

No-Gate Gateway

The Original Wu-Men Kuan

Translated by David Hinton



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INTRODUCTION

SINCE ITS BEGINNINGS in fourth-century C.E. China, Ch'an (Japanese: Zen) Buddhism has produced a rich literary tradition. This is hardly surprising, since Ch'an monks were generally part of the artist-intellectual class: they were classically trained in the arts, and they associated broadly with artist-intellectuals who themselves generally practiced Ch'an in some form. The Ch'an monastery was a permeable intellectual center, allowing fluid movement in and out. Monks often visited artist-intellectuals, and those artist-intellectuals often visited monasteries to see friends, practice, and consult Ch'an masters. In addition, when traveling far from home, they often stopped at monasteries, which functioned as inns. These artist-intellectuals saw Ch'an not as a religion, but as a philosophical practice that cultivates profound insight into the empirical nature of consciousness and Cosmos, and their creative work was deeply influenced by Ch'an. In fact, poetry, calligraphy, and painting were broadly considered forms of Ch'an practice and teaching.

Ch'an monks also practiced these arts. They produced a large body of poetry, a literary form that was pervasive in the culture and also perfectly suited to the quick, deep insights of Ch'an. But the Ch'an tradition is carried primarily in prose works by and about Ch'an masters, records of their lives and teachings. These records are also typified by poetic distillation: enigmatic sayings and wild antics intended to upend reason and tease the mind past the limitations of logical thought (the reasons for this will become clear later). As such, they operate with poetic wildness and immediacy, rather than the usual explanatory or utilitarian use of language. Ch'an teachers began drawing especially revealing moments from these records, moments that distill the essential insights of Ch'an, and assigning them as

puzzles for students to ponder. These scraps of poem and story came to be known as *kung-an* (公案, now widely known in its Japanese pronunciation: *koan*).

Kung-an means a “court case,” and more literally a “public case.” The term was adopted to the Ch’an situation because masters originally conducted *kung-an* training in “public,” when the entire monastic community was gathered together; because a *kung-an* is a factual situation that needs to be understood accurately, like a court case (although understanding here demands responding within the enigma, at a level that precedes thought and analysis); and finally, because each *kung-an* represents a kind of precedent to which practitioners can refer. Hence the translation adopted here: “sangha-case” (*sangha* meaning “a Buddhist community”). Eventually, these sangha-cases were gathered into collections used for teaching. *No-Gate Gateway* (無門關) is perhaps the most widely used of these collections, and it is one of the great masterpieces of Chinese literature.

The author of *No-Gate Gateway* is No-Gate Prajñā-Clear (Wu-men Hui-kai: 無門慧開), a quirky Ch’an master who lived from 1183 to 1260 C.E., during the Sung Dynasty. The Sung was a golden age for poetry and calligraphy, and it was the apex of landscape painting. In this rich cultural age, No-Gate received transmission and then wandered from temple to temple as a disheveled Ch’an master: hair and beard long and wild, clothes unkempt, always participating in menial chores and fieldwork. In spite of his humble wandering, he eventually became so widely known as a teacher that in 1246, at the age of sixty-four, he was asked by the emperor to found a new monastery near the capital. It was a large monastery, and No-Gate served as a busy abbot there for about a decade. He then retired to live out his final years at a small monastery in the mountains, where at the age of seventy-eight he “followed the vanishing way of things” (as death is described in one of the sangha-cases here).

Composed in 1228, during No-Gate’s years of wandering, *No-Gate Gateway* is usually described as a collection of forty-eight sangha-cases. But it is, in fact, a carefully constructed literary/philosophical

text that uses the historical sangha-cases for its own ends. Each of its forty-eight chapters begins with a sangha-case drawn from those records of Ch'an masters, but No-Gate often reshapes and distills those original stories to create the most piercing poetic impact possible. Each chapter also contains No-Gate's reflections on the sangha-case, consisting of a brief prose "comment" and a *gatha* (sutra-poem). These reflections are themselves like sangha-cases and are generally no less profound than the sangha-case itself.

Most notably, perhaps, No-Gate continually criticizes and ridicules the masters, undermining their teaching. He acknowledges their mastery and insight, chooses a tale that illustrates that insight at the deepest possible level, and right there he's created the perfect place to dismantle their teaching, thereby redoubling the original sangha-case's deconstruction of logical thought and explanation. This is the essential methodology of the book: to complicate and deepen the disorientation, to add this second intensifying layer to the sangha-case strategy of seeing through thought and explanation. It is a distinctive literary form, combining zany storytelling with poetry and philosophical prose, the separate elements of each chapter resonating with one another in revealing ways. This main body of the book is framed by a Foreword and Afterword in which No-Gate establishes the philosophical framework through which readers can most deeply approach the sangha-cases themselves.



No-Gate Gateway is inevitably presented in the West as a teaching text, wherein contemporary Zen masters append large commentaries to each chapter. However valuable these commentaries may be in their own right, they dwarf the text itself, domesticating it and diluting the immediate poetic impact that is so crucial to the book's literary strategy of transforming its readers through surprise and sudden penetrating insight that is beyond logic and explanation. No-Gate's comments on the sangha-cases are quite different, for they are themselves sangha-cases incisive enough to undermine and confuse the original sangha-cases or even the Ch'an tradition itself. They are the antithesis of explanatory commentaries. No-Gate was, after all, a patriarch in the Lin-chi (Japanese: Rinzai) school of Ch'an, the school

that depended least on explanation, preferring instead wild antics and sudden paradox for transmitting its insights. And in the Afterword he speaks of “adding nothing superfluous.” By presenting only the text itself in its native philosophical context, this translation tries to respect the book’s inherent value as a self-sufficient literary work, to render No-Gate’s spirit of poetic immediacy, for that is the kind of direct impact ancient Ch’an masters like No-Gate believed could awaken consciousness.

