The Gateless Gate

*The Gateless Gate* or *The Gateless Barrier* (Chin. Wu-wen kuan; Jap. Mumonkan)  
The author is Chinese Ch'an master Wu-men Hui-hai (無門慧開 Mumon Ekai, 1183-1260).

**English Translation**  
By late Zen master Katsuki Sekida (*Two Zen Classics* 26-137)

**Original Chinese Text**  
The original Chinese text is taken from the following Japanese web site:


The Chinese and Japanese texts in this web site are taken from the book titled *Mumonkan*, published in Japan by Iwanami Bunkō.

**Chinese Characters**  
Unfortunately a few Chinese characters were not given in this site. Luckily these characters are less than 1% of the text. Where there was a definition about these ideograms, they are entered them using Chinese system (Big 5). There are also ideograms that appear as mere black boxes, without any explanations. These are replaced with dummy characters (empty square boxes).

**The Gateless Gate** 無門關  
Wu-wen kuan (Mumonkan)

**Mumon's Preface**

佛語心爲宗、無門爲法門。  
Buddhism makes mind its foundation and no-gate its gate.  
既是無門、且作麼生透。  
Now, how do you pass through this no-gate?

豈不見道、從門入者不是家珍、從緣得者始終成壞。  
It is said that things coming in through the gate can never be your own treasures.  
What is gained from external circumstances will perish in the end.  
恁麼説話、大似無風起浪好肉抉瘡。  
However, such a saying is already raising waves when there is no wind. It is cutting unblemished skin.  
何況滯言句覓解會。 捎棒打月、隔靴爬痒、有甚交渉。  
As for those who try to understand through other people's words, they are striking at the moon with a stick; scratching a shoe, whereas it is the foot that itches. What concern have they with the truth?

慧開、紹定戊子夏、首衆于東嘉龍翔。因納子請益、遂將古人公案作敲門瓦子、隨機引導學者。
In the summer of the first year of Jõtei, Ekai was in Ryûshõ Temple and as head monk worked with the monks, using the cases of the ancient masters as brickbats to batter the gate and lead them on according to their respective capacities.
The text was written down not according to any scheme, but just to make a collection of forty-eight cases.
It is called *Mumonkan*, "The Gateless Gate."

若是箇漢、不顧危亡單刀直入。 
A man of determination will unflinchingly push his way straight forward, regardless of all dangers.

通曰無門關。 
It is called *Mumonkan*, "The Gateless Gate."

八臂那咤、擱他不在。 
Then even the eight-armed Nata cannot hinder him.

Verse 頌曰 
大道無門 The Great Way is gateless,
千差有路 Approached in a thousand ways.
透得此關 Once past this checkpoint
乾坤獨步 You stride through the universe.

Case 1 Jõshû's "Mu" 一 趙州狗子 
A monk asked Jõshû, "Has a dog the Buddha Nature?" Jõshû answered, "Mu."

Mumon's Comment 
無門曰、參禪須透祖師關、妙悟要窮心路絶。 
In order to master Zen, you must pass the barrier of the patriarchs. To attain this subtle realization, you must completely cut off the way of thinking.
祖關不透心路不絶、盡是依草附木精靈。 
If you do not pass the barrier, and do not cut off the way of thinking, then you will be like a ghost clinging to the bushes and weeds.
且道、如何是祖師關。 
Now, I want to ask you, what is the barrier of the patriarchs?
只者一箇無字、乃宗門一關也。
Why, it is this single word "Mu." That is the front gate to Zen.

Therefore it is called the "Mumonkan of Zen."

If you pass through it, you will not only see Jõshû face to face, but you will also go hand in hand with the successive patriarchs, entangling your eyebrows with theirs, seeing with the same eyes, hearing with the same ears.

Isn't that a delightful prospect?

Wouldn't you like to pass this barrier?

Arouse your entire body with its three hundred and sixty bones and joints and its eighty-four thousand pores of the skin; summon up a spirit of great doubt and concentrate on this word "Mu."

Carry it continuously day and night. Do not form a nihilistic conception of vacancy, or a relative conception of "has" or "has not."

It will be just as if you swallow a red-hot iron ball, which you cannot spit out even if you try.

All the illusory ideas and delusive thoughts accumulated up to the present will be exterminated, and when the time comes, internal and external will be spontaneously united. You will know this, but for yourself only, like a dumb man who has had a dream.

Then all of a sudden an explosive conversion will occur, and you will astonish the heavens and shake the earth.

It will be as if you snatch away the great sword of the valiant general Kan'ô and hold it in your hand. When you meet the Buddha, you kill him; when you meet the patriarchs, you kill them. On the brink of life and death, you command perfect freedom; among the sixfold worlds and four modes of existence, you enjoy a merry and playful samadhi.

Now, I want to ask you again, "How will you carry it out?"

Wouldn't you like to pass this barrier?
Employ every ounce of your energy to work on this "Mu."
若不間斷、好似法燭一點便著。
If you hold on without interruption, behold: a single spark, and the holy candle is lit!

Mumon's Verse 頌曰
狗子佛性 The dog, the Buddha Nature,
全提正令 The pronouncement, perfect and final.
纔渉有無 Before you say it has or has not,
喪身失命 You are a dead man on the spot.

Case 2 Hyakujō's Fox 二 百丈野狐

When Hyakujō Oshō delivered a certain series of sermons, an old man always followed the monks to the main hall and listened to him.

When the monks left the hall, the old man would also leave.

One day, however, he remained behind, and Hyakujō asked him, "Who are you, standing here before me?"

The old man replied.

"I am not a human being.
於過去迦葉佛時曾住此山。
In the old days of Kashyapa Buddha, I was a head monk, living here on this mountain.
因學人問、大修行底人還落因果也無。
One day a student asked me, 'Does a man of enlightenment fall under the yoke of causation or not?'
某甲對云、不落因果。
I answered, 'No, he does not.'
五百生堕野狐身。
Since then I have been doomed to undergo five hundred rebirths as a fox.
今請、和尚代一轉語貴脫野狐。
I beg you now to give the turning word to release me from my life as a fox.
遂問、大修行底人、還落因果也無。
Tell me, does a man of enlightenment fall under the yoke of causation or not?"
師云、不昧因果。
Hyakujō answered, "He does not ignore causation."
老人於言下大悟。
No sooner had the old man heard these words than he was enlightened.
Making his bows, he said, "I am emancipated from my life as a fox. I shall remain on this mountain."

I have a favor to ask of you: would you please bury my body as that of a dead monk."

Hyakujō had the director of the monks strike with the gavel and inform everyone that after the midday meal there would be a funeral service for a dead monk.

The monks wondered at this, saying, "Everyone is in good health; nobody is in the sick ward. What does this mean?"

After the meal Hyakujō led the monks to the foot of a rock on the far side of the mountain and with his staff poked out the dead body of a fox and performed the ceremony of cremation.

That evening he ascended the rostrum and told the monks the whole story.

Hyakujō said, "You come here to me, and I will tell you."

Hyakujō clapped his hands with a laugh and exclaimed, "I was thinking that the barbarian had a red beard, but now I see before me the red-bearded barbarian himself."

Not falling under causation: how could this make the monk a fox?
Not ignoring causation: how could this make the old man emancipated?

If you come to understand this, you will realize how old Hyakujō would have enjoyed five hundred rebirths as a fox.
Case 3 Gutei Raises a Finger

Whenever Gutei Oshō was asked about Zen, he simply raised his finger.

