All those blessed with excellent enlightenment in all worlds share one road to nirvana. Where does the road start?"

299a

Qianfeng picked up his staff and drew a line and said, "Right here."

Later a monk asked Yunmen for instruction. Yunmen picked up a fan and said, "The fan leaps up to the thirty-third heaven and taps Indra on the nose. In the Eastern Sea it strikes a carp and the rain pours down."

Wumen said,

One man walks on the bottom of the deepest sea, raising dust and dirt as though winnowing. One man stands on the peak of the highest mountain, with white waves surging up to the sky. Holding fast, letting go, each extends one hand to support the Zen vehicle. They are like two galloping chargers colliding; surely no one in the world can stand up to them. But if we observe them with the correct eye, neither of the two great elders knows where the road starts.

Verse

Before you've set out, you've already arrived.
Before you've spoken, you've already explained.
Even if you anticipate every situation before it develops,
You still have to know that there is an opening upwards.

Afterword by Wumen

When the Buddhas and enlightened teachers since antiquity imparted enlightenment stories, they settled cases on the basis of the facts. There was never any excess of words.

They lift off your brain cover and display the eye of enlightenment. They want everyone to take it up directly, not to seek elsewhere. If you are a person of integrity who can comprehend such

methods, as soon as you hear them mentioned, you know where they're at.

Ultimately there is no gateway that can be entered, nor any steps that can be climbed. You must throw back your shoulders and cross through the barrier without asking the border guard.

Haven't you seen what Xuansha said? "The gate of nothingness, the gate of No, is the gate of liberation. Mindfulness of No, the absence of deluded ideation, is the mindfulness of people of the Path."

Moreover, Baiyun said, "You must clearly realize: it's just this. Why can't you pass through?" Even this kind of talk is rubbing red clay on a cow's udder [dirtying a source of pure nourishment].

If you can manage to pass through the barrier of the gate of No, you have already made a fool out of me. If you cannot pass through the barrier of the gate of No, you have turned your back on your true self.

As it is said, the mind of nirvana is easy to have insight into, but differentiating wisdom is hard to clarify. If you can be clear in differentiating wisdom, the family and the nation will spontaneously be at peace.

Dated the first year of the Shao Ding era [1228], five days before the end of the summer retreat. By the monk Huikai of Wumen, eighth-generation descendant of Yangqi.

Addenda

Zen Prescriptions

299b Following guidelines and keeping to rules is binding yourself without rope. Being unobstructed in all directions is an army of deluded demons. Keeping the mind clear and still is the perverted Zen of silent illumination.

Indulging your inclinations oblivious of entanglements is falling into a deep pit. Being alert and awake and undimmed is wearing

chains and a cangue. Thoughts of good, thoughts of evil are hell and heaven. Opinions on the Buddha and the Dharma are twin iron mountains encircling you. If you awaken just as thought arises, you are someone playing with the spirit. If you sit inert cultivating concentration, this is a plan for living in the ghosts' house. If you advance, you are missing the truth; if you retreat, you go against the Zen school. If you neither advance nor retreat, you have the breath of life but are dead.

So tell me, how should you act? If you make the effort, you must finish in this life. Don't go on forever suffering more disasters.

Huanglong's Three Barriers by Zongshou

How is my hand like a Buddha's hand?
Reaching behind me for the pillow,
Unknowingly I laugh aloud.
Actually the whole body is a hand.

How is my foot like a donkey's foot?
Before I set out, it has already taken a step.
I let it wander sideways across the whole world,
Walking three-footed upside-down over [our Zen ancestor]
Yanqi.

Every person has a causal nexus in life;
Every person can penetrate through to before this
mechanism operates.
[The fearsome monster Eight-Armed] Nāṭa breaks bones to
take back to his father.
How could [a real Zen adept like] the Fifth Patriarch depend
On his karmic links with his papa [the Fourth Patriarch]?

Buddha's hand, a donkey's foot, the causal nexus of life—
Not the Buddha, not the Path, not Zen.