No-Gate Gateway’s native philosophical context extends back over two millennia prior to its composition. And yet it remains remarkably contemporary to us, for as we will see it is an empirically grounded spirituality that weaves human consciousness into landscape and Cosmos at profound levels. In its radical essence, Ch’an is a formalized philosophical practice cultivating a spiritual ecology that is an extension of Taoism, the empirically based spiritual philosophy that had shaped Chinese intellectual life for over a thousand years before Buddhism arrived in China. Ch’an originated in the fourth century through an amalgamation of these two traditions: Taoism and *dhyāna* (meaning “meditation,” and rendered in Chinese as *Ch’an*) Buddhism. It was widely considered by artist-intellectuals as a form of Taoist thought refined and reconfigured by Buddhist meditation practice. And *No-Gate Gateway* is especially notable in Ch’an literature for the way it explicitly grounds Ch’an practice in the deepest levels of Taoist insight, levels we can only call ontological and cosmological.

Virtually all aspects of Ch’an’s conceptual framework are anticipated in Taoism’s seminal texts: *I Ching*, *Tao Te Ching*, *Chuang Tzu*. Taoist thought is best described as a spiritual ecology, the central concept of which is Tao, or Way. *Tao* originally meant “way,” as in “pathway” or “roadway,” a meaning it has kept. But Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, the seminal Taoist thinkers, redefined it as a generative cosmological process, an ontological path*Way* by which things come into existence, evolve through their lives, and then go out of existence, only to be transformed and reemerge in a new form. To understand Tao, we must approach it at its deepest ontological and

cosmological level, where the distinction between Absence (無) and Presence (有) arises.

Presence is simply the empirical universe, which the ancients described as the ten thousand things in constant transformation, and Absence is the generative void from which this ever-changing realm of Presence perpetually emerges. Absence is the more foundational of the two principles, and its generative and dynamic nature is reflected in its etymological source as the pictograph of a woman dancing, her swirling movements enhanced by foxtails streaming out from her hands: . This nature was felt throughout the centuries, still alive in an expressive rendering of the ideogram 無 by Huang Ting-chien (as seen on the cover of this book), a near contemporary of Wu-men's who was also a Ch'an master. One of the great masters of Chinese calligraphy, Huang here renders the four vertical elements of the graph as alive and organic, like stalks of grain with heads nodding under the weight of seed-clusters. He brings them together at the bottom, below ground, as if they are rooted there. And fire is what they are rooted in! The dancer's foxtails had evolved into those four horizontal dots, which are an abbreviated form of 火, the stylized version of this early pictographic rendering of flame: .

Way can be understood as the generative process through which all things arise and pass away as Absence burgeons forth into the great transformation of Presence. This is simply an ontological description of natural process, and it is perhaps most immediately manifest in the seasonal cycle: the pregnant emptiness of Absence in winter, Presence's burgeoning forth in spring, the fullness of its flourishing in summer, and its dying back into Absence in autumn. There is another Taoist term for this cosmological process, one which also appears in *No-Gate Gateway*: *tzu-jan* (自然). The literal meaning of *tzu-jan* is "self-ablaze." From this comes "self-so" or "the of-itself." But it is best translated as "occurrence appearing of itself," for it is meant to emphasize the particularity and self-sufficiency—the *thusness*—of the ten thousand things that make up the generative process of Tao and its cosmology of Absence and Presence.

Sage wisdom in ancient China meant understanding the deep nature of consciousness and Cosmos, how they are woven together into a single fabric, an understanding that enables us to dwell as an organic part of Tao's generative cosmological process. The cultivation of this dwelling took many forms, all of which involved a deep engagement with landscape, which was seen as the open door to realization because it is where Tao's process of transformation was most majestically and immediately visible. Ancient artist-intellectuals lived whenever possible as recluses in the mountains, wandered there where that cosmological process could be experienced in the most immediate possible way. All of the arts were considered ways to cultivate that dwelling. Calligraphy was considered a way of enacting the dynamic energy of the Cosmos. Poetry and painting also embodied that energy, and they took landscape as their deep subject matter. And finally, that dwelling was the central concern of Ch'an practice: both meditation and sangha-case practice. Ch'an's essential nature as landscape practice will become clear below; but for the moment, it is perhaps sufficient to mention that Ch'an monasteries were typically located in remote mountains, and Ch'an masters leading those monasteries generally took the names of those mountains as their own because they so deeply identified with them. What's more, the ancient meaning of *ch'an*, before it was chosen to translate the Sanskrit *dhyana* ("meditation"), was "sacrifice to rivers and mountains," *rivers and mountains* being the term we translate "landscape," as in "landscape painting" or "landscape poetry."

Taoist dwelling is, at bottom, No-Gate's primary concern in *No-Gate Gateway*; and indeed, the wilderness cosmology of Absence and Presence is central to the book. Absence (無: *wu*), the more fundamental of the two terms, is the heart of No-Gate's own enlightenment and his teaching. In fact, it is the first word in both the name he took to represent his Ch'an identity and the title of his book: 無門 (Wu-men) and 無門關 (Wu-men Kuan) respectively.

Wu has a double meaning that creates a profound literary/philosophical resonance here in these names, and in the book's celebrated first sangha-case. In addition to meaning

“Absence,” that fundamental cosmological/ontological principle, *wu* is a simple grammatical function word meaning “not.” So on the surface, *Wu-men* means simply “no-gate,” investing the title with the enigmatic and, as will become clear, profound concept of a “no-gate gateway,” a kind of distilled sangha-case. But *wu* must also be read as that generative Absence, transforming “no-gate” into “Absence-gate.” This adds a whole new dimension to the title—*Wu-men Kuan*—for it now means “Absence-gate gateway,” or perhaps “Absence’s gateway.” And that Absence-gate also appears in the first couplet of the four-line *gatha* that ends the book’s Foreword, where Tao (Way) also appears, together with Presence, the other fundamental element of Taoist ontology/cosmology:

The great Way is a single Absence-gate
here on a thousand roads of Presence.



