

THE WANLING RECORD OF HUANG PO

COMPARATIVE EDITION



Compiled by White Lotus

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Special Thanks

First I would like to thank Gábor Terebess; the resources he's provided have helped not only with this project, but also with my study and journey with Zen overall. For that I am deeply grateful. Along with Gábor, I thank everyone else who have provided online resources which have helped with studying Zen and putting together this work. I would also like to thank everyone on r/zen for their support and interest in this project, and ewk especially for inspiring the comparative look into these translations of the Wanling Lu of Huang Po. Additionally I would like to thank you for reading this, as a free community project my greatest reward is the benefits it may have with the community and I hope this work helps with your study; and to perhaps inspire others to improve upon our understanding of the Zen text.

Introduction

The Wanling Lu (宛陵錄), or "The Record of Wanling," is a collection of teachings attributed to the Zen master Huangbo Xiyun (黃檗希運). It was compiled by Pei Xiu (裴休), a high-ranking official and disciple of Huangbo, who recorded the master's discourses and dialogues. Huangbo lived during the Tang Dynasty (8th–9th century CE), a period when Zen was flourishing. He was a successor in the lineage of Mazu Daoyi (馬祖道一) and influenced later figures like Linji Yixuan (臨濟義玄). His teachings emphasize sudden awakening, the nature of truth, and the direct realization of mind.

The Wanling Lu remains one of the most profound expressions of early Zen, resonating with the teachings of Bodhidharma and Vimalakirti. While the Wanling Lu is a cornerstone of early Zen, its transmission across languages presents challenges. Translation is not a mere exchange of words but an interpretation shaped by the translator's understanding, cultural context, and linguistic choices. Nuances in meaning can be lost, altered, or subtly reshaped, sometimes obscuring the depth of Huangbo's teachings.

This project is a comparative study of the different English translations of the text. By examining variations in wording, structure, and the translators' notes, we can gain a richer perspective on what is being conveyed. Differences in translation may reveal underlying subtleties, helping to illuminate the essence of Huangbo's teachings rather than reducing them to a single authoritative version. My hope is to provide readers with a side-by-side comparison of the text, offering a broader lens through which to engage with Huangbo's words. In doing so, I hope it inspires deeper insight into the Wanling Lu and the timeless wisdom it holds.

Notes on the Text and Formatting:

The original Chinese is included for each part, and the translations I have chosen are from John Blofeld, Jeffery M Leahy, and Thomas Cleary.

Abbreviations:

JB: John Blofeld

JL: Jeffery M Leahy

TC: Thomas Cleary

The majority of the text follows Blofeld's partitioning of the text with the exception of parts 25 through 34, which Leahy identified as "The Master Ascends the Hall". For the most part Leahy appears to follow Blofeld's method of partitioning the text, whereas readers will notice there are a few deviations with Cleary's version.

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The Wanling Record of Huang Po

Part 1

黃檗斷際禪師宛陵錄

裴相公問師曰。山中四五百人。幾人得和尚法。師云。得者莫測其數。何故。道在心悟。豈在言說。言說只是化童蒙耳。

JB	JL	TC
<p>THE WAN LING RECORD OF THE ZEN MASTER HUANG PO</p> <p>Once I put this question to the Master. How many of the four or five hundred persons gathered here on this mountain have fully understood Your Reverence's teaching?</p> <p>The Master answered: Their number cannot be known. Why? Because my Way is through Mind-awakening. How can it be conveyed in words? Speech only produces some effect when it falls on the uninstructed ears of children.</p>	<p>The Wanling Record of Chan Master Huangbo Duanji.</p> <p>Minister Pei Xiu questioned the Master: "At this mountain center there are four or five hundred people. How many of these people have attained an understanding of your dharma teaching?"</p> <p>The Master said: "The numbers of those who have attained my dharma cannot be measured. Why? The Path is realized in the mind. How could it be realized in speech? Putting into words can only affect a child's ignorant ears."</p>	<p>The Wanling Record</p> <p>Prime minister Pei asked the teacher, "Of the four or five hundred people on this mountain, how many get your teaching?"</p> <p>The teacher said, "There's no telling how many get it. Why? The Way is realized in the mind—how could it be in talk? Talk is just to develop the immature."</p>

Part 2

問如何是佛。師云。即心是佛。無心是道。但無生心動念有無長短彼我能所等心。心本是佛。佛本是心。心如虛空。所以云。佛真法身猶若虛空。不用別求。有求皆苦。設使恒沙劫行六度萬行得佛菩提。亦非究竟。何以故。為屬因緣造作故。因緣若盡還歸無常。所以云。報化非真佛。亦非說法者。但識自心。無我無人本來是佛。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: What is the Buddha?¹</p> <p>A: Mind is the Buddha, while the cessation of conceptual thought is the Way. Once you stop arousing concepts and thinking in terms of existence and non-existence, long and short, other and self, active and passive, and suchlike, you will find that your Mind is intrinsically the Buddha, that the Buddha is intrinsically Mind, and that Mind resembles a void.²</p> <p>Therefore is it written that ‘the true Dharmakaya³ resembles a void’. Seek for naught besides this, else your search must end in sorrow.</p> <p>Though you perform the six paramitas⁴ for as many aeons as there are grains of sand in the Ganges, adding also all the other sorts of activities for gaining Enlightenment, YOU WILL STILL FALL SHORT OF THE GOAL. Why? Because these are karma-forming activities and, when the good karma they produce has been exhausted, you will be born again in the ephemeral world.</p>	<p>It was asked: "What is 'Buddha'?"</p> <p>The Master said: "This very Mind is Buddha. No-mind is the Path. Only do not stir in the mind thoughts such as existence and non-existence, long and short, other and self, subject and object, and other such thoughts. Mind is fundamentally Buddha. Buddha is fundamentally Mind. Mind is like the empty sky.</p> <p>So it is said, 'The Buddha's true Dharmakaya is like the empty sky.'¹ One need not seek outside of this. If there is seeking outside of this understanding, all will be suffering.²</p> <p>Suppose that once were to diligently, for as many kalpas as there are sands in the Ganges, perform the six paramitas and the 10,000 practices in order to attain Buddha-awakening. There would still be no outcome. What is the reason? It is because such practices belong to pratitya-samutpada³ and the production of karma. When conditions are exhausted, all things will return to impermanence.</p>	<p>Question: What is Buddha?</p> <p>Answer: Mind itself is Buddha. Not minding is the Way. Just let there be no arousal of mind, or excitation of thought, no minding of long and short, others and self, subject and object, and so on. The mind is originally like space.</p> <p>You don't need to specially seek. Seeking is all suffering.</p> <p>Even if you carry out the six ways of transcendence and ten thousand practices to attain the enlightenment of Buddhas, that is still not the ultimate. Why? Because it is contrivance in the domain of conditioning. When conditions come to an end, it returns to impermanence.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>Therefore is it also written: “The Samboghkaya⁵ is not a real Buddha, nor a real teacher of the Dharma.⁶ Only come to know the nature of our own Mind, in which there is no self and no other; and you will in fact be a Buddha!</p>	<p>So it is said, 'The sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya are not the true Buddha. Neither are they speakers of Dharma.'⁴ Only know your own mind. 'No self' and 'no person' are, from the beginning Buddha.</p>	<p>That is why it is said, “Reward and emanation are not the real Buddha, and not what expounds the truth.” Just know your own mind; with no self and no other; it is originally Buddha.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) The Absolute.
- [2](#) Meaning intangible, not a mere negation.
- [3](#) The Absolute Body of a Buddha.
- [4](#) Charity, morality, patience under affliction, zealous application, right control of the mind, and the application of highest wisdom.
- [5](#) Buddha's Body of Bliss.
- [6](#) This means that the idealized or heavenly form of a Buddha, to whom the Unenlightened pray, is unreal in that he is regarded as an entity and therefore as apart from the One Mind.

JL:

- [1](#) This statement is a quote from the Suvarna-prabhasottama-sutra (Ch. Jin guang ming jing)
- [2](#) The line "If there is seeking, all will be suffering" is a partial quote of a line in the Lenqie shizi ji. The full line reads, "If there is seeking, all will be suffering. If there is no seeking, then happiness." The full line appears in a few Chan oriented texts, including the Jingde chuandeng lu. and the Erru sixing lun [The Long Scroll]. Each of these texts have "The sutra says" preceding the line, however none of them name the sutra of the quote's origin. The [Long Scroll] Erru sixing lun seems to be the earliest text containing the quote. I have been unable to determine which sutra, if any, is the original source. It is possible that the line originated in the [Long Scroll] Erru sixing lun.
- [3](#) Dependent co-arising.
- [4](#) This quote is from Vasubandhu's commentary on the Diamond Sutra. These lines from Vasubandhu were pervasive in Chan literature, appearing in numerous commentaries. The lines also appeared in Yongming Yanshou's Zongjing lu, where Yanshou attributes the lines to Vasubandhu.

Part 3

問聖人無心即是佛。凡夫無心莫沈空寂否。師云。法無凡聖亦無沈寂。法本不有。莫作無見。法本不無。莫作有見。有之與無盡是情見。猶如幻翳。所以云。見聞如幻翳。知覺乃眾生。祖師門中只論息機忘見。所以忘機則佛道隆。分別則魔軍熾。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: Allowing that the Enlightened man who achieves the cessation of conceptual thought is Buddha, would not an ignorant man, on ceasing to think conceptually, lose himself in oblivion?</p> <p>A: There ARE no Enlightened men or ignorant men, and there is no oblivion. Yet, though basically everything is without objective existence, you must not come to think in terms of anything non-existent; and though things are not non-existent, you must not form a concept of anything existing.</p> <p>For 'existence' and 'non-existence' are both empirical concepts no better than illusions. Therefore it is written: 'Whatever the senses apprehend resembles an illusion, including everything ranging from mental concepts to living beings.' Our Founder¹ preached to his disciples naught but total abstraction leading to elimination of sense-perception. In this total abstraction does the Way of the Buddhas flourish; while from discrimination between this and that a host of demons blazes forth!</p>	<p>It was asked: "For the sagely person, no mind in itself is Buddha. For the commoner in no-mind, will he not sink into empty tranquility?"</p> <p>The Master said: "The Dharma has no commoner, no sage, and no sinking into tranquility. The Dharma fundamentally has no existence. But do not have a 'non-existence' view. The Dharma fundamentally is not 'non-existence'. But do not have an 'existence' view."</p> <p>"'Existence' and 'non-existence' are both views caused by feelings. They are like hallucinations. So it is said: 'Seeing and hearing are like hallucinations.'¹ Knowing and awakening are actions belonging to sentient beings. In the Patriarch-masters' Gate there is only discussion of calming mental functions and forgetting views. Therefore, forgetting is key to growth on the Buddha path. Discrimination, then sets Mara's army ablaze."</p>	<p>Question: When sages are mindless, they are Buddhas; but when ordinary people are mindless, don't they sink into empty quietism?</p> <p>Answer: In truth there is no ordinary or sage, and no quietism. Truth is fundamentally not existent, but don't see it as nonexistent. Truth is fundamentally not nonexistent, but don't see it as existent.</p> <p>Existence and nonexistence are both subjective views. They are like illusory cataracts. That is why it is said, "Perception is like illusory cataracts; cognition is sentient being." In the Chan school we just talk about stopping impulses and forgetting views. Then when you stop impulses, the Way of Buddhas flourishes; when you think falsely, the army of devils rages.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) Bodhidharma

JL:

- [1](#) This line is quoting the Shoulengyan jing. The Shoulengyan is likely a Chinese apocryphon, composed in China, and passed off as a translation from a Sanskrit original (Been 57-58).

Part 4

問心既本來是佛。還修六度萬行否。師云。悟在於心。非關六度萬行。六度萬行盡是化門接物度生邊事。設使菩提真如實際解脫法身。直至十地四果聖位。盡是度門。非關佛心。心即是佛。所以一切諸度門中佛心第一。但無生死煩惱等心。即不用菩提等法。所以道。佛說一切法。度我一切心。我無一切心。何用一切法。從佛至祖。並不論別事。唯論一心。亦云一乘。所以十方諦求更無餘乘。此眾無枝葉。唯有諸貞實。所以此意難信。達摩來此土。至梁魏二國。祇有可大師一人。密信自心。言下便會。即心是佛。身心俱無。是名大道。大道本來平等。所以深信含生同一真性。心性不異。即性即心。心不異性。名之為祖。所以云。認得心性時。可說不思議。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: If Mind and the Buddha¹ are intrinsically one, should we continue to practise the six paramitas and the other orthodox means of gaining Enlightenment?</p> <p>A: Enlightenment springs from Mind, regardless of your practice of the six paramitas and the rest. All such practices are merely expedients for handling 'concrete' matters when dealing with the problems of daily life. Even Enlightenment, the Absolute, Reality, Sudden Attainment, the Dharmakaya and all the others down to the Ten Stages of Progress, the Four Rewards of virtuous and wise living and the State of Holiness and Wisdom are—every one of them —mere concepts for helping us through samsara; they have nothing to do with the real Buddha-Mind.</p> <p>Since Mind Is the Buddha, the ideal way of attainment is to cultivate that Buddha-Mind. Only avoid conceptual thoughts, which lead to becoming and cessation, to the afflictions of the sentient world and all the rest; then you will have no need of methods of Enlightenment and suchlike.</p>	<p>It was asked: "Mind is already, from the beginning Buddha. Should one still study the six perfections and the 10,000 practices?"</p> <p>The Master said: "Awakening is of the mind. It has nothing to do with the six perfections and 10,000 practices. The six paramitas and 10,000 practices are all transformation gates for dealing with others and crossing over beings. These are peripheral matters. One can suppose bodhi, thus ultimate reality, liberation, and the Dharmakaya, up to and including the ten stages of the bodhisattva, the four fruits¹, and the rank of sagehood. All of these are but gates to crossing over to Nirvana. They do not concern the Buddha-mind."</p> <p>"Mind itself is Buddha. Therefore, of all the many perfections, perfecting the Buddha-mind is the most important.² Only do not give rise to thoughts such as 'death', 'afflictions', etc. By means of this you will have no use for 'bodhi' and other such dharmas.</p>	<p>Question: If the mind is originally Buddha, does one still cultivate the myriad practices of the six ways of transcendence?</p> <p>Answer: Enlightenment is in the mind; it has nothing to do with the myriad practices of the six ways of transcendence. The myriad practices of the six ways of transcendence are all developmental methods; they are about dealing with people to deliver the living. Even awakening, reality as such, ultimate truth, liberation, the body of reality, as well as the ten stages, four fruitions, and ranks of the saints, are all methods of deliverance; they have nothing to do with the Buddha mind.</p> <p>Mind itself is Buddha; therefore the Buddha mind is foremost among all methods of deliverance. Just have no such thoughts as birth and death or affliction, and you don't need teachings such as awakening.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>Therefore is it written:</p> <p>All the Buddha’s teachings just had this single object—To carry us beyond the stage of thought. Now, if I accomplish cessation of my thinking, What use to me the Dharmas Buddha taught?</p> <p>From Gautama Buddha down through the whole line of patriarchs to Bodhidharma, none preached aught besides the One Mind, otherwise known as the Sole Vehicle of Liberation. Hence, though you search throughout the whole universe, you will never find another vehicle.</p> <p>Nowhere has this teaching leaves or branches; its one quality is eternal truth. Hence it is a teaching hard to accept.</p> <p>When Bodhidharma came to China and reached the Kingdoms of Liang and Wei, only the Venerable Master Ko gained a silent insight into our own Mind; as soon as it was explained to him, he understood that Mind is the Buddha, and that individual mind and body are nothing. This teaching is called the Great Way.</p> <p>The very nature of the Great Way is voidness of opposition. Bodhidharma firmly believed in being ONE WITH THE REAL ‘SUBSTANCE’ OF THE UNIVERSE IN THIS LIFE! Mind and that ‘substance’ do not differ one jot—that ‘substance’ Is Mind.</p>	<p>So it was said,</p> <p>'The Buddha spoke all of the Dharma teachings in order to carry me over all thought. When I am rid of all thoughts, what need would I have for all of the Dharma teachings?'</p> <p>From the Buddha through the patriarchs, none of them preached anything apart from this matter. They only preached the One Mind. They also spoke of this as the One Vehicle. Therefore, 'If one were to thoroughly search the ten directions, there would still be no other vehicle to be found.'³"</p> <p>"This teaching, disciples, has no branches and leaves. It only contains the highest Truth (tattva). Therefore, this teaching's meaning is difficult to believe.</p> <p>Bodhidharma came to this land (China), arriving in the two kingdoms of Liang and Wei. Upon his arrival there was only one person, Master Hui-Ke⁴, who could receive the esoteric faith of one's own mind. Once Bodhidharma's words were spoken, Master Huike attained this simple understanding: this very Mind is Buddha. The body and mind both are non-existent, This is called the Great Path."</p> <p>"The Great Path is, from the beginning, equality. Therefore, 'The deep faith that all living beings are of the same true nature,'⁵ The mind and nature of no different. This very nature is this very mind.</p>	<p>Therefore it is said,</p> <p>“Buddha expounded all the teachings to get over all our thoughts; if we don’t have any thoughts at all, what need is there for all the teachings?”</p> <p>From the Buddhas to the Patriarchs, none of them discussed anything other than one mind, also called one vehicle. Therefore you may search everywhere, but there is no other vehicle.</p> <p>“This congregation has no branches or leaves, only the substantial core.” Therefore “the meaning of this is hard to believe.</p> <p>”When Bodhidharma came to this land, he went to both nations of Liang and Wei, but there was only one man, great master Ke, who impersonally had faith in his own mind; he immediately understood when told the mind itself is Buddha. When mind and body are both nothing, this is called the Great Way.</p> <p>The Great Way is originally egalitarian, hence the profound faith that living beings have the same one true essential nature. Mind and essential nature are not different; essential nature is identical to mind.</p>