Don't be surprised that Wumen's barrier is dangerous.
It is the total enemy of patch-robed ones.

In recent days at Ruiyan we have Wumen;
He stays on the meditation bench and judges ancient and
modern.

The roads of ordinary and holy are both cut off;
So many worms hidden in the earth begin to speak with
the voice of thunder.

Let the head monk of Wumen and the monks assembled here
now join to offer a mountain verse in thanks.

[Dated and signed] Shao Ding era, geng-yin in the cycle of
years [A.D. 1230], late spring. Written by Zongshou of Wuliang.

Afterword by Meng Hong to the 1245 Reprinting

Bodhidharma came from the West. He did not cling to words; he directly indicated the human mind, so people could see their real nature and become enlightened.

To say "directly indicated" is already roundabout. To say further "become enlightened" is rather embarrassing. Since there is no gate to Wumen's No-gate, the gate of nothingness, why is there a barrier? The evil sound of his grandmotherly concern has spread. I want to add an extra word to make forty-nine cases. The few places here that are hard to understand should be comprehended in a lift of the eyebrows.

Reprinted in the summer of the *yi-si* year of the Chun You era [A.D. 1245]. Afterword by Meng Hong, Military Inspector, Military Governor of the Baoning Army Region, Pacification and Settlement High Commissioner for the Jing-Hu Region and concurrently Garrison-Colony Commissioner and Grand Policy Response Commissioner for Kui Circuit and Superintendent of Jiangling-fu and

Handong-jun, Lord Founder of the State, enfeoffed with the revenue of 2,100 households, with a hundred families in direct domain.

Case 49

[By the layman Anwan, Zheng Qingzhi (d. 1251),
official, scholar, and Zen student.]

Old Zen man Wumen made forty-eight cases, passing judgments on the public cases of the ancient worthies. He is just like a seller of fried cakes. As soon as the buyer opens his mouth and takes one, Wumen makes it so that he can neither swallow it nor spit it out. 299c

Nevertheless, I want to put another one on his hot griddle, so we have enough for extra. But if it's offered up as before, I wonder where you old teachers will sink your teeth? If you can eat it up in one mouthful, then you emit light and move the earth. If not, then you will see the forty-eight [fried cakes] all turn into hot sand. Speak quickly! Speak quickly!

[Case:] In the [*Lotus*] *Sutra* [the Buddha] says, "Stop! Stop! You must not speak. My Dharma is wondrous and inconceivable."

Anwan says,

Where does the Dharma come from? From whence does the wonder exist? And what is it when [the Buddha] is preaching? Not only were [the eminent Zen teachers like] Fenggan talkative, but Śākyamuni actually had a lot to say too. The old ones concocted weird apparitions and have caused generations of their descendants to get tripped up by the further ramifications, the "creeping vines," so they cannot escape. Extraordinary word-handles like these cannot function as spoons or steamers. How many people have misunderstood!

A bystander asked, "Ultimately how will you wrap up the case and pass judgment?"

Anwan touched his ten fingertips together and said, "Stop! Stop! You must not speak. My Dharma is wondrous and inconceivable. Turn quickly to this word inconceivable." Then he drew a small circle [in the air], pointed to it, and said to the assembly, "The whole canon of verbal teachings, and Vimalakīrti's [wordless] Dharma-gate of nonduality, are all in here."

Verse

The fire of words is a lamp;
You turn your head but there's no answer.
Only a thief recognizes a thief;
With a single question it's inherited.

[Dated and signed] Chun You era, *bing-wu* year [1246], late summer. Written by the layman Anwan of Chuji at Fisherman's Farm on West Lake.

Colophon

Since the old printing blocks were destroyed, it was ordered that they be remade. When the work of carving them was completed, these printing blocks were placed in Guangyuan Zen Temple on Tushita Mountain in Wuzangzhou. Dated the thirteenth day of the tenth month of the *yi-jiu* year of the Ying Yong era. In the custody of the *bhikṣu* Ganyuan.