Once through this gateway, you wander
all heaven and earth in a single stride.


This double meaning of *wu* had long been exploited in the philosophical tradition, complicating terms such as *wu-wei* and *wu-sheng*. *Wu-wei* (無為) dates to the earliest levels of Taoist thought and means literally “not/Absence” (*wu*) + “acting” (*wei*). It was a spiritual practice among ancient artist-intellectuals, and it was further cultivated in Ch’an practice. *Wu-wei* means “not acting” in the sense of acting without the metaphysics of self, or of being *absent* when you act. This selfless action is the movement of *tzu-jan* (Tao unfurling as the ten thousand individuated things), so *wu-wei* means acting as an integral part of *tzu-jan*’s spontaneous process of Absence burgeoning forth into Presence, and Presence dying back into Absence. This opens to the deepest level of *wu-wei*’s philosophical complex, where the term’s alternate sense of “Absence” + “acting” means *wu-wei* action is action directly from, or indeed *as*, the ontological source. As Ch’an masters dramatized in their wild antics, behavior that likens them to Chuang Tzu’s zany Taoist sages, to

practice *wu-wei* is to move with the wild energy of the Cosmos itself, energy ancient artist-intellectuals recognized most dramatically in rivers-and-mountains landscapes.

Wu-sheng (無生) plays on the two meanings of *wu* in much the same way as *wu-wei*, to give “not/Absence” (*wu*) + “born/alive” (*sheng*). *Wu-sheng* means “not living” in the sense of living with the metaphysics of self *absent*, hence “selfless living.” This opens to a deeper level in which the term means “Absence born” or “Absence alive,” describing our most essential identity as Absence itself. And finally, *wu-sheng* also means “not born” or “unborn,” describing the fact that we are each one more fleeting form conjured in Tao’s process of perpetual transformation: not just born out of it and returned to it in death, a familiar concept that still assumes a center of identity detached from the Cosmos and its processes, but never *out of it*, totally unborn. Indeed, our fullest identity, being unborn, is Tao itself, and is therefore all and none of earth’s fleeting forms simultaneously.

Gateway (關), the third word in the book’s title, also resonates with ancient Taoist cosmology. Chuang Tzu describes that cosmology like this: “The ten thousand things all emerge from a loom of origins, and they all vanish back into it.” This is a mythological description of the generative Cosmos in constant transformation: Tao, or the process of Presence emerging from Absence. And Chuang Tzu’s loom appears in the title’s third word: 關. There are two pictographic images in 關, the first of which is a gate depicted as a pair of doors mounted on pivots:

 in ancient oracle-bone script, thereafter evolving through intermediary forms like  before reaching its standard form: 門 (the second word of the title). To this gate was added a second image, that of a bolt fixed through iron rings, as in this bronze-inscription form,

which is among the earliest known:  Hence, a gate bolted closed.

But the image was transformed through a kind of associative process, with the bolt and rings becoming the very similar pictograph for silk, showing a pair of cocoons with silk emerging in the form of

three strands that would have been spun into thread: 𦉰. This image was doubled and combined with an element at the bottom depicting a shuttle and cross-thread passing through two strands of silk descending from those cocoons, as in these early forms: 𦉰 and 𦉰. With this, the gates have swung open to reveal a loom beyond.

The ideogram's meaning has undergone a parallel transformation and now emphasizes the sense of a gateway as a site of open communication between two places. This led to abstract meanings, such as "to connect or involve," "related," etc., meanings no doubt reinforced by the loom's image of weaving things together. The ideogram also retained its original sense of a locked gate or barrier, thus creating a range of meaning drawing on the idea of a place you can pass through or be blocked from passing through, exemplified by another common definition: "frontier" or "frontier mountain pass," where there would have been a checkpoint permitting or prohibiting passage. This sense of the place where you pass from human civilization into the wild and foreign unknown suggests the full resonance of the ideogram's loom, for it is nothing other than Chuang Tzu's loom of origins. And indeed, that loom of origins occurs repeatedly in the text of *No-Gate Gateway*.

Sangha-cases are a primary means of resolving what is the most fundamental question for Ch'an practice, and perhaps for human consciousness in general: how to pass through that seemingly closed gateway between us and the nonverbal depths of the loom, which is the gateway between thought and silence, subjective and objective, mind and landscape, self and Cosmos. Sangha-case study reinforces meditation, which is the heart of Ch'an practice, its primary means of understanding the true nature of consciousness. And fundamental to that understanding is moving past the illusory separation between consciousness and Cosmos. In its essence, meditation means sitting quietly and watching thoughts come and go in a field of silent emptiness. From this attention to thought's movement comes meditation's first revelation: that we are not, as a matter of observable fact, our thoughts and memories. That is, we are not that center of identity we assume ourselves to be in our day-to-day lives,

that center of identity defining us as fundamentally separate from the empirical Cosmos. Instead, we are the empty awareness that watches identity rehearsing itself in thoughts and memories relentlessly coming and going.

With experience, the movement of thought during meditation slows enough that we notice each thought emerging from a kind of emptiness, evolving through its transformations, and finally disappearing back into that emptiness. This leads to the realization that the cosmology of Absence and Presence defines consciousness too, thoughts being Presence emerging from and vanishing back into Absence. That is, consciousness is part of the same cosmological tissue as the empirical world, with thoughts emerging from a generative emptiness exactly as the ten thousand things do.

Eventually the stream of thought falls silent, and we inhabit empty consciousness, free of that center of identity. That is, we inhabit the most fundamental nature of consciousness, and that fundamental nature is nothing other than Absence. Here consciousness inhabits the primal Cosmos in the most complete and immediate way, dwelling as integral to the very source of the Cosmos's generative unfolding, for this Absence is not simply the tranquil silence we encounter in meditation, but something much deeper: a dark vastness beyond word and thought, the tumultuous source of life and death.