JB	JL	TC
They cannot possibly be separated. It was for this revelation that he earned the title of Patriarch of our sect, and therefore is it written: "The moment of realizing the unity of Mind and the "substance" which constitutes reality may truly be said to baffle description.'	Mind does not differ from this nature/essence. This is called 'patriarch'. So it is said, 'When one attains an understanding of the Mind-nature, one may speak the inconceivable .' ⁶ "	When mind doesn't differ from essential nature, this is called mastery. So it is said, when you recognize the essence of mind, it can be called inconceivable.

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) Absolute.

JL:

- [1](#) These are fruits of the srotapanna, sakradagamin, anagamin, and the arhat (Soothill and Hodous 177)
- [2](#) This line originates in the Lankavatara Sutra. (T 670.16.0481c02)
- [3](#) This line is taken directly from the Lotus Sutra. (T 262.09.0015a14-15)
- [4](#) Huike (487-593) is traditionally regarded as the second patriarch of Chan. There are numerous legends concerning his interactions with his teacher, Bodhidharma.
- [5](#) Huangbo is quoting Bodhidharma's [Long Scroll] Erru sixing lun. Huangbo's quote aligns with the text as it is found in the Jingde Chuandeng Lu. Earlier versions of the [Long Scroll] Erru sixing lun, such as those found in the Lengqie shizi ji and the text found amongst the Dunhuang manuscripts, contain a slightly different wording. See T2837.1285a13 for the Lengqie shizi ji and Broughton's English translation of the Dunhuang text.
- [6](#) This is a quote from a poetic verse attributed to the 23rd Indian patriarch Haklena. This verse can be found in numerous Chan collections, including the Jingde Chuandeng Lu.

Part 5

問佛度眾生否。師云。實無眾生如來度者。我尚不可得。非我何可得。佛與眾生皆不可得。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: Does the Buddha really liberate sentient beings?¹</p> <p>A: There are in reality no sentient beings to be delivered by the Tathagata. If even self has no objective existence, how much less has other-than-self! Thus, neither Buddha nor sentient beings exist objectively.</p>	<p>It was asked: "Does the Buddha carry sentient beings over to the shore of enlightenment?"</p> <p>The Master said: "In reality, there are no sentient beings for the Tathagata to carry over. If it is the case that 'self' cannot be apprehended, how could 'not-self'¹ be apprehended? 'Buddha' and 'sentient beings' are all impossible to apprehend."</p>	<p>Question: Doesn't Buddha deliver sentient beings?</p> <p>Answer: There are really no sentient beings for the Realized One to deliver. Even self cannot be found; how can non-self be found?</p>

Notes:

JB:

- 1 From samsara- the endless round of birth and death.

JL:

- 1 In this sentence, "not-self" indicates "other beings".

Part 6

云現有三十二相及度眾生。何得言無。師云。凡所有相皆是虛妄。若見諸相非相。即見如來。佛與眾生盡是汝作妄見。只為不識本心。謾作見解。纔作佛見便被佛障。作眾生見被眾生障。作凡作聖作淨作穢等見。盡成其障。障汝心故總成輪轉。猶如獼猴放一捉一無有歇期。一等是學。直須無學。無凡無聖。無淨無垢。無大無小。無漏無為。如是一心中。方便勤莊嚴。聽汝學得三乘十二分教。一切見解總須捨却。所以除去所有。唯置一床寢疾而臥。祇是不起諸見。無一法可得。不被法障。透脫三界凡聖境域。始得名為出世佛。所以云。稽首如空無所依出過外道。心既不異。法亦不異。心既無為法亦無為。萬法盡由心變。所以我心空故諸法空。千品萬類悉皆同。盡十方空界同一心體。心本不異法亦不異。祇為汝見解不同。所以差別。譬如諸天共寶器食隨其福德飯色有異。十方諸佛實無少法可得。名為阿耨菩提。祇是一心實無異相。亦無光彩。亦無勝負。無勝故無佛相。無負故無眾生相。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: Yet it is recorded that 'Whosoever possesses the thirty-two characteristic signs of a Buddha is able to deliver sentient beings'. How can you deny it?</p> <p>A: Anything possessing ANY signs is illusory. It is by perceiving that all signs are no signs that you perceive the Tathagata.¹ 'Buddha' and 'sentient beings' are both your own false conceptions. It is because you do not know real Mind that you delude yourselves with such objective concepts. If you WILL conceive of a Buddha, you WILL BE OBSTRUCTED BY THAT BUDDHA!!! And when you conceive of sentient beings, you will be obstructed by those beings.</p>	<p>Pei Xiu said: "It is now said that the Tathagata manifested the Thirty-two Marks in order to carry sentient beings over to the shore of enlightenment. How can you say that this is not so?"</p> <p>The Master said: "Whatsoever has marks is unreal. If you view all marks as non-marks, this is seeing the Tathagata.¹ 'Buddha' and 'sentient beings' are all constructed by your false views. It is simply because you do not recognize your original mind that you mistakenly construct views. As soon as you create a 'Buddha' view, then you will be obstructed by 'Buddha'. If you create a 'sentient being' view, you will be obstructed by 'sentient being'.</p>	<p>Question: How can you say there is no such thing as appearing with the thirty-two marks of distinction and delivering sentient beings?</p> <p>Answer: All marks are illusory. If you see all appearances are not definitive, then you see the Realized. Buddhas and sentient beings are all false views you fabricate. Simply because you do not know your original mind, you deceptively fabricate opinions and interpretations. As soon as you make up a notion of Buddha, you are obstructed by "Buddha." When you make up a notion of sentient beings, you're obstructed by "sentient beings."</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>All such dualistic concepts as 'ignorant' and 'Enlightened', 'pure' and 'impure', are obstructions. It is because your minds are hindered by them that the Wheel of the Law must be turned.² Just as apes spend their time throwing things away and picking them up again unceasingly, so it is with you and your learning. All you need is to give up your 'learning', your 'ignorant' and 'Enlightened', 'pure' and 'impure', 'great' and 'little', your 'attachment' and 'activity'. Such things are mere conveniences, mere ornaments within the One Mind. I hear you have studied the sutras of the twelve divisions of the Three Vehicles. They are all mere empirical concepts. Really you must give them up!</p> <p>So just discard all you have acquired as being no better than a bed spread for you when you were sick. Only when you have abandoned all perceptions, there being nothing objective to perceive; only when phenomena obstruct you no longer; only when you have rid yourself of the whole gamut of dualistic concepts of the 'ignorant' and 'Enlightened' category, will you at last earn the title of Transcendental Buddha. Therefore is it written: 'Your prostrations are in vain. Put no faith in such ceremonies.'</p> <p>Hie [sp. Hide?] from such false beliefs.' Since Mind knows no divisions into separate entities, phenomena must be equally undifferentiated. Since Mind is above all activities, so must it be with phenomena. Every phenomenon that exists is a</p>	<p>If you create 'commoner', 'sage', 'pure', 'defiled', and other such views, all of these will become obstructions. because these obstruct your mind, all of them become (samsaric) wheel-turning. It is like a monkey that releases one thing and grasps another without rest². It is the same with learning. One must attain the state beyond study. No 'commoner', no 'sage'. No 'pure', no 'defiled'. No 'great', no 'small'. No 'outflows', no 'conditioned'. So it is in the One Mind. Upaya serve as adornments.³ I hear that you have studied and understand the three vehicles and the twelve divisions of the teachings. All of these opinions must be abandoned.</p> <p>Therefore, get rid of these possessions; only lay out a bed for sleeping while sick and lie down.⁴ Simply do not give rise to views, understand that there is not one dharma to obtain, do not be obstructed by dharmas, and be liberated from the three realms and the region of 'commoner' and 'sage'. The one will attain for the first time the name of "World-transcending Buddha'. So it is said: 'Bowing at the Buddha's feet is like the sky; there is no basis to it'.¹⁵</p> <p>Go beyond these outside (non-Buddhist) paths. Since mind is of non-differentiation, dharmas are also of non-differentiation. Since mind is no-doing, dharmas are also no-doing.</p>	<p>When you make up notions such as "ordinary" and "holy," "pure" and "polluted," they all become obstructions. Because they obstruct your mind, they all become vicious cycles. It is like monkeys letting go of one and grabbing another, with no end in sight. All alike is learned. You simply should be free of what is learned—there is no ordinary, no holy, no purity, no defilement, no great, no small, no affliction, no fabrication. In a unified mind like this, if you expediently strive to adorn it, you may learn the twelve-part teaching of the Three vehicles. All opinionated interpretation should be abandoned.</p> <p>That is why Vimalakirti removed what he had and only put one bed where he lay resting in illness. This is just not producing any views; there is not a single thing that can be grasped. Not being obstructed by anything, passing through to liberation beyond the boundaries of ordinary and holy states in the three realms, only then can you be called a Buddha beyond the world. That is why it is said, "I bow to the spacelike, independent, beyond all other ways."</p> <p>Once the mind does not vary, reality does not vary either. Once the mind has no contrivance, reality is also uncontrived. All things change according to mind; therefore when our minds are empty, all things are empty—</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>creation of thought; therefore I need but empty my mind to discover that all of them are void. It is the same with all sense objects, to whichever of the myriads of categories they belong. The entire void stretching out in all directions is of one substance with Mind; and, since Mind is fundamentally undifferentiated, so must it be with everything else. Different entities appear to you only because your perceptions differ—just as the colours of the precious delicacies eaten by the Devas are said to differ in accordance with the individual merits of the Devas eating them!</p> <p>Anuttara—samyak-sambodhi³ is a name for the realization that the Buddhas of the whole universe do not in fact possess the smallest perceptible attribute. There exists just the One Mind. Truly there are no multiplicity of forms, no Celestial Brilliance, and no Glorious Victory (over samsdra) or submission to the Victor.⁴ Since no Glorious Victory was ever won, there can be no such formal entity as a Buddha; and, since no submission ever took place, there can be no such formal entities as sentient beings.</p>	<p>The ten thousand dharmas are all due to mind-transformation. Therefore, if my mind is empty, all of the dharmas are empty. All possible categories of all things are sameness. The empty world in all the ten directions is of the same substance as the One Mind. It is only that you perceive that these are not the same. Therefore, there are differences. For example, 'The devas all eat from the same jeweled utensils, but in accordance with their individual karmic merit, the color of the food differs.'⁶</p> <p>In all the Buddhas of the ten directions, there is truly not even the smallest dharma to be apprehended. This is called 'anuttarasamyaksambodhi'. It is only in the One mind that there is truly non-differentiation of characteristics. There is also no light and no color. There is also no victory and no defeat. because there is no victory, there are no marks of a Buddha. Because there is no defeat, there are no marks of sentient beings.</p>	<p>a thousand kinds, myriad types, are all the same; the realm of space in the ten directions is the same one nature of mind. The mind fundamentally does not differ, and truth does not differ either—it is just because your views and interpretations are not the same that they differ. It is like when the gods eat from the same bowl, the color of the food differs according to their qualities.</p> <p>The Buddhas of the ten directions really have nothing at all to attain; this is called unexcelled enlightenment. They are just one mind; they really have no different characteristics, and no colors. It has no superiority or inferiority either. Because there is no sign of superiority, there is no appearance of Buddhahood; because there is no inferiority, there is no appearance of sentient beings.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) Buddha.
- [2](#) I.e. that the relative truths of orthodox Buddhism must be taught.
- [3](#) Supreme Omniscience.
- [4](#) Buddha.

JL:

- [1](#) These lines, unattributed in the Wanling Lu, are pulled directly from Kumarajiva's Chinese translation of the Diamond Sutra.
- [2](#) Compare this with the quote from the Nirvana Sutra: "The nature of the monkey is that he rejects one thing and holds on to another. The heart and nature of sentient beings is also like this" (Egan 171)
- [3](#) This line is taken from the Fanwang jing. The Fanwang jing was accepted into the canon as a Chinese translation (supposedly done by Kumarajiva) of a Sanskrit original, though it was probably written in China (Sasaki 382).
- [4](#) This is in reference to the Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra. In this sutra, Vimalakirti empties his room and, through upaya, manifests an illness to lure others into visiting him so that he may offer his teaching.
- [5](#) This is a direct quote from the Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra.
- [6](#) Another direct quote from the Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra.