Once a visitor asked Gutei's boy attendant, "What does your master teach?"

The boy too raised his finger.

Hearing of this, Gutei cut off the boy's finger with a knife.

The boy, screaming with pain, began to run away.

Gutei called to him, and when he turned around, Gutei raised his finger.

The boy suddenly became enlightened.

When Gutei was about to pass away, he said to his assembled monks, "I obtained one-finger Zen from Tenryû and used it all my life but still did not exhaust it."

When he had finished saying this, he entered into eternal Nirvana.

Mumon's Comment

The enlightenment of Gutei and of the boy does not depend on the finger.

If you understand this, Tenryû, Gutei, the boy, and you yourself are all run through with one skewer.

Mumon's Verse

Gutei made a fool of old Tenryû,
Emancipating the boy with a single slice,
Just as Kyorei cleaved Mount Kasan
To let the Yellow River run through.

Case 4 The Western Barbarian with No Beard
Or Mokurry, why has the Western Barbarian no beard?

**Mumon's Comment**

Study should be real study, enlightenment should be real enlightenment.

You should once meet this barbarian directly to be really intimate with him.

But saying you are really intimate with him already divides you into two.

**Mumon's Verse**

Don't discuss your dream

Before a fool.

Barbarian with no beard

Obscures the clarity.

**Case 5 Kyōgen's "Man up in a Tree"**

Kyōgen Oshō said, "It is like a man up in a tree hanging from a branch with his mouth; his hands grasp no bough, his feet rest on no limb. Someone appears under the tree and asks him, 'What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?' If he does not answer, he fails to respond to the question. If he does answer, he will lose his life.

What would you do in such a situation?"

**Mumon's Comment**

Even if your eloquence flows like a river, it is of no avail.

Though you can expound the whole of Buddhist literature, it is of no use.

If you solve this problem, you will give life to the way that has been dead until this moment and destroy the way that has been alive up to now.

Otherwise you must wait for Maitreya Buddha and ask him.

**Mumon's Verse**

Kyōgen is truly thoughtless;
Case 6 The Buddha Holds Out a Flower

The Buddha said, "I have the True Dharma Eye, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvana, the True Form of the Formless, and the Subtle Dharma Gate, independent of words and transmitted beyond doctrine. This I have entrusted to Mahakashyapa."

Mumon's Comment

Golden-faced Gautama really disregarded his listeners.
He made the good look bad and sold dog's meat labeled as mutton.
He himself thought it was wonderful.
"If, however, everyone in the audience had laughed, how could he have transmitted his True Eye?"
And again, if Mahakashyapa had not smiled, how could the Buddha have transmitted it?

Mumon's Verse

Holding out a flower, The Buddha betrayed his curly tail.
迦葉破顏  Heaven and earth were bewildered,
人天罔措  At Mahakasyapa's smile.

**Case 7 Jōshū's "Wash Your Bowl"**  七 趙州洗鉢

趙州、因僧問、其甲乍入叢林。
A monk said to Jōshū, "I have just entered this monastery.
乞師指示。
Please teach me."
州云、喫粥了也未。
"Have you eaten your rice porridge?" asked Jōshū.
僧云、喫粥了也。
"Yes, I have," replied the monk.
州云、洗鉢盂去。
"Then you had better wash your bowl," said Jōshū.
其僧有省。
With this the monk gained insight.

**Mumon's Comment**
無門曰、趙州開口見膽、露出心肝。
When he opens his mouth, Jōshū shows his gallbladder. He displays his heart and liver.
者僧聽事不眞、喚鐘作甕。
I wonder if this monk really did hear the truth. I hope he did not mistake the bell for a jar.

**Mumon's Verse** 頌曰
只为分明極 Endeavoring to interpret clearly,
翻令所得遲 You retard your attainment.
早知燈是火 Don't you know that flame is fire?
飯熟已多時 Your rice has long been cooked.

**Case 8 Keichû the Wheelmaker**  八 奚仲造車

月庵和尚問僧、奚仲造車一百輻。
Gettan Oshô said, "Keichû, the first wheelmaker, made a cart whose wheels had a hundred spokes.
拈却兩頭、去却輻、明甚麼邊事。
Now, suppose you took a cart and removed both the wheels and the axle. What would you have?"

**Mumon's Comment**
無門曰、若也直下明得、眼、似流星、機、如掣電。
If anyone can directly master this topic, his eye will be like a shooting star, his spirit like a flash of lightning.

Mumon's Verse頌曰
機輪轉處 When the spiritual wheels turn,
達者猶迷 Even the master fails to follow them.
四維上下 They travel in all directions, above and below,
南北東西 North, south, east, and west.

**Case 9 Daitsu Chishô Buddha** 九 大通智勝
興陽讓和尚、因僧問、大通智勝佛、十劫坐道場、佛法不現前、不得成佛道時如何。
A monk asked Kôyô Seijô, "Daitsu Chishô Buddha sat in zazen for ten *kalpas* and could not attain Buddhahood. He did not become a Buddha. How could this be?"

讓曰、其問甚諦當。Seijô said, "Your question is quite self-explanatory."
僧云、既是坐道場、爲甚麼不得成佛道。
The monk asked, "He meditated so long; why could he not attain Buddhahood?"

讓曰、爲伊不成佛。Seijô said, "Because he did not become a Buddha."

Mumon's Comment 無門曰、只許老胡知、不許老胡會。
I allow the barbarian's realization, but I do not allow his understanding.
凡夫若知、既是聖人。
When an ignorant man realizes it, he is a sage.
聖人若會、既是凡夫。
When a sage understands it, he is ignorant.

Mumon's Verse頌曰
了身何似了心休 Better emancipate your mind than your body;
了得心口身不愁 When the mind is emancipated, the body is free,
若也身心倶了了 When both body and mind are emancipated,
神仙何必更封候 Even gods and spirits ignore worldly power.

**Case 10 Seizei Is Utterly Destitude** 一十 清税弧貧
曹山和尚、因僧問云、清税弧貧。
Seizei said to Sôzan, "Seizei is utterly destitute.
乞、師賑濟。
Will you give him support?"
山云、税闍梨。
Sōzan called out, "Seizei!"
税、應諾。
Seizei responded, "Yes, sir!"
山曰、青原白家酒、三盞喫了、猶道未沾唇。
Sōzan said, "You have finished three cups of the finest wine in China, and still you
say you have not yet moistened your lips!"

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、清稅輸機、是何心行。
Seizei pretended to retreat. What was his scheme?
曹山具眼、深辨來機。
Sōzan had the eye of Buddha and saw through his opponent's motive.
然雖如是、且道、那裏是稅闍梨、喫酒處。
However, I want to ask you, at what point did Seizei drink wine?

Mumon's Verse 頌日
貧似范丹 Poverty like Hantan's,
氣如項羽 Mind like Kõu's;
活計雖無 With no means of livelihood,
敢與鬪富 He dares to rival the richest.

Case 11 Jõshû Sees the Hermits 十一 州勘庵主

趙州、到一庵主處問、有麼有麼。
Jõshû went to a hermit's cottage and asked, "Is the master in? Is the master in?"
主、堅起拳頭。
The hermit raised his fist.
州云、水淺不是泊舡處。 便行。
Jõshû said, "The water is too shallow to anchor here," and he went away.
又到一庵主處云、有麼有麼。
Coming to another hermit's cottage, he asked again, "Is the master in? Is the master
in?"
主亦堅起拳頭。
This hermit, too, raised his fist.
州云、能縱能奪、能殺能活。便作禮。
Jõshû said, "Free to give, free to take, free to kill, free to save," and he made a deep
bow.