Ch'an calls this "empty-mind" (空心). 空 is essentially synonymous in the Ch'an literature with *wu*, and the double meaning of *wu* ("not/Absence") is used to describe this empty-mind further as *wu-hsin* (無心): "no-mind," meaning consciousness free of language and thought and memory, the mental apparatus of identity, or "Absence-mind," consciousness in its original-nature as that generative cosmological tissue. But there's more. Hsieh Ling-yün (385–433 C.E.), the great rivers-and-mountains poet, in the earliest surviving Ch'an text, calls this empty-mind "the tranquil mirror, all mystery and shadow," and then continues: "one must become Absence and mirror the whole." "Tranquil," "mirror," "mystery and shadow," "Absence"—this description distills the conceptual world of the *Tao*

Te Ching, and it shares Lao Tzu's intent: to transform immediate experience so that we dwell as integral to landscape and Cosmos. Here, the act of perception becomes a spiritual act: empty-mind mirroring the world, leaving its ten thousand things free of all thought and explanation—utterly simple, utterly themselves, and utterly sufficient. This is a perennial theme in *No-Gate Gateway* (see Key Terms: Eye/Sight), and it is the heart of Ch'an as a landscape practice. In such mirror-deep perception, earth's vast rivers-and-mountains landscapes replace thought and even identity itself, revealing the unity of consciousness and landscape/Cosmos that is the heart of sage-dwelling in ancient China.

So the title's *gateway* is described as having *no gate* because there is not, in fact, any real hindrance to passage. Or more precisely, there is no difference between the two realms, however much the *gateway* of language and identity seem to close consciousness in. Consciousness and landscape are part of the same tissue, so we have always already passed through that gateway. Or indeed, there is *no gate* at all: enlightenment is any time and any place, for that empty-mind is our most essential nature, even if we rarely pause to notice it. But however easy this seems as a concept, it is very difficult to understand in all its depth as a matter of day-to-day experience. Mastering it is the purpose of meditation practice, as we have seen, and also sangha-case practice.

The mental realm of thought and explanation establishes identity's inherent separation from the world. It establishes the things of the world as the *objects* of thought, as ontologically out there and other than us. And it replaces the immediate experience of things in and of themselves with knowledge and explanation of them. This is why No-Gate, in his comment on the first sangha-case, calls our everyday preoccupation with thoughts and ideas and explanations the "mind-road," and goes on to say with remarkable poetic image-making that "if you don't cut off the mind-road, you live a ghost's life, clinging to weeds and trees."

Sangha-cases try to "cut off the mind road." They try to tease mind outside of thought and explanation, and so, to return consciousness

to silence and the more immediate experience possible to empty-mind. That empty-mind silence precludes the distancing of things as objects. Like meditation, sangha-cases establish mind in a relation of mirror-like immediacy, allowing an immediate experience of landscape's ten thousand things in and of themselves, as elemental mystery. And that mirrorlike immediacy reveals that we are ourselves wholly a part of that elemental mystery.

Solutions to sangha-cases always involve responding with a spontaneous immediacy that lies outside any logical analysis; and in sangha-case training, the teacher may push the student toward that goal with enigmatic utterances and outbursts and antics. The correct answer to a sangha-case is whatever emerges spontaneously from that silent emptiness where the logical construction of thoughts has not yet begun, and such answers are only possible when a student has come to dwell in the wholeness of Absence, of *wu*-mind. It is *wu-wei* at the most profound level: "Absence acting." And as such it is a cultivation of that sage-dwelling as an organic part of the great transformation of things. This is also why Ch'an is described as a teaching outside of words and ideas, for meditation and sangha-case practice directly transmit that experience of empty-mind dwelling.

This assumption that insight lies in a kind of silence beyond words and ideas is central to Taoist thought from the beginning. The very first line of the *Tao Te Ching* says: "A Way you can call Way isn't the perennial Way," or alternately "A Way that can be said isn't the perennial Way." So while it is true that Ch'an ends concepts and thought, it does so within the conceptual framework of Taoist ontology/cosmology. Without that framework, silence is a completely different thing, for it lacks the ontological/cosmological depth and resonance.

Such depths are by definition outside language, so the vocabulary attempting to name that generative emptiness proliferated in early Taoist thought. It is a vocabulary of concepts that shift and overlap and blur: Tao, Absence and Presence, *tzu-jan* ("occurrence appearing of itself"), *ch'i* ("breath-force"), inner-pattern, dragon, loom of origins, dark-enigma (see Key Terms for definitions of all these

terms). Continuing the Taoist habit, Ch'an made its own contributions: mind, origin-tissue, Buddha, dharma. And in *No-Gate Gateway*'s first sangha-case, we encounter "Buddha-nature," which becomes another term for empty-mind, or Absence in its form as empty consciousness.

This first sangha-case is widely considered the foundation of sangha-case practice—and so, perhaps the most important sangha-case in the Ch'an tradition—because it forces a direct encounter with Absence and Buddha-nature. And here too the double meaning of 無 (*wu*: "no (not)/Absence") is crucial:

A monk asked Master Visitation-Land: "A dog too has Buddha-nature, no [無]?"

"Not [無]," Visitation-Land replied.

Rendered here in a translation that mimics the original's grammatical structure, this might seem a simple exchange. But *No-Gate*'s Comment says Visitation-Land's "not" is the *no-gate gateway* to Ch'an's ancestral essence. In the American tradition of Zen, Visitation-Land's "not" is taken as a blank denial of meaning-making, which is registered by letting the word remain untranslated, an inexplicable nothing: *mu* (the Japanese pronunciation of *wu*). Hence, something like:

A monk asked Master Visitation-Land: "Does a dog have Buddha-nature?"

"*Mu*," Visitation-Land replied.