Part 7

云心既無相。豈得全無三十二相八十種好化度眾生耶。師云。三十二相屬相。凡所有相皆是虛妄。八十種好屬色。若以色見我。是人行邪道。不能見如來。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: Even though Mind be formless, how can you deny the existence of the Thirty-Two Characteristic Signs of a Buddha, or of the Eighty Excellencies whereby people have been ferried over?¹</p> <p>A: The Thirty-Two Signs are signs,² and whatever has form is illusory. The Eighty Excellencies belong to the sphere of matter; but whoever perceives a self in matter is traveling the wrong path; he cannot comprehend the Tathagata thus.</p>	<p>Pei Xiu said: "Mind is without marks, but what about the Thirty-two Marks of the Buddha, the Eighty Minor Marks¹ and the transformation of sentient beings?"</p> <p>The Master said: "The Thirty-two Marks belong to characteristics. Whatsoever has marks is unreal. The Eighty Minor Marks belong to rupa (form). 'If one sees me by means of rupa, such a person practices an evil path, and cannot see the Tathagata.²"</p>	<p>Question: If the mind has no appearance, is it possible that there are utterly no thirty-two marks of greatness and eighty refinements developing and delivering sentient beings?</p> <p>Answer: The thirty-two marks are in the province of description, and all descriptions are illusory. The eighty refinements are in the province of form; "If they see me in terms of form, these people are traveling a false path, and cannot see the Realized."</p>

Notes:

JB:

- 1 From samsara to Nirvana.
- 2 I.e. forms.

JL:

- 1 The Eighty Minor Marks are an addition set of physical characteristics of the Buddha.
- 2 These lines quote the Buddha's verse in the Diamond Sutra.

Part 8

問佛性與眾生性。為同為別。師云。性無同異。若約三乘教。即說有佛性有眾生性。遂有三乘因果。即有同異。若約佛乘及祖師相傳。即不說如是事。唯有一心。非同非異。非因非果。所以云唯此一乘道。無二亦無三。除佛方便說。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: Does the essential substance of the Buddha differ at all from that of sentient beings or are they identical?</p> <p>A: Essential substance partakes neither of identity nor difference. If you accept the orthodox teachings of the Three Vehicles of Buddhism, discriminating between the Buddha-Nature and the nature of sentient beings, you will create for yourself Three Vehicle karma, and identities and differences will result. But if you accept the BuddhaVehicle, which is the doctrine transmitted by Bodhidharma, you will not speak of such things; you will merely point to the One Mind which is without identity or difference, without cause or effect.¹</p> <p>Therefore is it written: 'There is only the way of the One Vehicle; there is neither a second nor a third, except for those ways employed by the Buddha as purely relative expedients (updya) for the liberation of beings lost in delusion.'</p>	<p>It was asked: "Are Buddha-nature and sentient being-nature the same or different?"</p> <p>The Master said: "Their nature is neither the same nor different. If you accept the position of the Three Vehicles' teaching, then you will say, 'Buddha exists and sentient beings exist'. This will achieve Three Vehicles-karma. Then there will be 'sameness' and 'difference'. If you accept the position of the Buddha Vehicle that was transmitted by the Patriarchal Masters, then you will not speak such things. There is only One Mind. There is neither sameness nor differentiation. No causes and no effects.</p> <p>Therefore, it is said, "There is only One Vehicle. There are not two or three. Apart from Buddha, expedient means are spoken'." ¹</p>	<p>Question: Are the nature of Buddhas and the nature of sentient beings the same or different?</p> <p>Answer: Essential nature has neither sameness nor difference. According to the doctrine of the Three Vehicles, they say there is a Buddha-nature and a nature of sentient beings. Consequently there are cause and effect of the Three Vehicles, so there is sameness and difference. According to the Buddha-vehicle and the tradition of the ancestral teachers, they don't say such things—there is only one mind, neither same nor different, neither cause nor effect.</p> <p>That is why it is said that there is only this one vehicle, no second or third, except as explained by Buddha expediently.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- 1 It is not Huang Po's intention to deny the validity of karmic law as it applies to the ephemeral world of samsara.

JL:

- 1 These lines are from the Lotus Sutra.

Part 9

問。無邊身菩薩。為什麼不見如來頂相。師云。實無可見。何以故。無邊身菩薩便是如來。不應更見。祇教爾不作佛見不落佛邊。不作眾生見不落眾生邊。不作有見不落有邊。不作無見不落無邊。不作凡見不落凡邊。不作聖見不落聖邊。但無諸見即是無邊身。若有見處即名外道。外道者樂於諸見。菩薩於諸見而不動。如來者即諸法如義。所以云。彌勒亦如也。眾聖賢亦如也。如即無生。如即無滅。如即無見。如即無聞。如來頂即是圓見。亦無圓見故不落圓邊。所以佛身無為不墮諸數。權以虛空為喻。圓同太虛無欠無餘。等閑無事莫強辯他境。辯著便成識。所以云。圓成沈識海。流轉若飄蓬。祇道我知也學得也契悟也解脫也有道理也。強處即如意。弱處即不如意。似者箇見解有什麼用處。我向汝道。等閑無事莫謾用心。不用求真。唯須息見。所以內見外見俱錯。佛道魔道俱惡。所以文殊暫起二見。貶向二鐵圍山。文殊即實智。普賢即權智。權實相對治究竟亦無權實。唯是一心。心且不佛不眾生無有異見。纔有佛見便作眾生見。有見無見常見斷見。便成二鐵圍山。被見障故。祖師直指一切眾生本心。本體本來是佛。不假修成。不屬漸次。不是明暗。不是明故無明。不是暗故無暗。所以無無明亦無無明盡。入我此宗門。切須在意如此。見得名之為法。見法故名之為佛。佛法俱無。名之為僧。喚作無為僧。亦名一體三寶。夫求法者。不著佛求。不著法求。不著眾求。應無所求。不著佛求故無佛。不著法求故無法。不著眾求故無僧。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: Why was the Bodhisattva of Infinite Extent unable to view the sacred sign on the crown of the Buddha's head?¹</p> <p>A: There was really nothing for him to see. Why? The Bodhisattva of Infinite Extent was the Tathagata; it follows that the need to look did not arise. The parable is intended to prevent your conceiving of the Buddha and of sentient beings as entities and thereby falling into the error of spacial separateness. It is a warning against conceiving of entities as existing or not existing and thereby falling into the error of special separateness, and against conceiving of individuals as ignorant or Enlightened and thereby falling into that same error.</p>	<p>It was asked: "Why did Wubian Shen¹ Bodhisattva not see the Tathagata's usnisa²?"</p> <p>The Master said: "There was truly nothing to be seen. For what reason? Wubian Shen Bodhisattva simply was the Tathagata. He should not have any more views. The only teaching is this: if you do not create a Buddha view, you will not fall into the 'Buddha' extreme. If you do not create a 'sentient being' view, you will not fall into the 'sentient being' extreme. If you do not create an 'existence' view, you will not fall into the 'existence' extreme. If you do not create a 'non-existence' view, you will not fall into the 'non-existence' extreme. If you do not create an 'arya' view, you will not fall into the 'arya' extreme.</p>	<p>Question: Why does the Bodhisattva with a Boundless Body not see the mark on the crown of the Realized One's head?</p> <p>Answer: Really there's nothing to see. Why? The Bodhisattva with a Boundless Body is identical to the Realized One, and need not see further. It is just to teach you not to make up a view of Buddha, not to fall within the bounds of Buddha, not to make up a view of sentient beings, not to fall within the bounds of sentient beings, not to make of a view of existence, not to fall within the bounds of existence, not to make up a view of nonexistence, not to fall within the bounds of nonexistence, not to make up a view of the ordinary, not to fall within the bounds of the ordinary, not to make up a view of the holy, not to fall within the bounds of the holy.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>Only one entirely liberated from concepts can possess a body of infinite extent. All conceptual thinking is called erroneous belief. The upholders of such false doctrines delight in a multiplicity of concepts, but the Bodhisattva remains unmoved amid a whole host of them. ‘Tathagata’ means the THUSNESS of all phenomena. Therefore it is written:</p> <p>“Maitreya is THUS; saints and sages are THUS.’</p> <p>THUSNESS consists in not being subject to becoming or to destruction; THUSNESS consists in not being seen and in not being heard.</p> <p>The crown of the Tathagata’s head is a concept of perfection, but it is also no-perfection-to-beconceived. So do not fall into conceiving of perfection objectively. It follows that the Buddhakaya² is above all activity:³ therefore must you beware of discriminating between the myriads of separate forms. The ephemeral may be likened to mere emptiness;⁴ the Great Void is perfection wherein is neither lack nor superfluity, a uniform quiescence in which all activity is stilled.⁵ Do not argue that there may be other regions lying outside the Great Void, for such an argument would inevitably lead to discrimination. Therefore is it written: ‘Perfection⁶ is a deep sea of wisdom; samsara⁷ is like a whirling chaos.’</p>	<p>"Only those with no views can become 'Wubian Shen'. If one has false views, this is called an outside (non-Buddhist) way. 'Those outside of the way take delight in all the views. Bodhisattvas can reside within the various views and be unmoved.³ To be a tathagata means that all dharmas are in accord with reality.⁴ So it is said,</p> <p>,</p> <p>Maitreya is also thus. The assembly of enlightened beings is also thus.¹⁵</p> <p>'Thus' means non-arising. 'Thus' means non-extinguishing. 'Thus' means no views. 'Thus' means no hearing the teachings of the Buddha."</p> <p>The Tathagata's usnisa is itself a perfect view. Because it is also a non-perfect view, it does not fall into the 'perfection' extreme. Therefore, 'The Buddhakaya is unconditioned and does not degenerate into enumeration.¹⁶ Provisionally, the empty sky can serve as an example. 'Perfection is the same as extreme emptiness. There is nothing lacking and nothing left over.¹⁷ Such a space has nothing to do and nothing to argue about. Argumentation immediately brings about consciousness. So it is said, "Complete perfection is a deep ocean of consciousness. Samsara is like a wobbly mugwort plant.¹⁸</p>	<p>Just have no views—this is the boundless body. If you have a view, this is called an outside path. Outsiders indulge in views, while bodhisattvas are not moved by views. The “Realized One” means all things are as such. That’s why it is said,</p> <p>“The future Buddha Maitreya is also thus, the saints and sages are also thus.”</p> <p>“Thus” has no birth, “thus” has no extinction, “thus” has no view, “thus” has no repute.</p> <p>The Realized One’s crown is complete vision yet with no view of completeness, hence no fall within the bounds of completeness. Therefore the body of Buddha has no construction and does not fall within any measurement. It is provisionally likened to space, complete as cosmic space, with no lack and no excess. Be free, with no issues; don’t force arguments about other states. If you argue about them, that becomes consciousness. That is why it is said that completion sinks into the sea of consciousness, flowing in circles like a whirlwind,</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>When we talk of the knowledge 'I' may gain, the learning 'I' may achieve, 'my' intuitive understanding, 'my' deliverance from rebirth, and 'my' moral way of living, our successes make these concepts seem pleasant to us, but our failures make them appear deplorable. What is the use of all that? I advise you to remain uniformly quiescent and above all activity. Do not deceive yourselves with conceptual thinking, and do not look anywhere for the truth, for all that is needed is to refrain from allowing concepts to arise. It is obvious that mental concepts and external perceptions are equally misleading, and that the Way of the Buddhas⁸ is as dangerous to you as the way of demons.</p> <p>Thus, when Manjusri temporarily entered into dualism, he found himself dwarfed by two iron mountains which made egress impossible. But Manjusri⁹ had true understanding, while Samantabhadra¹⁰ possessed only ephemeral knowledge. Nevertheless, when true understanding and ephemeral knowledge are properly integrated, it will be found that they no longer exist. There is only the One Mind, Mind which is neither Buddha nor sentient beings, for it contains no such dualism. As soon as you conceive of the Buddha, you are forced to conceive of sentient beings, or of concepts and no-concepts, of vital and trivial ones, which will surely imprison you between those two iron mountains.</p>	<p>If speaking of one's own knowledge, attainment of learning, enlightenment, liberation from samsara, and having principles, strong points cause happiness. Weak points cause frustration. Of what use are all of these opinions? I say to you, remain idle with nothing to do and do not use the mind for nonsense. 'There is no use in seeking truth You must only put an end to your views'⁹ So, Internal and external views are both mistaken. The Buddha-path and the Mara-path are both evil.¹⁰</p> <p>Therefore, when Manjusri briefly gave rise to a dualistic view, he was eclipsed by two iron mountains.¹¹ Manjusri is real wisdom. Samantabhadra is conventional wisdom. 'Conventional' and 'real', when judged correctly, are in the end not-conventional and non-real. There is only the One mind. Mind, not Buddhas or sentient beings, is without discriminating views. As soon as there is a 'Buddha' view, a 'sentient being' view will instantly be created. 'Existence' views, 'non-existence' views, 'eternal' views', and 'annihilation' views all become two encircling iron mountains.</p>	<p>just saying "I know, I have learned, I understand, I am liberated, I have the principle." Where you're strong you have your way, but where you're weak you don't have your way. What's the use of such an opinionated understanding? I tell you to be free, without issues; don't use your mind deceptively. You don't need to seek reality; you should just stop opinions. Therefore inward views and outward views are both mistaken; the path of Buddhas and the path of devils are both off.</p> <p>This is why when Manjushri temporarily produced a dualistic view, he was banished between two surrounding iron mountains. Manjushri stands for true knowledge, Samantabhadra stands for temporal knowledge; the temporal and the true quell each other, so ultimately there is neither temporal nor true—they are just one mind. Mind, moreover, is not Buddha, not sentient being; it has no divergent views. As soon as there is a notion of Buddha, that produces a notion of sentient beings. The notion of existence and the notion of nonexistence, the notion of eternity and the notion of annihilation—these become two surrounding iron mountains,</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>On account of the obstacles created by dualistic reasoning, Bodhidharma merely pointed to the original Mind and substance of us all as being in fact the Buddha. He offered no false means of self-perfecting oneself; he belonged to no school of gradual attainment. His doctrine admits of no such attributes as light and dark. Since it¹¹ is not light, lo there is no light; since it is not dark, lo there is no dark! Hence it follows that there is no Darkness,¹² nor End of Darkness.¹³ Whosoever enters the gateway of our sect must deal with everything solely by means of the intellect.¹⁴</p> <p>This sort of perception is known as the Dharma; as the Dharma is perceived, we speak of Buddha; while perceiving that in fact there are no Dharma and no Buddha is called entering the Sangha, who are otherwise known as ‘monks dwelling above all activity’; and the whole sequence may be called the Triratna or Three Jewels in one Substance.¹⁵ Those who seek the Dharma¹⁶ must not seek from the Buddha, nor from the Dharma¹⁷ nor from the Sangha. They should seek from nowhere. When the Buddha is not sought, there is no Buddha to be found! When the Dharma is not sought, there is no Dharma to be found! When the Sangha is not sought, there is no Sangha!</p>	<p>Because they are obstructed by views, the patriarchal master pointed directly to the original mind of all sentient beings. Their fundamental essence is, from beginning, Buddha. His teaching is not a provisional practice, and does not belong to gradualism. It is neither illumination nor darkness. It is not illumination and therefore non-illumination. It is not darkness and therefore non-darkness. Therefore, 'There is no ignorance and no extinguishing of ignorance.'¹² All who enter this axiom-gate of ours must think like this.</p> <p>Perceiving is called 'Dharma'. Those who see Dharma are called 'Buddha'. Those who see that Buddhas and dharmas are all non-existent are called 'the Sangha'. This is called the 'nothing-to-do-monk'. It is also called 'the three treasures in one essence'¹³ 'The man who seeks Dharma does not engage in Buddha seeking, Dharma seeking, or Sangha seeking.'¹⁴ He should seek nowhere. Do not be attached to Buddha-seeking, and then there will be no Buddha. Do not be attached to Dharma-seeking, and then there will be no Dharma. Do not be attached to Sangha-seeking, and then there are no monks.</p>	<p>because you are obstructed by views. The founding teacher pointed directly to the original mind of all living beings; the fundamental essence is originally Buddha. It does not depend on cultivation, and is not subject to a gradual process. It is not light or dark; because it is not light it has no enlightenment, and because it is not dark it has no obscurity. Therefore, "There is no ignorance, and no end of ignorance." If you enter this school of ours, you need mindfulness like this.</p> <p>Seeing is called Dharma; because of seeing Dharma, it is called Buddha; the nonexistence of the Buddha and Dharma is called the Sangha, referred to as the unconstructed community. This is also called the Three Treasures of One Substance. The seeker of Dharma does not seek fixated on Buddha, does not seek fixated on Dharma, does not seek fixated on the Sangha, but should have no object of seeking. Because of not seeking fixated on Buddha there is no Buddha; because of not seeking fixated on Dharma, there is no Dharma; because of not seeking fixated on the Sangha, there is no Sangha.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) It is clear that this question was asked by somebody not present during the previous discussions.
- [2](#) Absolute.
- [3](#) I.e. activity in production of form.
- [4](#) Flux.
- [5](#) A distinction is here made between 'void' in the sense of flux where all forms are seen in dissolution, and the Great Void which overspreads, penetrates and is all. When the scientists speak of the stuff of the world as mind-stuff, it is probable that they are speaking of the flux, for the Great Void can hardly have been deduced from laws governing the ephemeral world of transitory phenomena. Compared with the Great Void, 'mind-stuff' is a relatively substantial concept!
- [6](#) Nirvana.
- [7](#) The transient universe.
- [8](#) If conceived objectively.
- [9](#) The personification of Ultimate Wisdom.
- [10](#) The personification of Love and Action.
- [11](#) Truth
- [12](#) Avidya or primordial ignorance.
- [13](#) Enlightenment.
- [14](#) Here 'intellect' stands for MANAS, the highest faculty of the human mind by which a man rises from conceptual thought to intuitive knowledge.
- [15](#) Huang Po is juggling with the most sacred of Buddhist terms, perhaps causing some of his hearer to stiffen with disapproval, but clearly in the hope of shocking them into a deeper understanding of truth. The terse humor with which he cloaks his underlying sincerity is lost in the translation.
- [16](#) Truth.
- [17](#) Doctrine.