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、一般堅起拳頭、為甚麼肯一箇、不肯一箇。
Both raised their fists; why was the one accepted and the other rejected?

Tell me, what is the difficulty here?

If you can give a turning word to clarify this problem, you will realize that Jōshū's tongue has no bone in it, now helping others up, now knocking them down, with perfect freedom.

Although like this, Jōshū was understood by the two hermits.

I must remind you: the two hermits could also see through Jōshū.

If you say there is anything to choose between the two hermits, you have no eye of realization.

If you say there is no choice between the two, you have no eye of realization.

*Mumon's Verse*  
眼流星 The eye like a shooting star,
機掣電 The spirit like a lighting;
殺人刀 A death-dealing blade,
活人劍 A life-giving sword.

**Case 12** Zuigan Calls His Master  
瑞巖彦和尚、毎日自喚主人公、復自應諾。Zuigan Gen Oshō called to himself every day, "Master!" and answered, "Yes, sir!"

乃云、惺惺着。□。Then he would say, "Be wide awake!" and answer, "Yes, sir!"

他時異日、莫受人瞞。□□。"Henceforward, never be deceived by others!" "No, I won't!"

*Mumon's Comment*  
無門曰、瑞巖老子、自買自賣、弄出許多神頭鬼面。Old Zuigan buys and sells himself. He takes out a lot of god-masks and devil-masks and puts them on and plays with them.

何故。

What for, eh?

□。一箇喚底、一箇應底。一箇惺惺底、一箇不受人瞞底。One calling and the other answering; one wide awake, the other saying he will never be deceived.

認着依前還不是。If you stick to any of them, you will be a failure.

若也傚他、惣是野狐見解。If you imitate him, you are just a fox's opinion.
If you imitate Zuigan, you will play the fox.

**Mumon's Verse**

頌曰
学道之人不識眞 Students of the Way do not realize truth.
只爲從前認識神 The seed of birth and death through endless eons:
無量劫來生死本 The fool calls it the true original self.
癡人喚作本來人

**Case 13** Tokusan Holds His Bowls

徳山、一日托鉢下堂。 One day Tokusan went down toward the dining room, holding his bowls.
見雪峰問者老漢鐘未鳴鼓未響、托鉢向甚處去、山便回方丈。 Seppô met him and asked, "Where are you off to with your bowls? The bell has not rung, and the drum has not sounded." Tokusan turned and went back to his room.
巒頭密啓其意。 Gantô whispered his meaning.

徳山、一日托鉢下堂。 One day Tokusan went down toward the dining room, holding his bowls.
見雪峰問者老漢鐘未鳴鼓未響、托鉢向甚處去、山便回方丈。 Seppô met him and asked, "Where are you off to with your bowls? The bell has not rung, and the drum has not sounded." Tokusan turned and went back to his room.

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、若是未後句、巒頭徳山倶未夢見在。 As for the last word, neither Gantô nor Tokusan has ever dreamed of it!

Mumon's Verse頌曰
識得最初句 If you realize the first,
便會末後句 You master the last.
末後與最初 The first and the last
不者は一句 Are not one word.

**Case 14 Nansen Cuts the Cat in Two**

Nansen Oshô saw monks of the Eastern and Western halls quarreling over a cat.

He held up the cat and said, "If you can give an answer, you will save the cat. If not, I will kill it."

No one could answer, and Nansen cut the cat in two.

That evening Jôshû returned, and Nansen told him of the incident.

Jôshû took off his sandal, placed it on his head, and walked out.

"If you had been there, you would have saved the cat," Nansen remarked.

**Mumon's Comment**

Tell me, what did Jôshû mean when he put the sandal on his head?

If you can give a turning word on this, you will see that Nansen's decree was carried out with good reason.

If not, "Danger!"

**Mumon's Verse** 頌曰

Had Jôshû been there, 
He would have done the opposite; 
When the sword is snatched away, 
Even Nansen begs for his life.

**Case 15 Tôzan's Sixty Blows**

Tôzan came to study with Unmon. Unmon asked, "Where are you from?"

"From Sato," Tôzan replied.

"Where were you during the summer?"

山云、湖南報慈。
"Well, I was at the monastery of Hōzu, south of the lake."

"When did you leave there," Unmon asked.

"On August 25" was Tōzan's reply.

"I spare you sixty blows," Unmon said.

The next day Tōzan came to Unmon and said, "Yesterday you said you spared me sixty blows. I beg to ask you, where was I at fault?"

"Oh, you rice bag!" shouted Unmon. "What makes you wander about, now west of the river, now south of the lake?"

Tōzan thereupon came to a mighty enlightenment experience.

**Mumon's Comment**

If Unmon had given Tōzan the true food of Zen and encouraged him to develop an active Zen spirit, his school would not have declined as it did.

Tōzan had an agonizing struggle through the whole night, lost in the sea of right and wrong. He reached a complete impasse. After waiting for the dawn, he again went to Unmon, and Unmon again made him a picture book of Zen.

Even though he was directly enlightened, Tōzan could not be called brilliant.

Now, I want to ask you, should Tōzan have been given sixty blows or not?

**Mumon's Verse**

*The lion had a secret to puzzle his cub;
The cub crouched, leaped, and dashed forward.*
无端再叙当头著 The second time, a casual move led to checkmate.
前箭犹轻后箭深 The first arrow was light, but the second went deep.

**Case 16 When the Bell Sounds** 十六 鐘聲七條

雲門曰、世界恁麼廣闊。Unmon said, "The world is vast and wide.
因甚向鐘聲裏披七條。Why do you put on your seven-piece robe at the sound of the bell?"

**Mumon's Comment**

In studying Zen, you should not be swayed by sounds and forms.
Even though you attain insight when hearing a voice or seeing a form, this is simply the ordinary way of things.
Don't you know that the real Zen student commands sounds, controls forms, is clear-sighted at every event and free on every occasion?

 Granted you are free, just tell me: Does the sound come to the ear or does the ear go to the sound?

直饒響寂雙忘、到此如何話會。If both sound and silence die away, at such a juncture how could you talk of Zen?

若將耳聽應難會、眼處聞聲方始親。While listening with you ear, you cannot tell. When hearing with your eye, you are truly intimate.

**Mumon's Verse**

會則事同一家 With realization, things make one family;
不會萬別千差 Without realization, things are separated in a thousand ways.

Case 17 Chû the National Teacher Gives Three Calls 十七 國師三喚

國師三喚侍者。侍者三應。The National Teacher called his attendant three times, and three times the attendant responded.

The National Teacher said, "I long feared that I was betraying you, but really it was you who were betraying me."
Mumon's Comment
無門曰、國師三喚、舌頭墮地。
The National Teacher called three times, and his tongue fell to the ground.
侍者三應、和光吐出。
The attendant responded three times, and he gave his answer with brilliance.
國師年老心孤、按牛頭喫草。
The National Teacher was old and lonely; he held the cow's head and forced it to eat grass.
侍者未肯承當。
The attendant would have none of it;
美食不中飽人口、且道、那裏是他辜負處。
delicious food has little attraction for a man who is satiated. Tell me, at what point was the betrayal?
國淨才子貴、家富小兒嬌。
When the country is flourishing, talent is prized. When the home is wealthy, the children are proud.