This leaves the sangha-case at a generic level of "Zen perplexity." But when this word is seen in its native conceptual context, *No-Gate*'s claim begins to reveal itself in its full richness, for here the meaning of 無 is not just utter negation, but also "Absence."

The monk's question about the dog could have been formulated

differently in the original Chinese. The stark affirm-deny construction, a standard form in Chinese, was clearly chosen because it allows the monk's question to end with the same *wu* that immediately becomes the master's reply. In the question, *wu* would appear to be nothing more than a grammatical function word coming at the end of a sentence ("A dog too has Buddha-nature, no?"), which makes Visitation-Land's *wu* breathtaking, for it suddenly deepens that insignificant *wu* all the way to the source of everything: Absence, that pregnant emptiness from which all things arise.

That seems a large part of how the sangha-case works, and it leads us to realize that "has/have," the seemingly unremarkable word occurring earlier in the question, is in fact 有 (*yu*), which has a double meaning almost the exact opposite of *wu*: "is/has" and "Presence." With this, another version of the monk's question echoes behind the literal: "A dog too Presences Buddha-nature, or Absence?" Once the question is invested with its cosmological depth, Visitation-Land's *wu* dramatically ends thought, leaving empty-mind free to "wander all heaven and earth in a single stride" (as No-Gate says in the poem ending his Foreword).

Absence itself represents the most profound and all-encompassing of sangha-cases, teasing the mind past ideas and explanations at fundamental cosmological levels; and it is indeed the deep subject of *No-Gate Gateway's* first sangha-case, where No-Gate describes it as the great gateway into Ch'an enlightenment. In the sangha-case, a monk is asking about Buddha-nature—the essence of consciousness, our original-nature—and Visitation-Land mysteriously replies: "Absence." The master's response is multifaceted. It is an expression of his mind at that moment, implying the monk should emulate his empty-mind rather than struggle for understanding. It is an enigmatic comment on the question, a description of Buddha-nature. And it is a challenge directed at the monk, insisting that giving up thought and explanation is the only way to fathom Absence—empty-mind in its most profound sense. So the sangha-case asks us to ponder Absence, the realization that our original-nature is that generative emptiness at the heart of the Cosmos. Not simply the tranquil silence we

encounter in meditation, but something much deeper: that dark vastness beyond words and thought, origin of all creation and all destruction.

Nevertheless, No-Gate's Comment advises us: "Don't understand Absence in terms of emptiness, and don't understand it in terms of Presence." Finally, No-Gate's *gatha* says:

A dog, Buddha-nature: the whole
kit and caboodle revealed in a flash.

Think of Presence and Absence,
and you're long lost without a clue.

The dichotomy of Absence and Presence is a crucial element in the puzzle of the Absence sangha-case, offering a way past ideas and concepts at the most fundamental level, a way to dwell as an integral part of Tao's generative ontological/cosmological process. Luckily, the puzzle is not so difficult.

Absence was often referred to as "emptiness" (空 or 虛), the emptiness that appears in No-Gate's Comment, and described as the generative void from which the ten thousand things (Presence) are born and to which they return. Our language and intellectual assumptions have trained us to interpret such terms—*Absence*, *emptiness*, *void*—as a kind of nonmaterial metaphysical realm in contrast to the material realm of Presence. We interpret Absence and Presence as a dualistic pair, in which Presence is the physical universe and Absence is a kind of metaphysical womb from which the physical emerges. But No-Gate would not have recognized any metaphysical dimensions in this dualism, for like all artist-intellectuals in ancient China, he was a thoroughgoing empiricist. And in the empirical reality of the Cosmos there is no metaphysical womb, no pool of pregnant emptiness. Absence is emptiness only in the sense that it is empty of particular forms, only Absence in the sense that it is the absence of particular forms. In normal everyday use, *Absence* (無) means something like "(there is) not," and *Presence*

(有) means “(there) is.” So the concepts of Absence and Presence might almost be translated “formless” and “form,” for they are just two different ways of seeing the ever-generative tissue of reality. And it should also be emphasized that both terms, *Absence* and *Presence*, are primarily verbal in Chinese: hence, that tissue of reality is seen as verbal (rather than static noun), as a tissue that is alive and in motion.

Absence is all existence seen as one undifferentiated tissue, while Presence is that tissue seen in its differentiated forms, the ten thousand things. That undifferentiated existence-tissue is only divided into individual things when we name them. Those names emerge from the undifferentiated tissue exactly like the things they name, and they emerge at exactly the same moment: it is only when the word *mountain* emerges that the mountain itself emerges as an independent entity in the field of existence. The mountain itself exists prior to the naming, of course, but it isn’t separated out as an independent entity. So, when Ch’an practice returns us to empty-mind without words and logical categories, it returns us to dwell as integral to that undifferentiated existence-tissue.

Because it is generative by nature, magically generative, the tissue of existence is perennially shaping itself into the individual forms we know—the ten thousand things—and reshaping itself into other forms: the natural process of change, of life and death, transformation and rebirth. From this it follows that Absence and Presence are not two separate realms of reality, but are instead a single tissue that is all origin through and through. Hence No-Gate’s explanation: “Don’t understand Absence in terms of emptiness, and don’t understand it in terms of Presence.”

This bedrock insight has a long history in China, stretching back to the beginnings of Taoist thought: *Tao Te Ching* and *I Ching*. Wang Pi (226–249 C.E.) was a major philosopher of the Dark-Enigma Learning school, which was crucial in the creation of Ch’an through the reformulation of Buddhism with Taoist thought. Wang wrote the most influential commentary on the *I Ching*, which is the earliest work of Chinese philosophy and the text where Taoist concepts first

appear. Of the remarkable line “In return itself, you can see the very mind of all heaven and earth,” Wang wrote:

Return means turning back to the source-tissue, and that source-tissue is the very mind of all heaven and earth itself. Wherever activity ceases, stillness begins; but there’s no opposition between stillness and movement. Wherever words end, silence begins; but there’s no opposition between silence and words. It’s like this even if the vastness of all heaven and earth is rich with the ten thousand things, rich with the activity of thunder and the movement of wind as they sweep the ten thousand transformations turning through their seasons. The tranquility of Absence, that is the source-tissue. It’s only because activity ceases for us in our everyday earthly lives that we can see the mind of all heaven and earth. If Presence were the mind of all heaven and earth, how could different kinds of things come to exist?