JL:

- [1](#) Wubian Shen (Limitless Body) is the name of a bodhisattva who is featured in the Mahaparinirvana Sutra.
- [2](#) One of the Thirty-two Marks of the Buddha. It is often referred to as the Buddha's "top-knot". This mark is the fleshy bump on the top of the Buddha's head, which is featured in many sculptural representations of the Buddha.
- [3](#) These two lines are from the Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra.
- [4](#) This line is from the Diamond Sutra.
- [5](#) This is a quote from the Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra.
- [6](#) This line appears in the Foshuo dasheng pusazang zhengfa jing, as well as the Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra. Given the fact that the Wanling lu contains numerous references to the Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra, it is likely that the author used the Vimalakirti-nirdesa as the source of this quote as well.
- [7](#) This quote is taken from the Xinxin ming (Inscription of a Faithful Mind) attributed to Sengcan, the third patriarch in the Chan Lineage. The Xinxin ming can also be found in the Jingde chuandeng lu.
- [8](#) Unattributed quote. In the Zongjing lu, the quote appears with the introduction, "An ancient virtuous one said..."
- [9](#) Xinxin ming.
- [10](#) This line originates in the Dasheng zen, attributed to Baoshi but most likely written long after his death. These lines from the Dasheng zan can be found in the Jingde chuandeng lu.

- [11](#) This line is a reference to the Shu fo yaoji jing (The Sutra of the Essential Collection of All the Buddhas).
- [12](#) This is a direct quote from the Heart Sutra. Bore boluomiduo xin jing. Huangbo's style of negation is similar to the style of the Heart Sutra.
- [13](#) The three treasures (triatna) are the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.
- [14](#) This appears in Zhi Qian's version of the Vimalakirti Sutra.

Part 10

問。和尚見今說法。何得言無僧亦無法。師云。汝若見有法可說。即是以音聲求我。若見有我即是處所。法亦無法。法即是心。所以祖師云。付此心法時。法法何曾法。無法無本心。始解心心法。實無一法可得名坐道場。道場者祇是不起諸見。悟法本空。喚作空如來藏。本來無一物。何處有塵埃。若得此中意。逍遙何所論。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: You yourself are a member of the Sangha now, obviously engaged in preaching the Dharma. Then how can you declare that neither of them exists?</p> <p>A: If you suppose there is a Dharma to be preached, you will naturally ask me to expound it, but if you postulate a 'ME', that implies a spacial entity! —The Dharma is No Dharma—it is MIND! Therefore Bodhidharma said:</p> <p>Though I handed down Mind's Dharma, How can Dharma be a Dharma? For neither Mind nor Dharma Can objectively exist. Only thus you'll understand The Dharma that is passed with Mind to Mind.</p>	<p>It was asked: "Why is it that we still see today's sermon? How can you say that there is no Sangha and no Dharma?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "If you view Dharma as having existence, it can be said that this is to advocate the seeking of a self. If you see an existing self, this self is located somewhere. Dharma is also non-Dharma. Dharma is mind. Therefore, the patriarchal master said,</p> <p>'When I passed on my mind-dharma, was there such a thing as dharma after dharma is the eternal Dharma?' When there is no dharma and no original mind, one is beginning to understand the mind-to-mind dharma.</p>	<p>Question: You are expounding the Dharma right now—how can you say there is no Sangha and no Dharma?</p> <p>Answer: If your view is that there is a Dharma that can be expounded, this is "seeking me through sound." If your view is that there is a self, this is being in a place. The Dharma is also no Dharma; the Dharma is mind. This is why an ancestral teacher said,</p> <p>"When this mind-Dharma is transmitted, when has reification of Dharma ever been Dharma?" When there is no Dharma and no original mind, only then do you understand mind and the Dharma of mind.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>Knowing that in truth not a single thing exists which can be attained!¹ is called sitting in a bodhimandala.² A bodhimandala is a state in which no concepts arise, in which you awaken to the intrinsic voidness of phenomena, also called the utter voidness of the Womb of Tathagatas.³</p> <p>There's never been a single thing; Then where's defiling dust to cling? If you can reach the heart of this, Why talk of transcendental bliss?⁴</p>	<p>Truly there is not one dharma that can attain the name, 'sitting upon the site of awakening'. The one who sits upon the site of awakening simply does not give rise to the various views. Awakening to dharma is originally emptiness. It is also called the emptiness of the tathagata-garbha.</p> <p>'From the beginning there is not a single thing. Where could there be dust?'¹ If you attain this understanding, why talk about free and easy'?"</p>	<p>In reality there is nothing at all that can be grasped—this is called sitting on the site of enlightenment. The site of enlightenment is simply not producing any views. Realizing that phenomena are fundamentally empty is called the empty repository of realization.</p> <p>“Fundamentally there is not a single thing—where is there any dust?” If you get the meaning of this, you are free—what is there to argue about?</p>

Notes:

JB:

- 1 Grasped, perceived, conceived, etc.
- 2 A sanctuary for attaining Enlightenment.
- 3 The source of all phenomena.
- 4 This famous poem of Hui Neng is intended to refute the view that Mind is a mirror to be cleansed of the defiling dust of phenomena, passion and other illusions, for this view leads to dualism, besides implying a certain degree of objectivity in the nature of mind. The dust and the mirror are one intangible unity.

JL:

- 1 These two lines comprise the second half of Huineng's poem as recorded in the Tiansheng guangdeng lu.



Part 11

問。本來無一物。無物便是否。師云。無亦不是。菩提無是處。亦無無知解。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: If 'there's never been a single thing', can we speak of phenomena as non-existent?</p> <p>A: "Non-existent" is just as wrong as its opposite. Bodhi means having no concept of existence or nonexistence.</p>	<p>It was asked: "Regarding the phrase 'From the beginning there is not a single thing', is 'no thing' correct?"</p> <p>The Master said: "Non-existence is also incorrect. Bodhi is not a place. It is also not an understanding of non-existence."</p>	<p>Question: "Fundamentally there is not a single thing"—then is "no thing" right?</p> <p>Answer: Nothingness is not right either. Enlightenment has no affirmation, yet it is not without knowledge and understanding.</p>

Part 12

問。何者是佛。師云。汝心是佛。佛即是心。心佛不異。故云即心是佛。若離於心別更無佛。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: What is the Buddha?¹</p> <p>A: Your Mind is the Buddha. The Buddha is Mind. Mind and Buddha are indivisible. Therefore it is written: "That which is Mind is the Buddha; if it is other than Mind, it is certainly other than Buddha.'</p>	<p>It was asked: "What is Buddha?"</p> <p>The Master said: "Your mind is Buddha. Buddha is simply the mind. Mind and Buddha are not different. For this reason it is said, "This very mind is Buddha.' Apart from mind there is no other Buddha whatsoever."</p>	<p>Question: What is Buddha?</p> <p>Answer: Your mind is Buddha. Buddha is mind; mind and Buddha are not different. So it is said, "This very mind is Buddha." Apart from mind there is no Buddha.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- 1 The questioner seems to be a newcomer.

Part 13

云若自心是佛。祖師西來如何傳授。師云。祖師西來唯傳心佛。直指汝等心本來是佛。心心不異故名為祖。若直下見此意。即頓超三乘一切諸位。本來是佛不假修成。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: If our own Mind is the Buddha, how did Bodhidharma transmit his doctrine when he came from India?</p> <p>A: When he came from India, he transmitted only Mind-Buddha. He just pointed to the truth that the minds of all of you have from the very first been identical with the Buddha, and in no way separate from each other. That is why we call him our Patriarch.</p>	<p>Pei Xiu said: "If one's own mind is Buddha, then what did the Patriarchal Master transmit when he came from the west?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "The Patriarchal Master came from the west only to transmit the Mind-Buddha. In truth, he was pointing out that your minds have been Buddha from the beginning, and that your minds are not different. This is why he is called 'Patriarch'.</p>	<p>Question: If one's own mind is Buddha, when the founding teacher came from the West, how did he transmit it?</p> <p>Answer: When the founding teacher came from the West, he only communicated the mind-Buddha. He directly pointed out that your mind is originally Buddha. It is because their minds do not differ that they are called masters.</p>

JB	JL	TC
Whoever has an instant understanding of this truth suddenly transcends the whole hierarchy of saints and adepts belonging to any of the Three Vehicles. You have always been one with the Buddha, so do not pretend you can ATTAIN to this oneness by various practices . ¹	If you truly, directly see this meaning, you will suddenly transcend all of the various ranks of the three vehicles. From the beginning you are Buddha; Buddha is not achieved through provisional practices."	If you see what this means immediately, then at once you transcend all the stages of the Three Vehicles. This has always been Buddha, and doesn't depend on cultivation.

Notes:

JB:

- 1 We cannot BECOME what we have always been; we can only become intuitively aware of our original state, previously hidden from us by the clouds of maya.

Part 14

云若如此。十方諸佛出世說於何法。師云。十方諸佛出世。祇共說一心法。所以佛密付與摩訶大迦葉。此一心法體。盡虛空遍法界。名為諸佛理論。這個法豈是汝於言句上解得他。亦不是於一機一境上見得他。此意唯是默契得。這一門名為無為法門。若欲會得但知無心。忽悟即得。若用心擬學取。即轉遠去。若無歧路心一切取捨心。心如木石。始有學道分。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: If that is so, what Dharma do all the Buddhas teach when they manifest themselves in the world?</p> <p>A: When all the Buddhas manifest themselves in the world, they proclaim nothing but the One Mind. Thus, Gautama Buddha silently transmitted to Mahakasyapa the doctrine that the One Mind, which is the substance of all things, is co-extensive with the Void and fills the entire world of phenomena. This is called the Law of All the Buddhas.</p>	<p>Pei Xiu said: "If this is so, in what dharma is the appearance of the Buddhas of the ten directions spoken of?"</p> <p>The Master said: "The appearance in the world of the Buddhas of the ten directions is often spoken of in the dharma of the One Mind. Therefore, Buddha silently transmitted the Dharma to Mahakasyapa. The essence of this Dharma of the One Mind is pervasive emptiness and is found throughout the Dharma Realm. This is called 'the discourse of the principle of all Buddhas'."</p>	<p>Question: If so, what Dharma do the Buddhas of the ten directions expound when they appear in the world?</p> <p>Answer: When the Buddhas of the ten directions appear in the world, they all just expound the Dharma of one mind. This is why the Buddha intimated it to Mahakasyapa. The substance of this Dharma of one mind comprehends space and pervades the universe. It is called the theory of all Buddhas.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>Discuss it as you may, how can you even hope to approach the truth through words? Nor can it be perceived either subjectively or objectively. So full understanding can come to you only through an inexpressible mystery. The approach to it is called the Gateway of the Stillness beyond all Activity. If you wish to understand, know that a sudden comprehension comes when the mind has been purged of all the clutter of conceptual and discriminatory thought-activity.</p> <p>Those who seek the truth by means of intellect and learning only get further and further away from it. Not till your thoughts cease all their branching here and there, not till you abandon all thoughts of seeking for something, not till your mind is motionless as wood or stone, will you be on the right road to the Gate.¹</p>	<p>"In this teaching, how can you attain the highest liberation through words and sentences? It is also not realized through one mental disposition or one sense object. This aim is only attained through silently understanding. This gate is called the 'No-Doing Dharma Gate'. If you wish to understand, simply know 'no mind', and you will instantly awaken and directly apprehend.</p> <p>If you exert effort in trying to sense it through study, you will be farther away from the goal. If your mind is devoid of such divergent thoughts, you will achieve complete equanimity. When the mind is like wood and stone, then you will have the qualification to begin to study the Way."</p>	<p>How can you understand this Dharma in verbal statements? It is not a matter of seeing it in one situation or one state either. The meaning can only be gotten by silent accord. This method is called the teaching of no contrivance; if you want to understand, just master having no thought. You get it by sudden realization—</p> <p>if you deliberately try to grasp it by study, you become further and further away from it. If you have no divergent thought, no grasping and rejecting thought at all, only then do you have a part in learning the Way.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- 1 These words recall the admonitions of so many mystics—Buddhist, Christian, Hindu or Sufi—who have committed their experience to words. What Huang Po calls the total abandonment of Hsrn—mind, thought, perceptions, concepts and the rest—implies the utter surrender of self insisted on by Sufi and Christian mystics. Indeed, in paragraph 28 he used the very words: "LET THE SELF PERISH UTTERLY". Such striking unanimity of expression by mystics widely separated in time and space can hardly be attributed to coincidence. No several persons entirely unacquainted with one another could produce such closely similar accounts of purely imaginary journeys. Hence one is led to suppose that what they describe is real. This seems to have been Aldous Huxley's view when he compiled that valuable work *The Perennial Philosophy*.