Mumon's Verse頌曰
鉄枷無孔要人擔 He carried and iron yoke with no hole
累及兒孫不等閑 And left a curse to trouble his descendants.
欲得□門并□戶 If you want to hold up the gate and the doors,
更須赤腳上刀山 You must climb a mountain of swords with bare feet.

Case 18 Tôzan's "Masagin" 十八 洞山三斤
洞山和尚、因僧問、如何是佛。
A monk asked Tôzan, "What is Buddha?"
山云、麻三斤。
Tôzan replied, "Masagin!" [three pounds of flax].

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、洞山老人、參得些蚌蛤禪、纔開兩片露出肝腸。
Old Tôzan attained the poor Zen of a clam. He opened the two halves of the shell a little and exposed all the liver and intestines inside.
然雖如是、且道、向甚處見洞山。
But tell me, how do you see Tôzan?

Mumon's Verse頌曰
突出麻三斤 "Three pounds of flax" came sweeping along;
言親意更親 Close were the words, but closer was the meaning.
來說是非者 Those who argue about right and wrong
便是是非人 Are those enslaved by right and wrong.

**Case 19 Nansen's "Ordinary Mind Is the Way"**

南泉、因趙州問、如何是道。
Jōshū asked Nansen, "What is the Way?"

"Ordinary mind is the Way," Nansen replied.

州云、不擬爭知是道。
"Shall I try to seek after it?" Jōshū asked.

泉云、擬向即乖。
"If you try for it, you will become separated from it," responded Nansen.

州云、不擬知是道。
"How can I know the Way unless I try for it?" persisted Jōshū.

泉云、道不屬知、不屬不知。
Nansen said, "The Way is not a matter of knowing or not knowing.

知是妄覺、不知是無記。
Knowing is delusion; not knowing is confusion.

若眞達不擬之道、猶如太虛廓然洞豁。
When you have really reached the true Way beyond doubt, you will find it as vast and boundless as outer space.

豈可強是非也。
How can it be talked about on the level of right and wrong?"

州於言下頓悟。
With these words, Jōshū came to a sudden realization.

**Mumon's Comment**

無門曰、南泉被趙州發問、直得瓦解氷消、分疎不下。
Nansen dissolved and melted away before Jōshū's question, and could not offer a plausible explanation.

趙州縱饒悟去、更參三十年始得。
Even though Jōshū comes to a realization, he must delve into it for another thirty years before he can fully understand it.

**Mumon's Verse**

頌曰

春有百花秋有月 The spring flowers, the autumn moon;
夏有涼風冬有雪 Summer breezes, winter snow.
若無閒事掛心頭 If useless things do not clutter your mind,
更是人間好時節 You have the best days of your life.

**Case 20 The Man of Great Strength**
松源和尚云、大力量人、因甚擡脚不起。
Shōgen Oshō asked, "Why is it that a man of great strength does not lift his legs?"
又云、開口不在舌頭上。
And he also said, "It is not the tongue he speaks with."

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、松源可謂、傾腸倒腹。
It must be said that Shōgen shows us all his stomach and intestines.
只是欠人承當。
But alas, no one can appreciate him!
縱饒直下承當、正好來無門處喫痛棒。
And even if someone could appreciate him, let him come to me, and I'll beat him severely.
何故。
Why?
□。要識眞金、火裏看。
If you want to find pure gold, you must see it through fire.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰
擡脚踏翻香水海  Lifting his leg, he kicks up the Scented Ocean;
低頭俯視四禪天  Lowering his head, he looks down on the fourth Dhyana heaven.
一箇渾身無處著請  There is no space vast enough for his body—
續一句  Now, somebody write the last line here.

Case 21 Unmon's "Kanshiketsu"
二十一 雲門屎橛

雲門、因僧問、如何是佛。
A monk asked Unmon, "What is Buddha?"
門云、乾屎橛。
Unmon replied, "Kanshiketsu!" [A dry shit-stick.]

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、雲門可謂、家貧難辨素食、事忙不及草書。
Unmon was too poor to prepare plain food, too busy to speak from notes.
動便將屎橛來、□門掛戸。
He hurriedly took up shiketsu to support the Way.
佛法興衰可見。
The decline of Buddhism was thus foreshadowed.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰
閃電光  Lightning flashing,
Case 22 Kashyapa's "Knock Down the Flagpole"

迦葉、因阿難問云、世尊傳金襕袈裟外、別傳何物。
Ananda asked Kashyapa, "The World-honored One gave you the golden robe; did he give you anything else?"
葉喚云、阿難。
"Ananda!" cried Kashyapa.
難、應諾。
"Yes, sir!" answered Ananda.
葉云、倒却門前刹竿著。
"Knock down the flagpole at the gate," said Kashyapa.

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、若向者裏下得一轉語親切、便見靈山一會儼然未散。
If you can give a turning word at this point, you will see that the meeting at Mount Grdhra kuta is still solemnly continuing.
其或未然、毘婆尸佛、早留心、直至而今不得妙。
If not, then this is what Vipasyin Buddha worried about from remote ages; up to now he has still not acquired the essence.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰
問處何如答處親 Tell me—question or answer—which was more intimate?
幾人於此眼生筋 Many have knit their brows over this;
兄呼弟鷹揚家醜 Elder brother calls, younger brother answers, and they betray the family secret.
不屬陰陽別是春 They had a special spring, not one of yin and yang.

Case 23 Think Neither Good Nor Evil

六祖、因明上座、趁至大庾嶺。
The Sixth Patriarch was pursued by the monk Myõ as far as Taiyu Mountain.
祖見明至、即擲衣鉢於石上云、此衣表信。
The patriarch, seeing Myõ coming, laid the robe and bowl on a rock and said, "This robe represents the faith; it should not be fought over. If you want to take it away, take it now."
明遂擧之如山不動、踟□悚慄。
Myõ tried to move it, but it was as heavy as a mountain and would not budge. Faltering and trembling, he cried out, "I came for the Dharma, not for the robe."
願行者開示。
I beg you, please give me your instruction.

祖云、不思善、不思惡、正與麼時、那箇是明上座本來面目。
The patriarch said, "Think neither good nor evil. At this very moment, what is the original self of the monk Myõ?"

明當下大悟、遍體汗流。
At these words, Myõ was directly illuminated. His whole body was covered with sweat.

泣淚作禮、問曰、上來密語密意外、還更 有意旨否。
He wept and bowed, saying, "Besides the secret words and the secret meaning you have just now revealed to me, is there anything else, deeper still?"

祖曰、我今爲汝説者、即非密也。
The patriarch said, "What I have told you is no secret at all.

汝若返照自己面目、密却在汝邊。
When you look into your own true self, whatever is deeper is found right there.

明云、其申雖在黄梅隨衆、實未省自己面目。
Myõ said, "I was with the monks under Ōbai for many years but I could not realize my true self.

今蒙指授入處、如人飲水冷暖自知。
But now, receiving your instruction, I know it is like a man drinking water and knowing whether it is cold or warm.

今行者即是某甲師也。
My lay brother, you are now my teacher."

祖云、汝若如是則吾與汝同師黄梅。
The patriarch said, "If you say so, but let us both call Ōbai our teacher.

善自護持。
Be mindful to treasure and hold fast to what you have attained."

Mumon's Comment
無問曰、六祖可謂、是事出急家老婆心切。
The Sixth Patriarch was, so to speak, hurried into helping a man in an emergency, and he displayed a grandmotherly kindness.

譬如新茘支剥了殻去了核、送在 你 口裏、只要你 嚼一嚼。
It is as though he peeled a fresh lichi, removed the seed, put it in your mouth, and asked you to swallow it down.