In speaking of “no opposition between stillness and movement,” Wang Pi is describing the unity of Absence and Presence in the empirical Cosmos; and in speaking of “no opposition between silence and words,” he is describing the unity of Absence and Presence in the realm of consciousness. And this same unity of Absence and Presence appears in the first chapter of the *Tao Te Ching* (for which Wang Pi also wrote the standard commentary), the first “mature” statement of the deep ontological/cosmological levels of Taoist philosophy:

In perennial Absence you see mystery,
and in perennial Presence you see appearance.
Though the two are one and the same,
once they arise, they differ in name.

One and the same they’re called *dark-enigma*,
dark-enigma deep within dark-enigma,

gate of all mystery.

Dark-enigma is a philosophical term that attempts the impossible task of naming Absence and Presence as a single existence-tissue, as it is in and of itself before any names, before Absence and Presence give birth to one another, and before all the other words and concepts and distinctions we use to approach the nature of reality. And the “gate of all mystery” is clearly the same gate that appears twice in the title *No-Gate Gateway*: first as the simple *Gate* (門), and second as the primary element in the *Gateway* ideogram: 關.

When No-Gate speaks of “passing through this gate,” he means understanding Absence and Presence together as a single generative tissue; and that transforms things completely, for the fundamental dichotomies structuring everything vanish. Absence and Presence, generative emptiness and the ten thousand things, become a single tissue. Word and silence become a single tissue, as does meaning and meaninglessness, self and Cosmos. Thought and empty-mind become a single tissue. The mirror-deep empty-mind that perceives and the ten thousand things filling perception become a single tissue. And there, suddenly there, we are wholly a part of that dark-enigma: not just in moments of empty-mind enlightenment, but also our thoughts and obsessions and memories as we move through our routine self-involved lives: Buddha-nature as ordinary mind, ordinary mind as Tao.

Concepts at this level blur. Absence is one half of the Presence/Absence dichotomy and, at the same time, the resolution of that dichotomy, for it is the undifferentiated tissue that includes all the differentiation of Presence: landscape’s ten thousand things, individual identity, words. And so, it is hard to distinguish Absence from dark-enigma or Tao. All of which is what No-Gate means when he says Absence is beyond even the most fundamental explanatory distinction: “Absence: don’t think it’s emptiness, and don’t think it’s Presence.” This understanding leads to a remarkable realization: if our original Buddha-nature is Absence, and Absence is the

undifferentiated and generative tissue that includes all of Presence, landscape's ten-thousand things; then our original-nature is itself all of those ten thousand things. Hence the desire among artist-intellectuals and Ch'an monks to inhabit rivers-and-mountains landscapes: for to face such a magisterial landscape is to make one's own internal dimensions magisterial.

It is Absence at this foundational ontological level that is the heart of No-Gate's teaching, as he explains in his comment on the first sangha-case:

What is this gateway of our ancestral patriarchs? It's the simplest of things, a single word: *Absence*. Absence is the sole gateway of our empty-gate household. And so, it's called the *no-gate gateway* into our Ch'an household.

Absence does indeed represent the most profound and all-encompassing of sangha-cases, teasing the mind past ideas and explanations at fundamental cosmological levels, and No-Gate made it his own. Indeed, No-Gate himself struggled for six years with the Absence sangha-case as a student, and that struggle led to his enlightenment. On the day after his awakening, he wrote this poem in the traditional quatrain form, quite remarkable poetically for its audacity in making an entire poem with a single word, *Absence* (無):

無	無	無	無	無
無	無	無	無	無
無	無	無	無	無
無	無	無	無	無

Once this whole conceptual framework is established in No-Gate's Foreword and first sangha-case, the purpose of all the following sangha-cases is to "cut off the mind-road" and establish this identification with Absence as our original-nature, our Buddha-nature. For this is the answer to No-Gate's first sangha-case: not some profound insight, but to inhabit Absence wholly, to make it the

whole of consciousness, to become it, to enact it. A central concern in *No-Gate Gateway*, this identification with Absence is described repeatedly as a “kindred intimacy,” and it explains the adoption of No-Gate as a spiritual name, for its deep meaning is of course Absence-Gate. This identification with Absence, this “kindred intimacy,” entails a radical transformation in everyday life. One acts always as landscape/Cosmos in its most fundamental generative nature, as *wu-wei* (Absence-action) and *wu-hsin* (Absence-mind): movement through daily activity becomes the Cosmos living a life; sight becomes the Cosmos gazing into itself; thought becomes the Cosmos contemplating itself. And it also entails a transformation in death, for death becomes a return home to the generative Cosmos as our truest self, meaning that our most essential nature is therefore as boundless and enduring as the Cosmos itself. So No-Gate is being quite literal when he says:

Once through this gateway, you wander
all heaven and earth in a single stride.

READING GUIDE

NO-GATE GATEWAY is full of zany storytelling, iconoclastic humor, and enigmatic twists of thought, so it's tempting to read it like any other book: straight through. Reading it that way can be great fun, but there's only one way to really enter the depths of its insights: reading the brief chapters slowly, allowing enough time to think down through them one by one.

The conceptual framework necessary for this deeper level of reading (notably for the crucial first chapter) is presented in the [Introduction](#). An extensive Notes section follows the *No-Gate Gateway* text, providing detailed information about specifics that appear there. These notes are not indicated in the text to avoid creating a scholarly layer that might prevent the sangha-cases from first having their immediate impact. Finally, the Key Terms section defines a constellation of essential philosophical concepts, thereby outlining Ch'an's conceptual framework from a different perspective than the [Introduction](#). This section can be read piecemeal, as the concepts are encountered in the *No-Gate Gateway* text (notes reference the Key Terms section), or it can be read as a whole.