Part 15

云如今現有種種妄念。何以言無。師云。妄本無體。即是汝心所起。汝若識心是佛。心本無妄。那得起心更認於妄。汝若不生心動念。自然無妄。所以云。心生則種種法生。心滅則種種法滅。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: At this very moment, all sorts of erroneous thoughts are constantly flowing through our minds. How can you speak of our having none?</p> <p>A: Error has no substance; it is entirely the product of your own thinking. If you know that Mind is the Buddha and that Mind is fundamentally without error, whenever thoughts arise, you will be fully convinced that THEY are responsible for errors. If you could prevent all conceptual movements of thought and still your thinking-processes, naturally there would be no error left in you. Therefore is it said: 'When thoughts arise, then do all things arise. When thoughts vanish, then do all things vanish.'</p>	<p>Pei Xiu: "It is said that right now there are all sorts of unreal thoughts. How can you speak of there being none?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "'Unreal' has no essence. It is merely a product of your mind. If you perceive that mind is Buddha, that mind is originally devoid of 'unreal', how could you produce mind and go on to recognize it as 'false'? If you do not give rise to thoughts in the mind, the mind will naturally be devoid of 'unreal'. Therefore, it is said, 'Thoughts are born, and then every type of dharma is born. Thoughts extinguish, and then every type of dharma is extinguished.'" ¹</p>	<p>Question: Right now there actually are all sorts of random thoughts--- how can you say there are none?</p> <p>Answer: Delusion fundamentally has no substance—it is produced by your mind. If you recognize mind is Buddha, mind originally has no delusion—how can you arouse the mind to go on to recognize delusion? If you don't excite the mind and stir thoughts, you'll naturally have no delusion. So it is said, "When thoughts arise, all sorts of things are produced; when thoughts cease, all sorts of things disappear."</p>

Notes:

JL:

- 1 This is a quote from the Awakening of Faith. According to Ruth Fuller Sasaki, this line has its origins in the Lanka-avatara Sutra.

Part 16

云今正妄念起時。佛在何處。師云。汝今覺妄起時。覺正是佛。可中若無妄念佛亦無。何故如此。為汝起心作佛見。便謂有佛可成。作眾生見。便謂有眾生可度。起心動念總是汝見處。若無一切見。佛有何處所。如文殊纔起佛見便貶向二鐵圍山。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: At this moment, while erroneous thoughts are arising in my mind, where is the Buddha?¹</p> <p>A: At this moment you are conscious of those erroneous thoughts. Well, your consciousness is the Buddha! Perhaps you can understand that, were you but free of these delusory mental processes, there would then be no 'Buddha'. Why so? Because when you allow a movement of your mind to result in a concept of the Buddha, you are bringing into existence an objective being capable of being Enlightened. Similarly, any concept of sentient beings in need of deliverance CREATES such beings as objects of your thoughts.</p> <p>All intellectual processes and movements of thought result from your concepts.² If you were to refrain from conceptualizing altogether, where could the Buddha continue to exist? You are in the same predicament as Manjusri who, as soon as he permitted himself to conceive of the Buddha as an objective entity, was dwarfed and hemmed in on all sides by those two iron mountains.</p>	<p>Pei Xiu said: "As the unreal is just now arising in my mind, where is the Buddha?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "You are now awakened to the 'unreal' that is arising. This awakening is Buddha. You may internalize the fact that if there were no unreal thoughts, there would also be no Buddha. Why is this so? Because when you give rise to thoughts that create the view of 'Buddha', this is a means of calling into existence a 'Buddha' that can be achieved. When you create a 'sentient being' view, this calls into existence the sentient beings that may be crossed over to the shore of enlightenment.</p> <p>The moving thoughts that arise in your mind are the locus of your views. If all these views did not exist, where would the Buddha exist? It is like when Manjushri was able to give rise to a 'Buddha' view and was instantly eclipsed and surrounded by two iron-walled mountains."</p>	<p>Question: Now, just when random thoughts are presently arising, where is Buddha?</p> <p>Answer: When you are presently aware of random thoughts arising, this very awareness is Buddha. Here, if there are no random thoughts, there is no Buddha either. Why so? Because you are arousing your mind to produce the view of "Buddha," then you say there is Buddhahood to attain. You produce the view of "sentient beings," and then you say there are sentient beings to liberate.</p> <p>Arousing the mind and stirring thoughts is all in your views; if you have no views at all, where is "Buddha"? It's like the case of Manjushri—as soon as he produced a notion of Buddha, he was banished between two iron enclosing mountains.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) Is the One Mind then no longer present in me?
- [2](#) Which bring the corresponding thought objects into existence.

Part 17

云今正悟時。佛在何處。師云。問從何來。覺從何起。語默動靜一切聲色。盡是佛事。何處覓佛。不可更頭上安頭嘴上加嘴。但莫生異見。山是山水是水。僧是僧俗是俗。山河大地日月星辰。總不出汝心。三千世界都來是汝箇自己。何處有許多般。心外無法滿目青山。虛空世界皎皎地。無絲髮許與汝作見解。所以一切聲色是佛之慧目。法不孤起仗境方生。為物之故有其多智。終日說何曾說。終日聞何曾聞。所以釋迦四十九年說。未嘗說著一字。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: At the moment of Enlightenment, where is the Buddha?</p> <p>A: Whence does your question proceed? Whence does your consciousness arise? When speech is silenced, all movement stilled, every sight and sound vanished— THEN is the Buddha’s work of deliverance truly going forward! Then, where will you seek the Buddha? You cannot place a head upon your head, or lips upon your lips; rather, you should just refrain from every kind of dualistic distinction.¹ Hills are hills. Water is water. Monks are monks. Laymen are laymen. But these mountains, these rivers, the whole world itself, together with sun, moon and stars —not one of them exists outside your minds!</p>	<p>Pei Xiu said: "Now, just at the time of true enlightenment, where is the Buddha?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "Where does this question come from? From where does awakening arise? Speech and silence, movement and stillness, and all of sound and form all of these are Buddha activities. Where will you look for Buddha? You cannot place another head on top of your head or a mouth on top of your mouth. Simply do not give birth to separate views. Mountains are mountains. Water is water. Monks are monks. Laymen are laymen. Mountains, rivers, the earth, sun, moon and stars: none of these are outside of your mind.</p>	<p>Question: Now when we awaken, where is Buddha?</p> <p>Answer: Where does this question come from? Where does awareness come from? Speech, silence, movement, stillness, all sound and form, are all Buddha’s affairs— where would you look for Buddha? Don’t put a head on top of your head, or add a beak to a beak. Just don’t conceive different views— mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers, monks and nuns are monks and nuns, lay people are lay people. Mountains, rivers, earth, sun and moon, stars and planets, are all not beyond your mind.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>The vast chiliocosm exists only within you, so where else can the various categories of phenomena possibly be found? Outside Mind, there is nothing. The green hills which everywhere meet your gaze and that void sky that you see glistening above the earth not a hairsbreadth of any of them exists outside the concepts you have formed for yourself! So it is that every single sight and sound is but the Buddha's Eye of Wisdom.² Phenomena do not arise independently but rely upon environment.³ And it is their appearing as objects which necessitates all sorts of individualized knowledge. You may talk the whole day through, yet what has been said? You may listen from dawn till dusk, yet what will you have heard? Thus, though Gautama Buddha preached for forty nine years, in truth no word was spoken.⁴</p>	<p>The three thousand worlds all come from yourself. Where does there exist many sorts of things? Outside of the mind, there are no dharmas to fill the eyes with green mountains. The void realm is like the clear and bright earth. These are not separated from your constructed views by so much as a thread. Therefore, all sound and form are the Buddha's Wisdom Eye. Dharmas do not arise by themselves. They rely upon their surroundings for their birth. Their becoming objects is the reason for the existence of so much knowledge. Speak all day, but what will you say? Listen all day, but what will you hear? Shakyamuni preached for forty-nine years, but never spoke a single word."</p>	<p>The whole universe is your self. Where are there so many lands? "Outside mind, there are no phenomena; filling the eyes, green mountains." The realm of space is clear—there is not so much as a thread or a hair for you to fabricate views and interpretations of. Therefore all sounds and forms are Buddha's eye of insight. Phenomena do not occur in isolation—they only come to be dependent on context. It is because of describing them that there is so much knowledge. That is why Shakyamuni "spoke for forty-nine years without saying a single word."</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) Since we are the Buddha, to seek him elsewhere is to place a head upon our head.
- [2](#) The Buddha's Eye of Wisdom commonly means the eye with which he perceives the true unity of all things. Huang Po, however, does not say 'perceived By the Eye', but uses the phrase '1s the Eye', thereby identifying see-er and seen.
- [3](#) I.e. the mental environment created by us.
- [4](#) Words belong to the realm of flux and illusion. The truth is beyond words, a silent and profound experience. The Buddha spoke of relative means. Viewed absolutely, no word was spoken.

Part 18

云若如此。何處是菩提。師云。菩提無是處。佛亦不得菩提。眾生亦不失菩提。不可以身得。不可以心求。一切眾生即菩提相。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: Assuming all this is so, what particular state is connoted by the word Bodhi?¹</p> <p>A: Bodhi is no state. The Buddha did not attain to it. Sentient beings do not lack it. It cannot be reached with the body nor sought with the mind. All sentient beings ARE ALREADY of one form with Bodhi.</p>	<p>Pei Xiu said: "If this is so, where is bodhi?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "Bodhi does not have a place. The Buddha also does not attain bodhi. Sentient beings also do not lack bodhi. It cannot be obtained with the body. It cannot be sought with the mind. 'All sentient beings are already marked by bodhi.'¹</p>	<p>Question: If so, what state is enlightenment?</p> <p>Answer: Enlightenment has no affirmative state. Neither did Buddha gain enlightenment, nor have sentient beings lost enlightenment. It cannot be attained by the body, and cannot be sought by the mind. All sentient beings are the manifestation of enlightenment.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- 1 Enlightenment or Supreme Wisdom.

JL:

- 1 Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra

Part 19

云如何發菩提心。師云。菩提無所得。爾今但發無所得心。決定不得一法。即菩提心。菩提無住處。是故無有得者。故云。我於然燈佛所無有少法可得。佛即與我授記。明知一切眾生本是菩提。不應更得菩提。爾今聞發菩提心。將謂一箇心學取佛去。唯擬作佛。任爾三祇劫修。亦祇得箇報化佛。與爾本源真性佛有何交涉。故云。外求有相佛。與汝不相似。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: But how does one 'Attain to the Bodhi-Mind'?</p>	<p>Pei Xiu said: "How does one manifest the bodhi-mind?"</p>	<p>Question: How does one awaken the will for enlightenment?</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>A: Bodhi is not something to be attained.¹ If, at this very moment, you could convince yourselves of its unattainability, being certain indeed that nothing at all can ever be attained, you would already be Bodhi-minded.</p> <p>Since Bodhi is not a state, it is nothing for you to attain. And therefore is it written of Gautama Buddha: 'While I was yet in the realm of Dipamkara Buddha, there was not a grain of anything to be attained by me. It was then that Dipamkara Buddha made his prophecy that I, too, should become a Buddha.' If you know positively that all sentient beings are already one with Bodhi, you will cease thinking of Bodhi as something to be attained.</p> <p>You may recently have heard others talking about this 'attaining of the Bodhi-Mind', but this may be called an intellectual way of driving the Buddha away! By following this method, you only APPEAR to achieve Buddhahood; if you were to spend aeon upon aeon in that way, you would only achieve the Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. What connection would all that have with your original and real Buddha-Nature?² Therefore is it written: 'Seeking outside for a Buddha possessed of form has nothing to do with you.'</p>	<p>The Master replied: "Bodhi is not a state to be apprehended. If right now you produce a mind that apprehends nothing, certain that there is no apprehending of a single dharma; this is bodhi-mind. Bodhi abides nowhere.</p> <p>This is the reason that there is nothing to be apprehended. For this reason it is said, 'When I was in Dipamkara¹ Buddha's realm, there was not even the smallest dharma that could be apprehended. (Dipamkara) Buddha then gave me his prediction.² Being fully aware that all sentient beings are originally enlightened, there should be no attaining of bodhi.</p> <p>Now you hear of the manifesting of bodhi-mind. This should be called 'a mind learning to make the Buddha leave'. Manifesting the bodhi-mind is to only imitate the actions of Buddha! Even if you repeatedly practice for an incalculable number of kalpas, you would still only attain the sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya Buddha. What relationship does the Buddha have with your original, true nature? For this reason it is said, 'If you seek outside for Buddha with characteristics, such a Buddha has no resemblance to you.'³</p>	<p>Answer: Enlightenment has no attainment. Now just awaken the mind that has no object of attainment and certainly does not grasp a single thing; this is the will for enlightenment. Enlightenment has no location;</p> <p>therefore there is no one who attains it. So Buddha said, "There was nothing at all for me to attain from the Burning Lamp Buddha, so the Buddha gave me the prediction of enlightenment." Clearly we know all sentient beings are originally enlightened, and will not also "attain" enlightenment.</p> <p>Now that you've heard of awakening the will for enlightenment, you think an individual mind learns Buddhahood, and just try to become a Buddha. Even if you cultivate for three incalculable eons, you'll just attain reward and emanation Buddhahood—what has this to do with the Buddhahood of your original real nature? So it is said, "If you seek a formal Buddha externally, it won't resemble you."</p>

Notes:

JB:

- 1 Perceived, grasped, entered, realized, conceived, etc.
- 2 I.e. you would achieve the physical and spiritual aspects of a Buddha, which an Enlightened One bears within the various realms of transitory existence, but you would lack the Dharmakaya, the aspect of a Buddha as identical with the Absolute.

JL:

- [1](#) A Buddha of the distant past.
- [2](#) This seems to be a paraphrase from the Diamond Sutra.
- [3](#) According to Ruth Fuller Sasaki, this line is a quote from a poem allegedly written by the 8th Indian patriarch, Buddhanandi. This quote is also found in the Zhenshou Linji Huizhao Chanshi Yulu.