Mumon's Verse
描不成兮畫不就 You cannot describe it; you cannot picture it;
贊不及兮休生受 You cannot admire it; don't try to eat it raw.
本來面目没處藏 Your true self has nowhere to hide;
世界壞時渠不朽 When the world is destroyed, it is not destroyed.
Case 24 Fuketsu's Speech and Silence

風穴和尚、因僧問、語默渉離微、如何通不犯。
A monk asked Fuketsu, "Both speech and silence are faulty in being *ri* [離 inward action of mind] or *bi* [微 outward action of mind]. How can we escape these faults?"

穴云、長憶江南三月裏、鷓鴣啼處百花香。
Fuketsu said,

"I always remember the spring in Kõnan,
Where the partridges sing;
How fragrant the countless flowers!"

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、風穴機如掣電得路便行。
Fuketsu's Zen spirit was like lightning and opened a clear passage.

争奈坐前人舌頭不斷。
However, he was entangled in the monk's words and could not cut them off.

若向者裏見得親切、自有出身之路。
If you can really grasp the problem, you can readily find the way out.

且離卻語言三昧、道將一句來。
Now, putting language samadhi aside, say it in your own words.

Mumon's Verse
頌曰
不露風骨句 He does not use a refined phrase;
未語先分付 Before speaking, he has already handed it over.
進歩口喃喃 If you chatter on and on,
知君大罔措 You will find you have lost your way.

Case 25 Kyôzan's Dream

仰山和尚、夢見往彌勒所、安第三座。
In a dream Kyôzan Oshô went to Maitreya's place and was led in to sit in the third seat.

有一尊者、白槌云、今日當第三座説法。
A senior monk struck with a gavel and said, "Today the one in the third seat will speak."

山乃起白槌云、摩訶衍法離四句、絶百非。
Kyôzan rose and, striking with the gavel, said, "The truth of Mahayana is beyond the four propositions and transcends the hundred negations.

諦聴、諦聴。
Taichô! Taichô!" [Hear the truth!]

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、且道、是説法不説法、開口即失、閉口又喪。
Now tell me, did Kyōzan preach or did he not not? If he opens his mouth, he is lost; if he seals his mouth, he is lost.
不開不閉、十万八千。
Even if he neither opens nor shuts his mouth, he is a hundred and eight thousand [miles away from the truth].

**Mumon's Verse** 偈日
白日晴天 In broad daylight, under the blue sky,
夢中説夢 He forges a dream in a dream;
捏怪捏怪 He makes up a monstrous story
訛□一衆 And tries to deceive the whole crowd.

**Case 26 Two Monks Roll Up the Blinds** 二十六 二僧卷簾
清涼大法眼、因僧齋前上參。 眼以手指簾。
When the monks assembled before the midday meal to listen to his lecture, the great Hōgen of Seiryō pointed at the bamboo blinds.
時有二僧、同去卷簾。
Two monks simultaneously went and rolled them up.
眼曰、一得一失。
Hōgen said, "One gain, one loss."

**Mumon's Comment** 無門曰、且道、是誰得誰失。
Tell me, who gained and who lost?
若向者裏著得一隻眼、便知清涼國師敗闕處。
If you have an eye to penetrate the secret, you will see where Seiryō Kokushi failed.
然雖如是、切忌向得失裏商量。
However, I warn you strongly against discussing gain and loss.

**Mumon's Verse** 偈日
卷起明明徹太空 Rolling up the blinds, the great sky is open,
太空猶未合吾宗 But the great sky does not come up to Zen.
爭似從空都放下 Why don't you throw them all down from the sky,
綿綿密密不通風 And keep your practice so close that no air can escape?

**Case 27 Nansen's "Not Mind, Not Buddha, Not Things"** 二十七 不是心佛
南泉和尚、因僧問云、還有不與人説底法麼。
A monk asked Nansen, "Is there any Dharma that has not been preached to the people?"
Nansen answered, "There is."
Nansen said, "It is not mind; it is not Buddha; it is not things."

Mumon's Comment
At this question, Nansen used up all his treasure and was not a little confused.

Mumon's Verse
Talking too much spoils your virtue;
Silence is truly unequaled.
Let the mountains become the sea;
I'll give you no comment.

Case 28 Ryûtan Blows Out the Candle
Ryûtan lit a paper candle and handed it to him.
Ryûtan said, "What sort of realization do you have?"
"From now on," said Tokusan, "I will not doubt the words of an old oshô who is renowned everywhere under the sun."

The next day Ryûtan ascended the rostrum and said, "I see a fellow among you. His fangs are like the sword tree. His mouth is like a blood bowl."
Strike him with a stick, and he won't turn his head to look at you.
Someday or other, he will climb the highest of the peaks and establish our Way there."

Tokusan brought his notes on the *Diamond Sutra* to the front of the hall, pointed to them with a torch, and said, "Even though you have exhausted the abtruse doctrines, it is like placing a hair in a vast space. Even though you have learned all the secrets of the world, it is like a drop of water dripped on the great ocean."

And he burned all his notes.

Then, making bows, he took his leave of his teacher.

**Mumon's Comment**

Before Tokusan crossed the barrier from his native place, his mind burned and his mouth uttered bitterness. He went southward, intending to stamp out the doctrines of special transmission outside the sutras.

When he reached the road to Reishû, he asked an old woman to let him have lunch to "refresh the mind."

"Your worship, what sort of literature do you carry in your pack?" the old woman asked.

"Commentaries on the *Diamond Sutra*," replied Tokusan.

"I hear it is said in that sutra, 'The past mind cannot be held, the present mind cannot be held, the future mind cannot be held.'"

"Now, I would like to ask you, what mind are you going to have refreshed?"

At this question Tokusan was dumbfounded.
Coming to Ryûtan, Tokusan got the worst of it.
可謂是前言不應後語。
His former words were inconsistent with his later ones.
龍潭大似憐兒不覺醜。
As for Ryûtan, he seemed to have lost all sense of shame in his compassion toward his son.
見他有些子火種、郎忙將惡水驀頭一澆澆殺。
Finding a bit of live coal in the other, enough to start a fire, he hurriedly poured on muddy water to annihilate everything at once.
冷地看來、一場好笑。
A little cool reflection tells us it was all a farce.

**Mumon's Verse**

頌曰

聞名不如見面 Hearing the name cannot surpass seeing the face;
見面不如聞名 Seeing the face cannot surpass hearing the name.
雖然救得鼻孔 He may have saved his nose,
爭奈瞎却眼睛 But alas! he lost his eyes.

**Case 29 The Sixth Patriarch's "Your Mind Moves"**

六祖、因風颺幡。有二僧、對論。
The wind was flapping a temple flag, and two monks started an argument.
一云、幡動。一云、風動。
One said the flag moved, the other said the wind moved;
往復曾未契理。
they argued back and forth but could not reach a conclusion.
祖云、不是風動、不是幡動、仁者心動。
The Sixth Patriarch said, "It is not the wind that moves, it is not the flag that moves; it is your mind that moves."
二僧悚然。
The two monks were awe-struck.

**Mumon's Comment**

無門曰、不是風動、不是幡動、不是心動、甚處見祖師。
It is not the wind that moves; it is not the flag that moves; it is not the mind that moves. How do you see the patriarch?
若向者裏見得親切、方知二僧買鐵得金。
If you come to understand this matter deeply, you will see that the two monks got gold when buying iron.
祖師忍俊不禁、一場漏逗。
The patriarch could not withhold his compassion and courted disgrace.
Mumon's Verse

頌曰

風幡心動   Wind, flag, mind, moving,
一狀領過   All equally to blame.
只知開口   Only knowing how to open his mouth,
不覺話墮   Unaware of his fault in talking.