NO-GATE'S GATEWAY

NO-GATE'S FOREWORD

BUDDHISM CALLS MIND its ancestral nature, its household, and no-gate its dharma-gate. If it's an absent gate, no gate at all, how could anyone pass through it? We've all heard that whatever enters through a courtyard gate can't be the household treasure, and whatever arises from the origin-tissue must be limited to beginning and end, fruition and ruin. But that kind of talk—it's like waves churned up without any wind, like wounds cut deep into healthy flesh. In the search for understanding, what's worse than using a tangle of words? You're just swinging a stick as if you could hit the moon, scratching a boot as if you could itch a foot! How could that ever work?

In the Bestowal-Accord reign, *wu* year of the rat, I, Prajñā-Clear, led the sangha at Dragon-Soar Monastery in East-Revered. It was the summer session, and monks were hungry for insight. So I taught in accord with whatever moment the loom of origins unfurled, using sangha-cases from ancient masters like clubs to batter down that gate and scatter the roof-tiles.

I copied them down without a goal. I just started, not thinking about structure, the befores and afters, a finished book. Now there are forty-eight, and together I call them the *No-Gate Gateway*.

If you're like the long edge of the Star River, wielding your lone blade fearlessly, no care for danger and death, you'll enter through the gate with a single slash. Not even the eight-armed demon-king could stop you. Heaven's twenty-eight Indian patriarchs and earth's six Chinese patriarchs: you'll leave them all gazing at wind and begging for their lives. But if you hesitate, it's like looking through a window across the room and glimpsing a horse gallop past outside: scarcely seen and already gone vanishing away.

GATHA

...

The great Way is a single Absence-gate
here on a thousand roads of Presence.

Once through this gateway, you wander
all heaven and earth in a single stride.

1: VISITATION-LAND DOG NATURE

A monk asked Master Visitation-Land: “A dog too has Buddha-nature, no?”

“Absence,” Land replied.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

To penetrate the depths of Ch'an, you must pass through the gateway of our ancestral patriarchs. And to fathom the mysteries of enlightenment, you must cut off the mind-road completely. If you don't pass through the ancestral gateway, if you don't cut off the mind-road, you live a ghost's life, clinging to weeds and trees.

What is this gateway of our ancestral patriarchs? It's the simplest of things, a single word: *Absence*. Absence is the sole gateway of our empty-gate household. And so, it's called the "no-gate gateway" into our Ch'an household.

Pass all the way through it, and you meet Master Visitation-Land eye to eye! Visitation-Land, and the whole lineage of ancestral patriarchs too! You wander hand in hand with them, eyebrows tangled with theirs, looking with the same eyes, hearing with the same ears. How is that not great good fortune and wild joy? Don't you, too, long to pass through this gateway?

To penetrate the depths of this single word, *Absence*, summon all three-hundred-sixty bones and joints, all eighty-four thousand sacred apertures of your intelligence, summon your whole being into a single mass of doubt. Devote yourself day and night. Absence: don't think it's emptiness, and don't think it's Presence.

You'll feel like you've swallowed a red-hot iron ball: retching and retching at something that won't vomit out. But let all the delusions of a lifetime go, all the understanding and insight; and slowly, little by little, nurture the simplicity of occurrence appearing of itself.

Soon, inner and outer are a single tissue. A single tissue, and you're

like a mute in the midst of dream: all that understanding for yourself alone. Then suddenly, the whole thing breaks wide open, and all heaven and earth shudder in astonishment.

It's as if you've snatched General Gateway's vast sword away, as if you carry it wherever you go. If you meet Buddha, you kill Buddha. If you meet ancestral patriarchs, you kill ancestral patriarchs.

Out there walking the cliff-edge between life and death, you're perfectly self-possessed, vast and wide open in such wild freedom. Through all four transformations in the six forms of existence, you wander the playfulness of *samadhi*'s three-shadowed earth.

Can you do it: devote a life, delve with all your lifelong *ch'i*-strength into this single word, *Absence*? Don't give up, and it will soon seem so easy: a mere spark setting the whole dharma-candle afire!

GATHA

...

A dog, Buddha-nature—the whole
kit-and-caboodle revealed in a flash.

Think about Presence and Absence,
and you're long lost without a clue.

無

2: HUNDRED-ELDER WILD FOX

Often, when Master Hundred-Elder Mountain spoke before the sangha, there was an old man listening to the dharma with all the monks. When the monks left, he left too. But one day, this stranger stayed behind, and the master asked, “Who is this person standing here before me?”

“Someone. No one. Not a human being,” the old man replied. “*Kalpas* ago, in the long-lost time of Kāshyapa Buddha, I lived here on this mountain. One day back then, a monk asked: ‘A great one who’s cultivated the fundamentals, who’s mastered them: is he too tangled in the laws of karma?’

“‘He’s not tangled in karmic law,’ was my answer. And since then I’ve been reborn five hundred times as a fox roaming the countryside. I’ve come to ask you, Master, if you won’t please give me the treasure of a hinge-phrase that will liberate me from this life as a wild fox.”

Then he continued, asking: “A great one who’s cultivated the fundamentals, who’s mastered them: is he too tangled in the laws of karma?”

“He’s not free of karmic law,” Hundred-Elder replied.

And upon hearing those words, the old man had a great awakening.

Bowing reverently to Hundred-Elder, he said: “The fox’s body that’s no longer mine, it’s there on the mountain’s far side. I wonder, Master, please, if I may request the rites for a dead monk?”

Hundred-Elder told the supervising monk to strike the clapper and announce to the sangha that after the meal they would bid farewell to a dead monk.