Part 20

問。本既是佛。那得更無四生六道種種形貌不同。師云。諸佛體圓更無增減。流入六道處處皆圓。萬類之中個個是佛。譬如一團水銀分散諸處。顆顆皆圓。若不分時祇是一塊。此一即一切。一切即一。種種形貌喻如屋舍。捨驢屋入人屋。捨人身至天身。乃至聲聞緣覺菩薩佛屋。皆是汝取捨處。所以有別。本源之性。何得有別。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: If we have always been one with the Buddha (Absolute), why are there nevertheless beings who come into existence through the four kinds of birth and enter the six states of existence, each with the characteristic form and appearance of its kind?</p> <p>A: The essential Buddha-Substance is a perfect whole, without superfluity or lack. It permeates the six states of existence and yet is everywhere perfectly whole. Thus, every single one of the myriads of phenomena in the universe is the Buddha (Absolute). "This substance may be likened to a quantity of quicksilver which, being scattered in all directions, everywhere reforms into perfect wholes. When undispersed, it is of one piece, the one comprising the whole and the whole comprising the one."</p>	<p>It was asked: "If we are all from the beginning originally buddhas, how do there come to be four births and six paths, beings that have various appearances and are all different?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "The essence of all the buddhas is complete perfection, and there is nothing to add or subtract. It flows into the six paths and is complete perfection in every place. Of the ten thousand species, each and every one is Buddha. As an example, a ball of mercury will scatter everywhere. It will spread out roundly and perfectly. If not for this spreading it would be merely a clump. This one becomes all. All becomes one."</p>	<p>Question: If they're originally Buddha, how can there still be the various different forms of the four kinds of birth and six paths of existence?</p> <p>Answer: All Buddhas are essentially complete, no more, no less; flowing into the six paths, all are everywhere complete. Every individual among myriad species is a Buddha. It is like a glob of mercury scattered all over—each globule is round. When not divided, it is just one mass. This is "one is all, all are one."</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>The various forms and appearances, on the other hand, may be likened to dwellings. Just as one abandons a stable in favour of a house, so one exchanges a physical body for a heavenly body, and so on up to the planes of Pratyeka-Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. But all alike are things sought by you or abandoned by you; hence the differences between them. How is it possible that the original and essential nature of the universe should be subject to this differentiation?</p>	<p>The various forms, for example, are like a house. One would abandon a donkey stable to enter a human's house. One would abandon a human body to attain a god's body, up to and including sravaka, pratyeka, bodhisattva, and buddha dwellings. These are all places that you obtain and abandon. Therefore, they exist separately from the nature of the original source. How could the nature of the original source have any differences?</p>	<p>The various physical forms are like houses. You leave a donkey house and enter a human house. Leaving a human body, you attain a celestial body. And so on, up to the houses of listeners, conditional illuminates, bodhisattvas, or Buddhas—all of these are in your grasping and rejecting; that's why there are distinctions. In the original essence, how can there be distinctions?</p>

●—————●

Part 21

問。諸佛如何行大慈悲。為眾生說法。師云。佛慈悲者無緣。故名大慈悲。慈者不見有佛可成。悲者不見有眾生可度。其所說法無說無示。其聽法者無聞無得。譬如幻士為幻人說法。這個法若為道我從善知識言下領得。會也悟也這個慈悲。若為汝起心動念學得他見解。不是自悟本心。究竟無益。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: How do the Buddhas, out of their vast mercy and compassion, preach the Dharma (Law) to sentient beings?</p> <p>A: We speak of their mercy and compassion as vast just because it is beyond causality (and therefore infinite). By mercy is really meant not conceiving of a Buddha to be Enlightened, while compassion really means not conceiving of sentient beings to be delivered.¹</p>	<p>It was asked: "How is it that all the buddhas practice the Great Compassion and preach the Dharma to sentient beings?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "Buddha-compassion is without dependence. For this reason it is called 'the Great Compassion'. The merciful see that there is no buddhahood to be achieved, and the sorrowful see that there are no sentient beings to be carried over to the far shore of enlightenment.¹</p>	<p>Question: How do Buddhas practice great kindness and compassion and expound the Dharma for sentient beings?</p> <p>Answer: Buddhas' kindness and compassion have no object; therefore they are called great kindness and compassion. Kindness is not seeing that there is Buddhahood to attain; compassion is not seeing that there are sentient beings to deliver.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>In reality, their Dharma is neither preached in words nor otherwise signified; and those who listen neither hear nor attain. It is as though an imaginary teacher had preached to imaginary people.</p> <p>As regards all these dharmas (teachings), if, for the sake of the Way, I speak to you from my deeper knowledge and lead you forward, you will certainly be able to understand what I say; and, as to mercy and compassion, if for your sakes I take to thinking things out and studying other people's concepts—in neither case will you have reached a true perception of the real nature of your own Mind from WITHIN YOURSELVES. So, in the end, these things will be of no help at all.</p>	<p>He who speaks the Dharma neither speaks nor indicates. He who listens to the Dharma neither hears nor apprehends. As example would be: an illusory master preaching the Dharma to an illusory person."²</p> <p>"If I were to speak to you from my great knowledge regarding the Way, the words would be understood. 'Understanding'. 'Awakening'. 'This compassion'. If I were to raise thoughts of study, attainment and insight in your mind, then this would not be a self-awakening to original mind. In the end, there would be no benefit."</p>	<p>The Dharma they expound has no explanation and no indication; those who listen to the Dharma have no hearing and no attainment. It is like a magician teaching phantoms.</p> <p>How can you say of this Dharma, "I have attained understanding from the words of a teacher; I comprehend, I understand"? As for this kindness and compassion, how can you learn another's perception and understanding by arousing the mind and stirring thoughts? If it is not your own realization of the original mind, ultimately it is no use.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) The Zen Masters, in their single-minded desire to lead their disciples beyond the realm of dualism, would have them abandon even the notion of compassion as such, since it leads to the dualistic concept of its opposite. By Zen adepts compassion must be practiced as a matter of course and without giving rise to the least feeling of self-satisfaction. Still less may it be practiced as a means of gaining some heavenly or earthly reward.

JL:

- [1](#) It is difficult to convey the full meaning of this sentence in English. The word translated as "compassion consists of two characters, which mean "mercy" and "sorrow" respectively ("compassion", then is "merciful sorrow"). To make his point, Huangbo has split the characters to provide a deeper meaning for what it is to practice the Great Compassion.
- [2](#) Vimalakirti Sutra.

Part 22

問。何者是精進。師云。身心不起。是名第一牢強精進。纔起心向外求者。名為歌利王愛游獵去。心不外遊。即是忍辱仙人。身心俱無。即是佛道。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: What is the meaning of ‘zealous application’?¹</p> <p>A: The most completely successful form of zealous application is the absence from your minds of all such distinctions as ‘my body’, ‘my mind’. As soon as you begin to seek for something outside your own Mind, you are like Kaliraja bent on hunting.² But when you prevent your minds from going on travels outside themselves, you are already a ksanti-rishi. NO BODIES AND NO MINDS—that is the Way of the Buddhas!</p>	<p>It was asked: "What is diligence?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "Body and mind do not arise. This is called the most essential, striving diligence. Once you give rise to a mind tending towards outside thoughts, this is called 'Kaliraja's love for the hunt'.¹ When mind does not go wandering outside, this is the sage, Ksantivadin.² Body and mind, without exception, do not exist. This is the Buddha-path."</p>	<p>Question: What is diligence?</p> <p>Answer: When mind and body are not excited, this is called the foremost robust diligence. As soon as you arouse the mind to seek outside, this is called a contentious king loving to go hunting. When mind doesn't wander outside, this is called a wizard of forbearance, free of body and mind—this is the Way of Buddhas.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- 1 One of the six paramitas.
- 2 Kaliraja is said to have sliced up some sages, including a former incarnation of Gautama Buddha. The latter bore this piecemeal dismemberment with the equanimity of a ksanti-rishi, one who practices the paramita of uncomplaining patience in affliction.

JL:

- 1 In the Diamond Sutra, the Buddha mentions that in a past life, he was dismembered by Kaliraja.
- 2 This is another reference to a past life of the Buddha, mentioned in the Diamond Sutra.

Part 23

問。若無心行此道得否。師云。無心便是行此道。更說什麼得與不得。且如瞥起一念便是境。若無一念便是境忘心自滅。無復可追尋。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: If I follow this Way, and refrain from intellectual processes and conceptual thinking, shall I be certain of attaining the goal?</p> <p>A: Such non-intellection is following the Way! Why this talk of attaining and not attaining? The matter is thus— by thinking of something you create an entity and by thinking of nothing you create another. Let such erroneous thinking perish utterly, and then nothing will remain for you to go seeking!</p>	<p>It was asked: "If there is no-mind is to practice this path, will it be obtained?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "No-mind truly is practicing the Path. How can you even speak of what is obtained and unobtainable? It is like this: when you even slightly give rise to a single thought, then there are phenomena. If there is not one thought, then the phenomena are forgotten and this false mind self-extinguishes. It will not again be able to seek."</p>	<p>Question: If there is no mental activity, is this Way attained?</p> <p>Answer: Having no thoughts is practicing this Way—what attaining or not attaining is there to speak of anymore? The moment you produce a thought, this is an object. If you don't have a single thought, this object disappears, and the mind spontaneously becomes quiet. There's nothing more to pursue.</p>

Part 24

問。如何是出三界。師云。善惡都莫思量。當處便出三界。如來出世為破三有。若無一切心。三界亦非有。如一微塵破為百分。九十九分是無。一分是有。摩訶衍不能勝出。百分俱無。摩訶衍始能勝出。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: What is meant by "Transcending the Three Worlds"? <i>Of desire, form and formlessness.</i>¹</p> <p>A: Transcending the Three Worlds connotes rising beyond the dualism of good and evil. Buddhas appear in the world in order to make an end of desire, of form and of formless phenomena.</p>	<p>It was asked: "What is going beyond the three worlds?"</p> <p>The Master replied: "Good and evil are both nothing to be conceived. When one reaches this, one will immediately go beyond the three worlds.</p>	<p>Question: What is getting out of the triple world?</p> <p>Answer: Don't think about good or bad, and right there you'll get out of the triple world. The Realized One emerged in the world to break through the three realms of being.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>For you also the Three Worlds will vanish if you can reach the state beyond thought. On the other hand, if you still cling to the notion that something, even if it be as small as the hundredth part of a grain, might exist objectively, then even a perfect mastery of the entire Mahayana Canon will fail to give you victory over the Three Worlds. Only when every one of those tiny fragments is seen to be nothing can the Mahayana achieve this victory for you.”²</p>	<p>The Tathagata's coming to the world was a destruction of the three existences. If all thoughts do not exist, then the three worlds also do not exist. It is like the 100% destruction of the smallest particle of a dharma. When 99% doesn't have existence, while 1% still exists, the Mahayana cannot win your liberation. When 100% is completely destroyed, the Mahayana can begin to win your liberation."</p>	<p>If you don't have any thoughts, the triple world is also not existent. It's like an atomic particle split into a hundred parts—if ninety-nine are nonexistent while one part is existent, the Mahayana cannot transcend. If all hundred parts are nonexistent, only then can the Mahayana transcend.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) "The formless world is far other than the Great Void, being one of the three states or worlds constituting samsara.
- [2](#) I.e. even atoms have no objective existence—whether atoms of matter or those atoms of consciousness in which certain Buddhist meta-physicians believed.

The Master Ascends the Hall

Part 25

上堂云。即心是佛。上至諸佛。下至蠢動含靈。皆有佛性。同一心體。所以達摩從西天來。唯傳一心法。直指一切眾生本來是佛。不假修行。但如今識取自心見自本性。更莫別求。

JB	JL	TC
<p>One day, after taking his seat in the great hall, the Master began as follows. Since Mind is the Buddha (Absolute), it embraces all things, from the Buddhas (Enlightened Beings) at one extreme to the meanest of belly-crawling reptiles or insects at the other. All these alike share the Buddha-Nature and all are of the substance of the One Mind.</p> <p>So, after his arrival from the West, Bodhidharma transmitted naught but the Dharma of the One Mind. He pointed directly to the truth that all sentient beings have always been of one substance with the Buddha. He did not follow any of those mistaken 'methods of attainment'. And if you could only achieve this comprehension of your own Mind, thereby discovering your real nature, there would assuredly be nothing for you to seek, either.</p>	<p>Huangbo ascended the hall and spoke: "This very mind is Buddha. From the highest of all buddhas down to the lowest of the squirming living creatures; all possess the Buddha-nature. They share the essence of the One Mind.</p> <p>This is why Bodhidharma came from the west and only transmitted the Dharma of the One Mind. He directly pointed to the fact that all sentient beings are, from the beginning, Buddha. Do not perform provisional practices. But, today, if you understand your own mind and see your own original nature, then there will be nothing else to seek."</p>	<p>Mind itself is Buddha. From the Buddhas above down to insects, all animate beings have Buddha-nature, the same one essence of mind.</p> <p>That is why Bodhidharma came from India only communicating the teaching of one mind, directly pointing out that all sentient beings are originally Buddha. It doesn't depend on cultivation—just recognize your own mind right now, see your own original nature; don't seek anything else anymore.</p>

Part 26

云何識自心。即如今言語者正是汝心。若不言語又不作用心體。如虛空相似。無有相貌亦無方所。亦不一向是無有而不可見。故祖師云。真性心地藏。無頭亦無尾。應緣而化物。方便呼為智若不應緣之時。不可言其有無。正應之時。亦無蹤跡。既知如此。如今但向無中棲泊。即是行諸佛路。經云。應無所住而生其心。一切眾生輪迴生死者。意緣走作心。於六道不停。致使受種種苦。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Q: How, then, does a man accomplish this comprehension of his own Mind?</p> <p>A: That which asked the question Is your own Mind; but if you were to remain quiescent and to refrain from the smallest mental activity, its substance would be seen as a void—you would find it formless, occupying no point in space and falling neither into the category of existence nor into that of non-existence.</p> <p>Because it is imperceptible, Bodhidharma said: 'Mind, which is our real nature, is the unbegotten and indestructible Womb; in response to circumstances, it transforms itself into phenomena. For the sake of convenience, we speak of Mind as the intelligence; but when it does not respond to circumstances,¹ it cannot be spoken of in such dualistic terms as existence or non-existence. Besides, even when engaged in creating objects in response to causality, it is still imperceptible. If you know this and rest tranquilly in nothingness—then you are indeed following the Way of the Buddhas.</p>	<p>"It is said, 'How does one understand one's own mind?'</p> <p>This, which today has spoken those words, is truly your own mind. If you do not speak and also do not make effort, the mind-essence thus appears like the empty sky. Non-existence has no features and also has no dimensions. Isn't it always non-existent and also cannot be seen?</p> <p>For this reason the Patriarchal Master said, 'The true nature of mind is Ksitigarbha. There is no head and also no tail. It transforms beings according to their conditions. As an expedient means, it is called wisdom.'¹ If it is uncaused, it cannot be said that it exists or does not exist. When it responds to causes, it also does not leave footprints. Just understand in this way. Today I only direct you to abide in silence. This is practicing the All-Buddhas-Vehicle.</p>	<p>How do you recognize your own mind?</p> <p>What is speaking right now is indeed your mind. If you're not speaking, and not doing anything, the essence of mind is like space—it has no form, and no location. Yet it is not totally nonexistent and imperceptible.</p> <p>Therefore an ancestral teacher said that the real essence, the mine of the mind ground, has no head or tail; it influences people according to conditions—this is expediently called wisdom. When it is not responding to conditions, it cannot be said to exist or not. When it is responding, it still has no traces. Once you know it as such, right now just abide in nothingness; this is traveling the path of Buddhas.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>Therefore does the sutra say: 'Develop a mind which rests on no thing whatever.' Every one of the sentient beings bound to the wheel of alternating life and death is re-created from the karma of his own desires! Endlessly their hearts remain bound to the six states of existence, thereby involving them in all sorts of sorrow and pain.</p>	<p>The sutra says, 'You should give birth to a mind that is without anything upon which to stand.'² All of the sentient beings in the wheel of birth and death; thinking causes them to move along the wheel. Create thoughts and you will be endlessly within the six paths. This will cause you to be afflicted with suffering and all kinds of bitterness."</p>	<p>Scripture says, "Activate the mind without dwelling on anything." The reason all sentient beings revolve in birth and death is that their attention focuses on fluctuating thought, on the six paths of being, not stopping, which causes them to undergo all sorts of suffering.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) And so rests from creating objects.