Case 30 Baso's "This Very Mind Is the Buddha"

馬祖、因大梅問、如何是佛。
Daibai asked Baso, "What is the Buddha?"
祖云、即心是佛。
Baso answered, "This very mind is the Buddha."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若能直下領略得去、著佛衣、喫佛飯、説佛話、行佛行、即是佛也。
If you directly grasp Baso's meaning, you wear the Buddha's clothes, eat the Buddha's food, speak the Buddha's words, do the Buddha's deeds—that is, you are a Buddha himself.
然雖如是、大梅引多少人、錯認定盤星。
However, alas! Daibai misled not a few people into taking the mark on the balance for the weight itself.
爭知道説箇佛字、三日漱口。
How could he realize that even mentioning the word "Buddha" should make us rinse out our mouths for three days?
若是箇漢、見説即心是佛、掩耳便走。
If a man of understanding hears anyone say, "This very mind is the Buddha," he will cover his ears and rush away.

Mumon's Verse

頌曰

青天白日   The blue sky and bright day,
切忌尋覓   No more searching around!
更問如何   "What is the Buddha?" you ask:
抱贓叫屈   With loot in your pocket, you declare yourself innocent.

Case 31 Jôshû Investigates an Old Woman

趙州、因僧問婆子、臺山路向甚處去。
A monk asked an old woman, "What is the way to Taisan?"
婆云、直去。
The old woman said, "Go straight on."
僧纔行三五步。 婆云、好箇師僧、又恁麼去。
When the monk had proceeded a few steps, she said, "A good, respectable monk, but he too goes that way."

Afterward someone told Jōshū about this.

州云、待我去與你勘過這婆子。
Jōshū said, "Wait a bit, I will go and investigate the old woman for you."

明日便去亦如是問。
The next day he went and asked the same question, and the old woman gave the same answer.

州歸謂衆曰、臺山婆子、我與□勘破了也。
On returning, Jōshū said to his disciples, "I have investigated the old woman of Taisan for you."

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、婆子只解坐籌帷幄、要且著賊不知。
The old woman only knew how to sit still in her tent and plan the campaign; she did not know when she was shadowed by a spy.

趙州老人、善用偸營劫塞乃機、又且無大人相。
Though old Jōshū showed himself clever enough to take a camp and overwhelm a fortress, he displayed no trace of being a great commander.

撿點將來、二俱有過。
If we look at them, they both have their faults.

且道、那裏是趙州、勘破婆子處。
But tell me, what did Jōshū see in the old woman?

Mumon's Verse
問既一般 The question was like the others,
答亦相似 The answer was the same.
飯裏有砂 Sand in the rice,
泥中有刺 Thorns in the mud.

Case 32 A Non-Buddhist Philosopher Questions the Buddha

外道問佛

世尊、因外道問、不問有言、不問無言。
A non-Buddhist philosopher said to the Buddha, "I do not ask for words; I don not ask for non-words."

世尊據座。
The Buddha just sat there.

外道贊歎云、世尊大慈大悲、開我迷雲令我得入。
The philosopher said admiringly, "The World-honored One, with his great mercy, has blown away the clouds of my illusion and enabled me to enter the Way."
And after making bows, he took his leave.
Then Ananda asked the Buddha, "What did he realize, to admire you so much?"
The World-honored One replied, "A fine horse runs even at the shadow of the whip."

**Mumon's Comment**

無門曰、阿難乃佛弟子、宛不如外道見解、且道、外道與佛弟子相去多少。

Ananda was the Buddha's disciple, but his understanding was not equal to that of the non-Buddhist. I want to ask you, what difference is there between the Buddha's disciple and the non-Buddhist?

**Mumon's Verse 頌曰**

劍刃上行 On the edge of a sword,
氷綾上走 Over the ridge of an iceberg,
不涉階梯 With no steps, no ladders,
懸崖撒手 Climbing the cliffs without hands.

**Case 33 Baso's "No Mind, No Buddha"**

馬祖、因僧問、如何是佛。
A monk asked Baso, "What is the Buddha?"
祖曰、非心非佛。
Baso answered, "No mind, no Buddha."

**Mumon's Comment**

無門曰、若向者裏見得、參學事畢。
If you understand this, you have finished studying Zen.

**Mumon's Verse 頌曰**

路逢劍客須呈 Present a sword if you meet a swordsman;
不遇詩人莫獻 Don't offer a poem unless you meet a poet.
逢人且説三分 When talking, tell one-third of it;
未可全施一片 Don't divulge the whole at once.

**Case 34 Nansen's "Reason Is Not the Way"**

南泉云、心不是佛、智不是道。
Nansen said, "Mind is not the Buddha, reason is not the Way."

**Mumon's Comment**
無門曰、南泉可謂、老不識羞。
Nansen, growing old, had no shame.
纔開臭口、家醜外揚。
Just opening his stinking mouth, he let slip the family secrets.
然雖如是、知恩者少。
Yet there are very few who are grateful for his kindness.

Mumon's Verse 頌日
天晴日頭出 The sky clears, the sun shines bright,
雨下地上濕 The rain comes, the earth gets wet.
盡情都説了 He opens his heart and expounds the whole secret,
只恐信不及 But I fear he is little appreciated.

Case 35 Seijō's Soul Separated 三十五 倩女離魂
五祖問僧云、倩女離魂、那箇是眞底。
Goso said to his monks, "Seijō's soul separated from her being. Which was the real Seijō?"

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、若向者裏悟得眞底、便知出殻入殻如宿旅舎。
When you realize what the real is, you will see that we pass from one husk to another like travelers stopping for a night's lodging.
其或未然、切莫亂走。
But if you do not realize it yet, I earnestly advise you not to rush about wildly.
驀然地水火風一散、如落湯螃蟹七手八脚。
When earth, water, fire, and air suddenly separate, you will be like a crab struggling in boiling water with its seven or eight arms and legs.
那時莫言、不道。
When that happens, don't say I didn't warn you!

Mumon's Verse 頌日
雲月是同 The moon above the clouds is ever the same;
渓山各異 Valleys and mountains are separate from each other.
萬福萬福 All are blessed, all are blessed;
是一是二 Are they one or are they two?

Case 36 When You Meet a Man of the Way 三十六 路逢達道
五祖曰、路逢達道人、不將語默對、且道、將甚麼對。
Goso said, "When you meet a man of the Way on the path, do not meet him with words or in silence. Tell me, how will you meet him?"
Mumon's Comment
無門曰、若向者裏對得親切、不妨慶快。
In such a case, if you can manage an intimate meeting with him it will certainly be gratifying.
其或未然、也須一切處著眼。
But if you cannot, you must be watchful in every way.

Mumon's Verse頌曰
路逢達道人 Meeting a man of the Way on the road,
不將語默對 Meet him with neither words nor silence.
攔腮劈面拳 A punch on the jaw:
直下會便會 Understand, if you can directly understand.

Case 37 Jôshû's Oak Tree 三十七 庭前栢樹
趙州、因僧問、如何是祖師西來意。
A monk asked Jôshû, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming to China?"
州云、庭前栢樹子。
Jôshû said, "The oak tree in the garden."

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、若向趙州答處見得親切、前無釋迦後無彌勒。
If you understand Jôshû's answer intimately, there is no Shakya before you, no Maitreya to come.

Mumon's Verse頌曰
言無展事 Words cannot express things;
語不投機 Speech does not convey the spirit.
承言者喪 Swayed by words, one is lost;
滯句者迷 Blocked by phrases, one is belwildered.

Case 38 A Buffalo Passes the Window 三十八 牛過窓櫺
五祖曰、譬如水牯牛過窓櫺、頭角四蹄都過了、因甚麼尾巴過不得。
Goso said, "A buffalo passes by the window. His head, horns, and four legs all go past. But why can't the tail pass too?"

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、若
向者裏顛倒、著得一隻眼、下得一轉語、可以上報四恩下資三有。
If you make a complete about-face, open your eye, and give a turning word on this point, you will be able to repay the four kinds of love that have favored you and help the sentient beings in the three realms who follow you.

其或未然、更須照顧尾巴始得。

If you are still unable to do this, return to this tail and reflect upon it, and then for the first time you will realize something.

**Mumon's Verse**

過去墮抗塹

Coming back, all the worse, it is lost.

者些尾巴子

This tiny little tail,

直是甚奇怪

What a strange thing it is!

---

**Case 39 A Mistake in Speaking**

雲門、因僧問、光明寂照遍河沙。

A monk said to Unmon, "The brilliance of the Buddha silently illuminates the whole universe..."

一句未絶、門遽曰、豈不是張拙秀才語。

But before the could finish the verse, Unmon said, "Aren't those the words of Chôetsu the Genius?"

僧云、是。

"Yes, they are," answered the monk.

門云、話墮也。

"You have slipped up in your speaking," Unmon said.

後來、死心拈云、且道、那裏是者僧話墮處。

Afterward, Shishin Zenji brought up the matter and said, "Tell me, at what point did the monk err in his speaking?"

---

**Mumon's Comment**

無門曰、若向者裏見得雲門用處孤危、者僧因甚話墮、堪與人天為師。

If you clearly understand this and realize how exacting Unmon was in his method, and what made the monk err in his speaking, you are qualified to be a teacher of heaven and earth.

若也未明、自救不了。

If you are not yet clear about it, you are far from saving yourself.

---

**Mumon's Verse**

急流垂釣 A line cast in the rapids,

貪餌者著 The greedy will be caught.

口縫纔開 Before you start to open your mouth,

性命喪却 Your life is already lost!
Case 40 Tipping Over a Water Bottle

When Isan Oshō was with Hyakujō, he was tenzo [典座 head cook] of the monastery.

Hyakujō wanted to choose a master for Mount Tai-i, so he called together all the monks and told them that anyone who could answer his question in an outstanding manner would be chosen.

Then he took a water bottle and stood it on the floor, and said, "You may not call this a water bottle. What do you call it?"

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

Hyakujō asked Isan his opinion.

Isan tipped over the water bottle with his feet and went out.

And Isan was named as the founder of the new monastery.

Mumon's Comment

Isan displayed great spirit in his action, but he could not cut himself free from Hyakujō's apron strings. He preferred the heavier task to lighter one.

Why was he like that, eh?

He took off his headband to bear the iron yoke.

Mumon's Verse

Tossing bamboo baskets and ladles away,
He made a glorious dash and swept all before him.
Hyakujō's barrier cannot stop his advance;
Thousands of Buddhas come forth from the tips of his feet.
達磨面壁。
Bodhidharma sat facing the wall.

二祖立雪。
The Second Patriarch stood in the snow.

斷臂云、弟子心未安、乞師安心。
He cut off his arm and presented it to Bodhidharma, crying, "My mind has no peace as yet! I beg you, master, please pacify my mind!"

磨云、將心來爲汝安。
"Bring your mind here and I will pacify it for you," replied Bodhidharma.

祖云、覓心了不可得。
"I have searched for my mind, and I cannot take hold of it," said the Second Patriarch.  
磨云、爲汝安心竟。
"Now your mind is pacified," said Bodhidharma.

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、□齒老胡、十万里航海特特而來。
The broken-toothed old Hindu came so importantly, thousands of miles over the sea.  
可謂是無風起浪。
This was raising waves where there was no wind. 
末後接得一箇門人、又却六根不具。
In his last years he induced enlightenment in his disciple, who, to make matters worse, was defective in the six roots.  
□。謝三郎不識四字。
Why, Shasanro did not know for ideographs.

Mumon's Verse頌曰
西來直指  Coming east, directly pointing,  
事因囑起  You entrusted the Dharma, and trouble arose;  
撓聒叢林  The clamor of the monasteries  
元來是□  Is all because of you.

Case 42 The Girl Comes out of Samadhi 四十二 女子出定

世尊、昔、因文殊、至諸佛集處値諸佛各還本處。
Once, in the old days, in the time of the World-honored One, Manjusri went to the assembly of the Buddhas and found that everyone had departed to his original dwelling place.

惟有一女人近彼佛坐入於三昧。
Only a girl remained, sitting in samadhi close to the Buddha's throne.

文殊乃白佛、云何女人得近佛坐而我不得。

文殊乃白佛、云何女人得近佛坐而我不得。
Manjusri asked Shakyamuni Buddha, "Why can the girl get near the Buddha's throne, while I cannot?"

佛告文殊，汝但覺此女，令從三昧起，汝自問之。

Shakyamuni Buddha said, "Bring her out of her samadhi and ask her yourself."

文殊遶女人三匝，鳴指一下，乃托至梵天盡其神力而不能出。

Manjusri walked around the girl three times, snapped his fingers once, took her to the Brahma heaven, and exerted all his miraculous powers to bring her out of her meditation, but in vain.

世尊云、假使百千文殊亦出此女人定不得。

The World-honored One said, "Even a hundred thousand Manjusris cannot make her wake up.

下方過一十二億河沙國土有罔明菩薩。

But down below, past twelve hundred million lands as innumerable as the sands of Ganges, there is a Bodhisattva Mōmyō.

能出此女人定。

He will be able to rouse her from her samadhi."

須臾罔明大士、從地湧出禮拜世尊。世尊敕罔明。

Instantly the Bodhisattva Mōmyō emerged from the earth and made a bow to the World-honored One, who gave him his imperial order.

却至女人前鳴指一下。

The Bodhisattva went over to the girl and snapped his fingers once.

女人於是從定而出。

At this she came out of her samadhi.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、释迦老子、做者一場雜劇、不通小小。

Old Shakyamuni put a petty drama on the stage and failed to enlighten the masses.

且道、文殊是七佛之師、因甚出女人定不得。

I want to ask you: Manjusri is the teacher of the Seven Buddhas; why couldn't he arouse the girl from her samadhi?

罔明初地菩薩、為甚却出得。

How was it that Mōmyō, a Bodhisattva at the beginner's stage, could do it?

若向者裏見得親切、業識忙忙那伽大定。

If you understand this intimately, you will enjoy Nagya's grand samadhi in the busiest activity of consciousness.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

出得出不得 One was successful, the other was not;

渠儂得自由 Both secured freedom of mind.

神頭并鬼面 One in a god-mask, the other in a devil-mask;

敗闕當風流 Even in defeat, a beautiful performance.
Case 43 Shuzan's Shippei

首山和尚、拈竹篦示衆云、汝等諸人、若喚作竹篦則觸。
Shuzan Oshô held up his shippei [staff of office] before his disciples and said, "You monks! If you call this a shippei, you oppose its reality.
不喚作竹篦則背。
If you do not call it a shippei, you ignore the fact.
汝諸人、且道、喚作甚麼。
Tell me, you monks, what will you call it?"