JL:

- [1](#) This is a four line verse attributed to the twenty-sixth patriarch, Puryamitra. See the Zongjing lu.
- [2](#) This quote is from the Diamond Sutra



Part 27

淨名云。難化之人心如猿猴。故以若干種法制禦其心。然後調伏。所以心生種種法生。心滅種種法滅。故知一切諸法皆由心造。乃至人天地獄六道修羅。盡由心造。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Ch'ing Ming¹ says: "There are people with minds like those of apes who are very hard to teach; people who need all sorts of precepts and doctrines with which to force their hearts into submission.' And so when thoughts arise, all sorts of dharmas² follow, but they vanish with thought's cessation.</p>	<p>"Jing Ming¹ said, 'Like monkeys, it is difficult to transform people's minds because the various types of dharmas restrain their minds.'² After that, they are subdued. Therefore, 'When thoughts are born, every type of dharma is born. When thoughts extinguish, every type of dharma is extinguished'³</p>	<p>Vimalakirti's Advice says, "Intractable people have minds like monkeys. Therefore a variety of methods are used to control their minds; after that, they are tamed. So when thoughts are produced, all sorts of things are produced; when thoughts are extinguished, all sorts of things disappear."</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>We can see from this that every sort of dharma is but a creation of Mind. And all kinds of beings—humans, devas, sufferers in hell, asuras and all comprised within the six forms of life—each one of them is Mind-created.</p>	<p>For this reason it is known that every single dharma is created by mind. Up to and including humans, gods, hell beings, the beings of the six paths, and the asuras; all of them are created by mind."</p>	<p>So we know that all things come from mental construction.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) A famous lay-disciple.
- [2](#) Doctrines, precepts, concepts, things.

JL:

- [1](#) This is another name for Vimalakirti
- [2](#) Vimalakirti-nidesa Sutra [T 475.14.0553a12-13]
- [3](#) This is a slightly different phrasing of the line from the Awakening of Faith quoted above. See T 1666.32.0577b22.

Part 28

如今但學無心頓息諸緣。莫生妄想分別。無人無我。無貪瞋無憎愛無勝負。但除却如許多種妄想。性自本來清淨。即是修行菩提法佛等。若不會此意。縱爾廣學勤苦修行。木食草衣。不識自心皆名邪行。盡作天魔外道水陸諸神。如此修行。當復何益。

JB	JL	TC
<p>If only you would learn how to achieve a state of non-intellection, immediately the chain of causation would snap. Give up those erroneous thoughts leading to false distinctions! There is no 'self' and no 'other'. There is no 'wrong desire', no 'anger', no 'hatred', no 'love', no 'victory', no 'failure'. Only renounce the error of intellectual or conceptual thought-processes and your nature will exhibit its pristine purity—for this alone is the way to attain Enlightenment, to observe the Dharma (Law), to become a Buddha and all the rest. Unless you understand this, the whole of your great learning, your painful efforts to advance, your austerities of diet and clothing, will not help you to a knowledge of your own Mind. All such practices must be termed fallacious, for any of them will lead to your rebirth among "demons"—enemies of the truth—or among the crude nature spirits. What end is served by pursuits like those?</p>	<p>"Now if you only study no-mind, all causation will cease. Do not give birth to false thoughts and distinctions. There are no 'people' and there is no 'self'. There are no 'desire' or 'anger'. No 'hate', no 'love'. No 'victory', no 'defeat'. Simply abandon these like the many types of false thoughts. The nature of the self is, from the beginning pure. This is practicing bodhi, Dharma, Buddha, etc. If you do not understand this way of thinking, then all of your study, diligent and suffering practices, eating vegetables and wearing cloth; these will not allow you to know your own mind. These are to be deemed evil practices. Such practices without exception lead to the creation of Maras, non-Buddhists, and all of the water and earth spirits. Such practices as these; how could they be of any benefit?"</p>	<p>Even humanity, divinities, hells, the six paths, and titans all depend on mental construction. Right now just learn to have no thoughts, stop all focus on objects at once, do not conceive false ideas and imaginings, and there is no other or self, no greed or hostility, no hatred or love, no winning or losing. Just get rid of so many kinds of false conceptions — essential nature is originally pure. This is called cultivation, enlightenment, Dharma, Buddha, and so on. If you don't understand what this means, even if you study extensively and toil diligently cultivating practice, eating from trees and wearing plants, without knowing your own mind, it's all called aberrant practice. All of it produces celestial devils, outsiders, and spirits of water and land—what is the benefit of such practices?</p>

Part 29

志公云。本體是自心作。那得文字中求。如今但識自心。息却思惟。妄想塵勞自然不生。淨名云。唯置一床寢疾而臥。心不起也。如今臥疾。攀緣都息。妄想歇滅。即是菩提。如今若心裏紛紛不定。任爾學到三乘四果十地諸位。合殺祇向凡聖中坐。諸行盡歸無常。勢力皆有盡期。猶如箭射於空。力盡還墮。却歸生死輪迴。如斯修行不解佛意。虛受辛苦。豈非大錯。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Chih Kung says: 'Our bodies are the creations of our own minds.' But how can one expect to gain such knowledge. from books? If only you could comprehend the nature of your own Mind and put an end to discriminatory thought, there would naturally be no room for even a grain of error to arise. Ch'ing Ming expressed this in a verse:</p> <p>Just spread out a mat For reclining quite flat— When thought's tied to a bed Like a sick man growing worse. All karma will cease And all fancies disperse. THAT's what is meant by Bodhi!</p> <p>As it is, so long as your mind is subject to the slightest movement of thought, you will remain engulfed in the error of taking 'ignorant' and 'Enlightened' for separate states; this error will persist regardless of your vast knowledge of the Mahayana or of your ability to pass through the 'Four Grades of Sainthood' and the "Ten Stages of Progress Leading to Enlightenment'. For all these pursuits belong to what is ephemeral; even the most strenuous of your efforts is doomed to fail, just as an arrow shot never so high into the air must inevitably fall spent to the ground.</p>	<p>"Zhigong said, 'The original essence is created in your own mind.' How could this be sought in the written word (the sutras)? Now, only know your own mind. Cut-off thinking. In this way, false thoughts and defilements will not arise. Jingming says, '</p> <p>Only lay out a bed for sleeping while sick and lie down.' Thoughts do not arise. Now as an invalid, climbing over these objects (of the mind) comes to a rest, and false thoughts extinguish. This is bodhi.</p> <p>Now, if your mind is cluttered with uncertainty, it is of no matter how much you study and go through the three vehicles, the four fruits, the ten stages, and all the ranks. These will all be reduced to sitting between commoner and sage. All practices return to impermanence. All of their energy has a time of extinction. Just like an arrow shot into the sky, its power exhausts and it falls.</p>	<p>Master Zhi said, "The fundamental essence is the doing of your own mind—how can you find it in writings?" Right now just recognize your own mind and cease thinking—false ideas and toil over sense objects will naturally not arise. In Vimalakirti's Advice it says</p> <p>he only placed a bed to lie resting while ill—this means thoughts do not arise. It is like when someone lies sick, and clinging to mental objects ceases, and errant thoughts die out—this is enlightenment.</p> <p>Now if there is a flurry going on unsettled in your mind, even if you study the Three Vehicles, four fruitions, and the ranks of the ten stages, in sum you're just sitting in the midst of ordinary and holy; all actions wind up impermanent. All powers have an end, like arrows shot into the air, falling once their energy is spent —</p>

JB	JL	TC
So, in spite of them, you are certain to find yourselves back on the wheel of life and death. Indulging in such practices implies your failure to understand the Buddha's real meaning. Surely the endurance of so much unnecessary suffering is nothing but a gigantic error, isn't it?	They will bring you back to the cycle of life and death. If you practice, but do not understand the Buddha's meaning, then there will be bitter suffering. How is this not a great error?"	you return to the cycle of birth and death. If you cultivate practice like this, not understanding Buddha's meaning, you suffer in vain— isn't that a big mistake?

●—————●

Part 30

志公云。未逢出世明師。枉服大乘法藥。如今但一切時中行住坐臥但學無心。亦無分別亦無依倚。亦無住著。終日任運騰騰。如癡人相似。世人盡不識爾。爾亦不用教人識不識。心如頑石頭都無縫罅。一切法透汝心不入。兀然無著。如此始有少分相應。透得三界境過名為佛出世。

JB	JL	TC
Chih Kung says elsewhere: 'If you do not meet with a teacher able to transcend the worlds, you will go on swallowing the medicine of the Mahayana Dharma quite in vain.' Were you now to practise keeping your minds motionless at all times, whether walking, standing, sitting or lying; concentrating entirely upon the goal of no thought-creation, no duality, no reliance on others and no attachments; just allowing all things to take their course the whole day long, as though you were too ill to bother; unknown to the world; innocent of any urge to be known or unknown to others;	"Zhigong says, 'If you do not come across a world-transcending teacher, you will take the Dharma-medicine of the Great Vehicle in vain.' Now at all times, whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, you should only study no-mind. Also practice non-differentiation, non-reliance, and non-attachment. All day, accept movement and rising. Thus, like a fool in appearance. All of the people in the world do not know you. You also have no use for teaching others awareness or ignorance.	Right now just learn to have no thought, no imagining, no dependence, and no dwelling, at all times, whatever you are doing, buoyant all day long whatever goes on, as if you were an imbecile. Worldly people will not know you at all; and you don't need to get people to know or not know either.

JB	JL	TC
<p>with your minds like blocks of stone that mend no holes—then all the Dharmas¹ would penetrate your understanding through and through. In a little while you would find yourselves firmly unattached. Thus, for the first time in your lives, you would discover your reactions to phenomena decreasing and, ultimately, you would pass beyond the Triple World; and people would say that a Buddha had appeared in the world.</p>	<p>With a mind like a stubborn stone without cracks or fissures, all the dharmas that pervade your mind will not enter. So unattached in this way, you may begin to have some associations. Throughout the three realms you will be called 'a buddha who has transcended the world.'</p>	<p>With a mind like a rock, with no gap at all, nothing whatever can penetrate into your mind, which remains unmoved, without attachment, When you are like this, only then will you have a bit of accord. Passing beyond the objects of the three realms is called Buddha emerging in the world.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- 1 Laws of Existence or Universal Laws.



Part 31

不漏心相名為無漏智。不作人天業。不作地獄業。不起一切心。諸緣盡不生。即此身心是自由人。不是一向不生。祇是隨意而生。經云。菩薩有意生身是也。忽若未會無心。著相而作者。皆屬魔業。乃至作淨土佛事。並皆成業。乃名佛障。障汝心故。被因果管束。去住無自由分。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Pure and passionless knowledge¹ implies putting an end to the ceaseless flow of thoughts and images, for in that way you stop creating the karma that leads to rebirth—whether as gods or men or as sufferers in hell. Once every sort of mental process has ceased, not a particle of karma is formed. Then, even in this life, your minds and bodies become those of a being completely liberated. Supposing that this does not result in freeing you immediately from further rebirths, at the very least you will be assured of rebirth in accordance with your own wishes.</p>	<p>"If you do not taint the mind as it appears, this is called 'untainted wisdom'. You will not create human and god karma. You will not create hell-being karma. You will not give rise to any thoughts. All conditions will extinguish and you will not be reborn. This very body and mind are a self-created person. If the process of rebirth is not completely stopped, then you will be reborn as you wish.</p>	<p>Not being infected by mental descriptions is called untainted wisdom. Not creating human or celestial karma, not creating hellish karma, not producing any thoughts, when all entanglements end and do not occur, then this body and mind are a free person. One is not completely unborn, but is just born at will.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>The sutra declares: 'Bodhisattvas are re-embodied into whatsoever forms they desire.' But were they suddenly to lose the power of keeping their minds free from conceptual thought, attachment to form would drag them back into the phenomenal world, and each of those forms would create for them a demon's karma! With the practices of the Pure Land Buddhists it is also thus, for all these practices are productive of karma; hence, we may call them Buddha-hindrances! As they would obstruct your Mind, the chain of causation would also grapple you fast, dragging you back into the state of those as yet unliberated.²</p>	<p>The sutra says, 'Bodhisattvas are born into the bodies that they wish to be born into.'¹ This is so. They instant that they lose their understanding of no-mind, they will become attached to forms and create them. All of this belongs to Mara-karma. This includes the Pure Land Buddhist' activities. Even these produce karma, so they are to be called 'Buddha-hinderances'. Because they hinder your mind, you will be turned by karmic restraints and there will be no freedom to go and reside in the Pure Land."</p>	<p>This is what is meant by the scriptural term "intentionally produced body." If you don't understand freedom from thoughts, and act with fixation on appearances, all of it belongs to the work of devils. Even if you do Pure Land Buddhist ceremonies, all of them become karma. This is called the obstacle of Buddha, because it blocks your mind; constricted by cause and effect, you have no freedom to leave or stay.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) Enlightenment.
- [2](#) 'The Pure Land Sect advocates utter reliance upon Amida, Buddha of Boundless Light and Life, holding that perfect faith will ensure rebirth in a paradise where preparation for final Enlightenment follows under ideal conditions. Zen Buddhists, on the contrary, often claim that reliance on Amida Buddha is the negation of that self-reliance which Gautama Buddha taught to be the only sure path. Nevertheless, the Pure Land doctrine PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD is not truly opposed to Zen, since the real meaning of Amida is the Buddha-Substance innate in man, and rebirth into his paradise implies the awakening of the individual's mind to its Oneness with the Buddha-Substance.

JL:

- [1](#) It is not entirely clear which sutra is being alluded to here. It is possible that this is a reference to the Lanka-avatara Sutra, which does contain a discussion of the types of "will-body" that can be taken by a bodhisattva (Suzuki 118-119)

Part 32

所以菩提等法。本不是有。如來所說。皆是化人猶如黃葉為金權止小兒啼。故實無有法名阿耨菩提。如今既會此意。何用區區。但隨緣消舊業。更莫造新殃。心裏明明。所以舊時見解總須捨却。淨名云。除去所有。法華云。二十年中常令除糞。祇是除去心中作見解處。又云。蠲除戲論之糞。所以如來藏本自空寂并不停留一法。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Hence all dharmas such as those purporting to lead to the attainment of Bodhi possess no reality. The words of Gautama Buddha were intended merely as efficacious expedients for leading men out of the darkness of worse ignorance. It was as though one pretended yellow leaves were gold to stop the flow of a child's tears. Samyak-Sambodhi¹ is another name for the realization that there are no valid Dharmas. Once you understand this, of what use are such trifles to you?</p> <p>According harmoniously with the conditions of your present lives, you should go on, as opportunities arise, reducing the store of old karma laid up in previous lives; and above all, you must avoid building up a fresh store of retribution for yourselves! Mind is filled with radiant clarity, so cast away the darkness of your old concepts.</p>	<p>"Therefore, bodhi and all the various dharmas are originally non-existent. This is so with the Tathagata's words. All of what he said was in order to transform people just as yellow leaves are exchanged for gold as an expedient to stop a child's crying. This is because there is really no dharma called anuttarasamyaksambodhi.¹ Now that you understand in this way, of what use are trivial matters?</p> <p>Just accord with your conditions and exhaust your old karma and do not create new calamity. The mind contains brightness. Therefore, your old levels of understanding must all be abandoned.</p>	<p>Now if you have understood what this means, what is the need for a variety?</p> <p>Just dissolve old karma according to conditions, and don't make new trouble, so there is clarity in your mind. Therefore former opinionated understanding should all be discarded.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>Ch'ing Ming says: 'Rid yourselves of everything.' 'The sentence in the Lotus Sutra concerning a whole twenty years spent in the shovelling away of manure symbolizes the necessity of driving from your minds whatever tends to the formation of concepts. In another passage, the same sutra identifies the pile of dung which has to be carted away with metaphysics and sophistry. Thus the 'Womb of the Tathagatas' is intrinsically a voidness and silence containing no individualized dharmas of any sort or kind.</p>	<p>Jingming says, 'Get rid of your possessions.'² The Lotus Sutra says, 'Twenty years spent removing dung'³ This was only the removal of viewpoints from within the mind. The Lotus Sutra also says, 'Eliminate the dung of silly talk.'⁴ Thus, the tathagatagarbha is itself originally empty and silent. It does not allow a single dharma to remain."</p>	<p>Vimalakirti's Advice says, "Clear away your holdings." The Lotus sutra speaks of constantly having waste removed for twenty years. This is just getting rid of the formation of opinionated understanding in your mind. It is also called cleaning out the waste of specious argument. Therefore the treasury of realization is originally naturally empty and silent, not retaining anything at all.</p>

Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) Supreme Knowledge.

JL:

- [1](#) The Diamond Sutra
- [2](#) Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra
- [3](#) The Lotus Sutra
- [4](#) The Lotus Sutra. The full line in the Kumarajiva's Chinese translation of the Lotus Sutra reads, [...]. This line in the Lotus Sutra is translated by Leon Hurvitz as, "clear away the dung of frivolous assertions concerning the dharmas (Hurvitz 89).

Part 33

故經云。諸佛國土亦復皆空。若言佛道是修學而得。如此見解全無交涉。或作一機一境揚眉動目。祇對相當便道契會也。得證悟禪理也。忽逢一人。不解便道。都無所知對他。若得道理。心中便歡喜。若被他折伏不如他。便即心懷惆悵。如此心意學禪。有何交涉。

JB	JL	TC
<p>And therefore says the sutra: "The entire realms of all the Buddhas are equally void."¹ Though others may talk of the Way of the Buddhas as something to be reached by various pious practices and by sutra-study, you must have nothing to do with such ideas.</p> <p>A perception, sudden as blinking, that subject and object are one, will lead to a deeply mysterious wordless understanding; and by this understanding will you awake to the truth of Zen.</p> <p>When you happen upon someone who has no understanding, you must claim to know nothing. He may be delighted by his discovery of some 'way to Enlightenment'; yet if you allow yourselves to be persuaded by him, you will experience no delight at all, but suffer both sorrow and disappointment. What have such thoughts as his to do with the study of Zen? Even if you do obtain from him some trifling 'method', it will only be a thought-constructed dharma having nothing to do with Zen.</p>	<p>"For this reason, the sutra says, 'All of the Buddha-lands are also empty.'¹ If it is said that the Buddha-Dharma is attained through practice and study, then such a level of understanding as this has no association with the Buddha-Dharma.</p> <p>It achieves the creation of one mental disposition and one sense object in the raising of a brow or the movement of an eye. You are only partially correct and say that you have an understanding and have obtained proof of awakening to Chan principles.</p> <p>If you encounter someone who does not understand the expedient Path, then say to him that you have no knowledge. If he attains an understanding of the principles of the Path, he will have great joy in his mind. If you are turned by him and subdued, you will not be as good as him. Your mind will be filled with despair. What does a meaning such as this have to do with the study of Chan? You may obtain even a small portion of a principle of the Path and some mental factors. The path of Chan has nothing to do with any of these."</p>	<p>So scripture says the lands of the Buddhas are also all empty. If you say the enlightenment of Buddha is attained by cultivation and learning, such a view is irrelevant.</p> <p>Some act out one potential, one state, raising eyebrows and rolling eyes, and if the response corresponds they say you have understood, realized the principle of Chan.</p> <p>If they meet someone who doesn't understand, they say he knows nothing at all. Those who are told they get the principle are delighted, but if they are repudiated as not up to snuff, they are disappointed. What relevance does such conceptual study of Chan have? Even if you understand a bit of principle, you've only gotten a mental state—it has nothing to do with the Way of Chan.</p>

Notes:

- JB:**
- 1 The implication is that the Western Paradise of Amida Buddha is as void as the rest of them.

- JL:**
- 1 This quote is from the Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra. The quote occurs during an exchange between Vimalakirti and Manjusri.

Part 34

任汝會得少許道理。即得個心所法。禪道總沒交涉。所以達摩面壁。都不令人有見處。故云忘機是佛道。分別是魔境。此性縱汝迷時亦不失。悟時亦不得。天真自性本無迷悟。盡十方虛空界元來是我一心體。縱汝動用造作。豈離虛空。虛空本來無大無小。無漏無為。無迷無悟。了了見無一物。亦無人亦無佛。絕纖毫的量是無依倚無粘綴。一道清流是自性。無生法忍何有擬議。真佛無口不解說法。真聽無耳其誰聞乎。珍重。

JB	JL	TC
<p>Thus, Bodhidharma sat rapt in meditation before a wall; he did not seek to lead people into having opinions.</p> <p>Therefore it is written: "To put out of mind even the principle from which action springs is the true teaching of the Buddhas, while dualism belongs to the sphere of demons.' Your true nature is something never lost to you even in moments of delusion, nor is it gained at the moment of Enlightenment. It is the Nature of the Bhutatathata. In it is neither delusion nor right understanding. It fills the Void everywhere and is intrinsically of the substance of the One Mind. How, then, can your mind-created objects exist outside the Void? The Void is fundamentally without spacial dimensions, passions, activities, delusions or right understanding.</p>	<p>"Therefore, Bodhidharma's wall-gazing. He did not command people to have any viewpoints.</p> <p>This is why it is said that forgetting mental dispositions is the path of the buddhas, while distinctions are Mara-vishayas¹. Even while you are deluded this nature will not diminish. At the time of awakening, it will not gain anything. Naturally, your own nature is from the beginning without delusion or awakening. It is my One Mind essence that fundamentally fills the ten directions and the sky realm. Even if you were to engage in creation, how could you be away from the empty sky? The empty sky is fundamentally without the concepts of 'great' and 'small', It is untainted and unconditioned. It is non-delusion and non-awakening.</p>	<p>Therefore Bodhidharma's facing a wall does not let people have any views.</p> <p>So it is said that forgetting mental machinations is the Way of Buddha, while imagination is the realm of devils. The essential nature is not lost even when you're deluded, and it is not attained when you're enlightened. Natural inherent nature fundamentally has no delusion or enlightenment. The whole realm of space is basically the body of one's own single mind. Whatever you do, how could it be apart from space? Space basically has no great or small, no affliction and no fabrication, no delusion and no enlightenment.</p>

JB	JL	TC
<p>You must clearly understand that in it there are no things, no men and no Buddhas; for this Void contains not the smallest hairsbreadth of anything that can be viewed spacially; it depends on nothing and is attached to nothing. It is all-pervading, spotless beauty; it is the self-existent and uncreated Absolute. Then how can it even be a matter for discussion that the REAL Buddha has no mouth and preaches no Dharma, or that REAL hearing requires no ears, for who could hear it? Ah, it is a jewel beyond all price.¹</p>	<p>The cleaver see that there are no 'things'. There are also no 'humans' and no 'buddhas', down to even the tiniest width of a hair. It is unattached, unbound. The monk of the One Path is by his own nature accepting of this non-arising of dharmas. Why the hesitation? The true Buddha is without a mouth and does not explain his dharma teaching. True listening is without ears. Who is there to hear? Take care of yourselves."²</p>	<p>Clearly it has not a single thing, no person, and no Buddha, utterly no definite measurement. No dependence, no sticking, a single clear flow—this is inherent recognition of nonorigination; what hesitation is there? The real Buddha has no mouth and cannot expound a teaching; real hearing has no ear—who listens?</p>

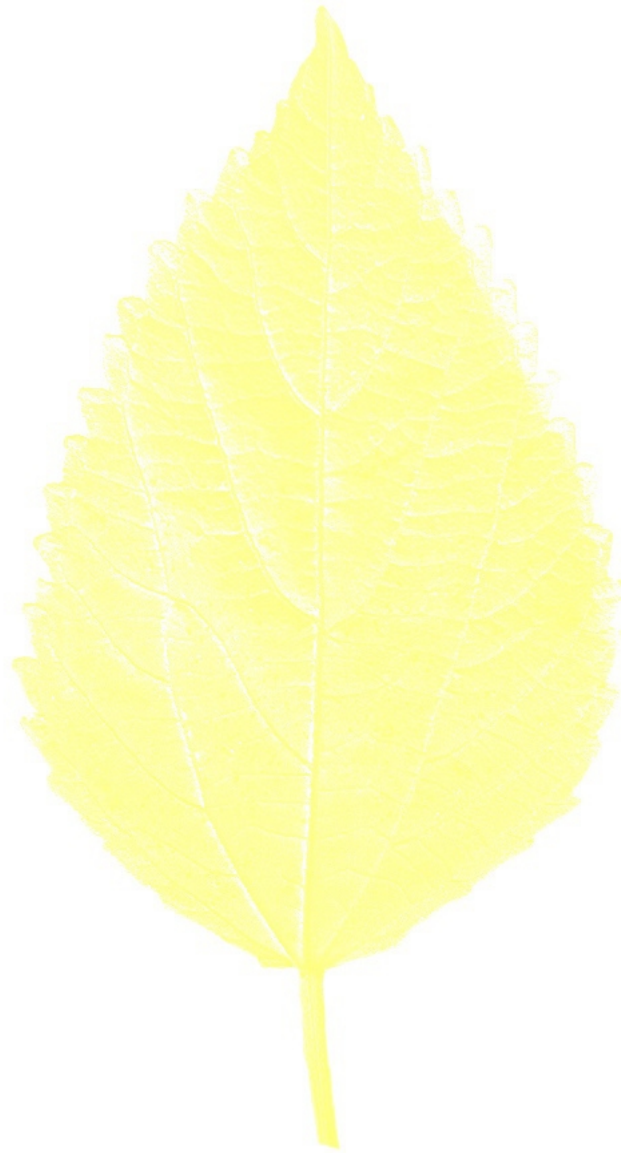
Notes:

JB:

- [1](#) This passage, in which the Master comes as near as possible to describing the indescribable, using terms as 'all-pervading spotless beauty', should be sufficient answer to those critics of Buddhist 'pessimism' who suppose that the doctrine of ŚGnyata or voidness equates Nirvana with total extinction.

JL:

- [1](#) Misleading sense objects.
- [2](#) Zhenzhong was a phrase commonly used at the end of an "ascending the hall" sermon (Sasaki 127-128)



Afterward

"Why does anybody think giving children leaves made out of gold is the way to go?"

In one view it relates to what is said in chapter Twenty-Six: On the Action of the Child from the Mahaparinirvana Sutra which tells:

"Also, we say "child's action". When a child cries and weeps, the parents take up the yellow leaf of bitter willow and say to the child: "Don't cry, don't cry! I shall now give you some gold!" The child sees this, thinks it is true gold, and stops crying. But this yellow leaf is in actual fact not gold. [...]

"O good man! Just as a child thinks of gold in regard to what is not gold, so do things stand with the Tathagata. In regard to the impure, he talks of the pure. As the Tathagata is "Paramartha-satya" itself, there is nothing false here as in the case of the child that thinks what is not a cow or horse is a cow or horse. If beings conceive of the true Way in what is not the Way, the Tathagata will also speak about this non-Way and make it into the "Way". In the non-Way, there is, truth to tell, no Way. Only as there is the smallest bit of causal relations, he talks of the non-Way and says that it is the Way.

This is as with the child who thinks that the wooden man and woman are [a real] man and woman. It is the same with the Tathagata. Knowing what is no being, he speaks of a being. But truth to tell, there can be no thought of a being. If the Buddha-Tathagata says that there is no being, all beings may gain the wrong view. For this reason, the Tathagata says that beings exist. The person who entertains the thought of a being in a being cannot destroy the thought of a being. Any being who destroys the thought of a being gains Great Nirvana. When one thus gains Nirvana, one ceases crying. This is a child's action. O good man!"

However, something interesting to note is that it may relate to the Chinese spiritual medicine of the time:

"In the region of Shanbei (northern Shaanxi), if a household has an infant who cries loudly at night, people will often invite someone to draw a talisman on yellow-bordered paper. The process involves drawing a donkey hung upside down and attaching it to a tree, with a spell written beside it:

"The donkey, upside down, is surnamed Zhou. The child cries at night without shame. If it cries again tonight, a steel knife will sever the demon donkey's head."

This donkey is colloquially known as the "upside-down donkey" (颠倒驴), symbolizing the reversal of day and night, and is believed to break the spell of a child's night crying. The donkey has a close connection with the local farmers and, in this case, has been adapted in folklore as the spirit causing the child's disturbance."

In closing I will share what Yuan Wu said about the gold from J.C. Cleary and Thomas Cleary's translation titled: "Zen Letters: Teachings of Yuanwu" in the section called: "Move with a Mighty Flow":

"Once you merge your tracks into the stream of Zen, you spend your days silencing your mind and studying with your whole being. You realize that this Great Cause is not obtained from anyone else but is just a matter of taking up the task boldly and strongly, and making constant progress. Day by day you shed your delusions, and day by day you enhance your clarity of mind. Your potential for enlightened perception is like fine gold that is to be refined hundreds and thousands of times.

What is essential for getting out of the dusts, what is basic for helping living creatures, is that you must penetrate through freely in all directions and arrive at peace and security free from doubt and attain the stage of great potential and great function.

This work is located precisely in your own inner actions. It is just a matter of being in the midst of the interplay of the myriad causal conditions every day, in the confusion of the red dusts, amid favorable and adverse circumstances and gain and loss, appearing and disappearing in their midst, without being affected and "turned around" by them, but on the contrary, being able to transform them and "turn them around."

When you are leaping with life and water cannot wet you, this is your own measure of power. You reach an empty, solidified silence, but there is no duality between emptiness and form or silence and noise. You equalize all sorts of wondrous sayings and perilous devices and absolute perceptions; ultimately there is no gain or loss, and it is all your own to use.

When you go on "grinding and polishing" like this for a long time, you are liberated right in the midst of birth and death, and you look upon the world's useless reputation and ruinous profit as mere dust in the wind, as a dream, as a magical apparition, as an optical illusion. Set free, you pass through the world. Isn't this what it means to be a great saint who has emerged from the dusts of sensory attachments?"

Resources and Acknowledgments

Cover Image: Ilham Ramadhan

Chinese Text: buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw and cbeta.org

Translations:

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About White Lotus

InfinityOracle is the username I chose for reddit, and on Discord I started going by the name White Lotus, based on an image I used for my profile picture. It was from reddit and Discord that my interest in Zen deepened and I started the journey that led to the creation of this book. It is offered to the community free for the purpose of study and discussion. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this project, and thank you for reading.