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、喚作竹篦則觸。
If you call it a shippei, you oppose its reality.
不喚作竹篦則背。
If you do not call it a shippei, you ignore the fact.
不得有語、不得無語。
Words are not available; silence is not available.
速道、速道。
Now, tell me quickly, what is it?

Mumon's Verse 頌日
拈起竹篦　Holding up the shippei,
行殺活令　He takes life, he gives life.
背觸交馳　Opposing and ignoring interweave.
佛祖乞命　Even Buddhas and patriarchs beg for their lives.

Case 44 Bashô's Staff

芭蕉和尚示衆云、你有拄杖子、我興你拄杖子。
Bashô Osho said to his disciples, "If you have a staff, I will give you a staff.
你無拄杖子、我奪你拄杖子。
If you have no staff, I will take it from you."

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、扶過斷橋水、伴歸無月村。
It helps me wade across a river when the bridge is down. It accompanies me to the village on a moonless night.
若喚作拄杖、入地獄如箭。
If you call it a staff, you will enter hell like an arrow.
Mumon's Verse 頌曰
諸方深與淺 The depths and shallows of the world
都在掌握中 Are all in its grasp.
□天□拄地 It supports the heaven and sustains the earth.
隨處振宗風 Everywhere, it enhances the doctrine.

Case 45 Hõen's "Who Is He?" 四十五 他是阿誰
東山演師祖曰、釋迦彌勒猶是他奴。Hõen of Tõzan said, "Even Shakya and Maitreya are servants of another.
且道、他是阿誰。I want to ask you, who is he?"

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、若也見得他分曉、譬如十字街頭撞見親爺相似、更不須問別人道是與不是。
If you can really see this "another" with perfect clarity, it is like encountering your own father at a crossroads. Why should you ask whether you recognize him or not?

Mumon's Verse 頌曰
他弓莫挽 Don't draw another's bow,
他馬莫騎 Don't ride another's horse,
他非莫辨 Don't discuss another's faults,
他事莫知 Don't explore another's affairs.

Case 46 Proceed On from the Top of the Pole 四十六 竣頭進歩
石霜和尚云、百尺竿頭、如何進歩。Sekisõ Oshõ asked, "How can you proceed on further from the top of a hundred-foot pole?"
又古徳云、百尺竿頭坐底人、雖然得入未爲眞。Another eminent teacher of old said, "You, who sit on the top of a hundred-foot pole, although you have entered the Way you are not yet genuine.
百尺竿頭、須進歩十方世界現全身。Proceed on from the top of the pole, and you will show your whole body in the ten directions."

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、進得歩、翻得身、更嫌何處不稱尊。
If you go on further and turn your body about, no place is left where you are not the master.
然雖如是、且道、百尺竿頭、如何進步。嗄。
But even so, tell me, how will you go on further from the top of a hundred-foot pole? Eh?"

Mumon's Verse
頌曰
瞎却頂門眼 He darkens the third eye of insight
錯認定盤星 And clings to the first mark on the scale.
拌身能捨命 Even though he may sacrifice his life,
一盲引衆盲 He is only a blind man leading the blind.

Mumon's Comment
無門曰、若能下得此三轉語、便可以隨處作主遇縁即宗。
If you can put turning words to these three questions, you are the master wherever you may stand and command Zen whatever circumstances you may be in.

其或未然、麁□易飽、細嚼難飢。
If otherwise, listen: gulping down your meal will fill you easily, but chewing it well can sustain you.

Mumon's Verse
頌曰
一念普觀無量劫 This moment's thoughts sees through eternal time;
無量劫事即如今 Eternal time is just this moment.
如今□破箇一念 If you see through this moment's thought,
□破如今□底人 You see through the man who sees through this moment.

Case 47 Tosotsu's Three Barriers

兜率悦和尚、設三關問學者、
Tosotsu Etsu Oshô set up three barriers for his disciples:

1. You leave no stone unturned to explore profundity, simply to see into your true nature.
即今上人性在甚處。
Now, I want to ask you, just at this moment, where is your true nature?
識得自性方脫生死。
2. If you realize your true nature, you are free from life and death.
眼光落時、作麼生脫。
Tell me, when your eyesight deserts you at the last moment, how can you be free from life and death?
脱得生死便知去處、四大分離向甚處去。
3. When you set yourself free from life and death, you should know your ultimate destination. So when the four elements separate, where will you go?
A monk asked Kempō Oshō, "It is written, 'Bhagavats in the ten directions. One straight road to Nirvana.'
I still wonder where the road can be."
Kempō lifted his staff, drew a line, and said, "Here it is."
Later the monks asked the same question to Unmon, who held up his fan and said, "This fan jumps up to the thirty-third heaven and hits the nose of the deity Sakra Devanam Indra. When you strike the carp of the eastern sea, the rain comes down in torrents."

Mumon's Comment
One, going to the bottom of the sea, lifts up clouds of dust; the other, on the top of the highest mountain, rises towering waves to wash the sky. One holding fast, the other letting go, each stretches out his hand to support the profound teaching. They are just like two riders starting from opposite ends of the course and meeting in the middle. But none on earth can be absolutely direct. When examined with a true eye, neither of these two great masters knows the road.

Mumon's Verse
Before a step is taken, the goal is reached;
Before the tongue is moved, the speech is finished.
Though each move is ahead of the next, There is still a transcendent secret.

Mumon's Postscript
From the Buddha and ancestors, according to the law, at the conclusion, there is no remaining words.
The sayings and doings of the Buddha and the patriarchs have been set down in their original form.

掲翻腦蓋、露出眼睛。
Nothing superfluous has been added by the author, who has taken the lid off his head and exposed his eyeballs.

肯要諸人直下承當、不從佗覓。
Your direct realization is demanded; it should not be sought through others.

若是通方上士。
If you are a man of realization, you will immediately grasp the point at the slightest mention of it.

了無門戸可入、亦無階級可升。
There is no gate for you to go through; there are no stairs for you to ascend.

掉臂度關不問關吏。
You pass the checkpoint, squaring your shoulders, without asking permission of the keeper.

豈不見玄沙道、無門解脫之門、無意道人之意。
Remember Gensha's saying, "No-gate is the gate of emancipation; no-meaning is the meaning of the man of the Way."

又白雲道、明明知道只是箇事、爲甚麼透不過。
And Hakuun says, "Clearly you know how to talk of it, but why can't you pass this simple, specific thing?"

恁麼説話、也是赤土搽牛嬭。
However, all this kind of talk is like making a mud pie with milk and butter.

若透得無門關、早是鈍置無門。
If you have passed the Mumonkan, you can make a fool of Mumon.

若透不得無門關、亦之辜負自己。
If not, you are betraying yourself.

所謂、涅槃心易曉、差別智難明。
It is easy to know the Nirvana mind but difficult to attain the wisdom of differentiation.

明得差別智、家國自安寧。
When you have realized this wisdom, peace and order will reign over your land.

時紹定改元 解制前五日
The change of era to Jôtei [1228], five days before the end of summer session

楊岐八世孫 無門比丘慧開 謹識。
Respectfully inscribed by Mumon Ekai Bhikkhu, eighth in succession from Yôgi

無門關 巻終
Wu-wen kuan (Mumonkan)    End of the book

Source
English translation by late Zen master Katsuki Sekida (Two Zen Classics 26-137)