The whole sangha started talking: “We’re all perfectly fine. No one’s been sick in the infirmary’s Nirvana Hall. So how can this be?”

After they'd eaten, Hundred-Elder led the sangha to the mountain's far side; and there, poking around with his travel-staff at the bottom of a cliff, he uncovered a dead fox. Then the sangha built a ritual fire and burned the body.

That evening, the master took his place in the Dharma Hall and explained to his sangha what had happened, what form the origin-tissue had taken in the man's life.

At this the head monk, Yellow-Bitterroot Mountain, asked: "When that long-ago man got the hinge-phrase wrong, he was condemned to five hundred lives as a wild fox. But what if you get it right every time, hinge after hinge, what then?"

"Come. Stand here before me," said the master, "and I'll tell you."

Yellow-Bitterroot walked up to Hundred-Elder and slapped him once!

Clapping his hands together and laughing, the master said: "People talk about Bodhidharma, the Barbarian with a red beard. But suddenly, right here before me, I see the red-bearded Barbarian himself!"

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Not tangled in karmic law: how could that make someone a fox roaming the countryside? Not free of karmic law: how could that liberate someone from a fox's body? You here before me in this sangha: if you can reveal this wholly with Buddha-eye clarity, you'll understand how old Hundred-Elder grew rich frolicking like wind-drift through five hundred lifetimes.

GATHA

...

Not tangled in karma, not free of karma:
two colors in a lush procession of color.

Not free of karma, not tangled in karma:
all a thousand, ten thousand times wrong.

無

3: MILLION-MILLION ONE FINGER

Whenever a question was posed, Master Million-Million simply raised a finger. Now, Million-Million had a houseboy, and one day a visitor asked this boy: “What is the dharma-essence your master teaches?”

The boy held up his finger, like the master.

Hearing of this, Million-Million chopped the houseboy’s finger off with a cleaver. Howling in agony, the boy turned and fled. Just then, Million-Million called to him. When the boy looked back, Million-Million held up his one finger. Suddenly, the boy was awakened.

When Million-Million was about to follow the vanishing way of things, he said to the sangha: “I received this one-finger Ch’an from Heaven-Dragon Mountain. I used it for an entire lifetime and never exhausted it.”

With those words, he passed into extinction.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Million-Million and the houseboy: their enlightenment doesn't reside in a lifted finger. It's always right there in front of you. You here before me in this sangha: if you can see through this wholly—Heaven-Dragon and Million-Million, the houseboy and you yourself are all run through and strung together on a single strand.

GATHA

...

Dumbly wielding a sharp blade to reveal a small child,
Million-Million dulled old Heaven-Dragon's instrument.

In one handstroke, the river god split its course through
Flourish Mountain's ten thousand thousand high ridges.

4: WESTERN BARBARIAN NO BEARD

Master Doubt-Shrine Mountain asked: “Bodhidharma, the Western Barbarian with a red beard—how is it he had no beard?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

To penetrate depths, you must truly penetrate depths. To awaken, you must truly awaken. To meet the Barbarian, you must meet him eye to eye. Then, in that one moment, the two of you are indistinguishable. But say even so much as *eye to eye*, and already you've become two again.

GATHA

...

You feel a fool facing him, no idea
how to describe the dream. And this

Western Barbarian no beard stuff
only muddies all that startled clarity.

5: INCENSE-REGAL STUCK HIGH

Master Incense-Regal Mountain said: “It’s like being stuck high in a tree—teeth clamped down on a branch tip, nothing in reach and no footholds anywhere. Someone on the ground calls up, “That *ch’i*-mind Bodhidharma brought from the West: what is it?”

If you don’t answer, you deny the question. If you do answer, you cut your life short and lose your destiny. Here, now, this moment just like that: how will you answer to save your life?

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

You may be eloquent as a river tipping steadily over into a falls, but what would all your explanations reveal? Even if you explain your way through the entire treasure-house of Buddhist sutras, is anything revealed? You here before me in this sangha: if you can make an answer reveal it all, you'll bring to life the Buddha-Way path that's been dead since ancient times, and you'll put to death the Buddha-Way path that's been alive since ancient times. If you can't do that, you'll just have to wait for the next *kalpa*, ask Maitreya Buddha when he appears.

GATHA

...

No sense at all, vile and poisonous
beyond all bounds, Incense-Regal

stuns every monk mute. His entire
body's one killer demon-eye glare!

6: WORLD-HONORED HELD FLOWER

Long ago on Spirit-Vulture Peak, Shākyamuni Buddha, the World-Honored One, held a flower up and revealed it to the sangha. Everyone sat in shadowy silence. Then Mahākāshyapa's face broke into the faintest smile.

The World-Honored-One said: “I possess the perfect dharma of the eye's treasure-house, the nirvana of mind's mysterious depths, the true form of formlessness, the subtle mystery of the dharma-gate. Not relying on words and texts, outside teaching and beyond doctrine—I here entrust all that to Mahākāshyapa.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

His face yellow, color of earth, Shākyamuni treated those people like they were nothing. He made the wondrous appear worthless, hung dog meat out for sale as fine lamb. He might have thought it the most marvelous of things, but what if the whole sangha had smiled? How could he have handed down that perfect dharma of the eye's treasure-house? And supposing Mahākāshyapa hadn't smiled? How could he have handed it down then?

If you claim that perfect dharma of the eye's treasure-house can be handed down using the ten thousand things of Presence, that yellow-faced Lao Tzu's just a hawker swindling people at the gates of a market village. And if you claim it can only be handed down using Absence, how could he acknowledge its transmission to Mahākāshyapa alone?

GATHA

...

Holding a flower out, raising it up:
it's the final insight fully revealed,

Mahākāshyapa's smile-creased face
baffling all heaven and earth alike.

7: VISITATION-LAND WASH BOWL

A monk asked Master Visitation-Land: “I’ve just arrived here in your thicket-forest monastery, Master. Please show me what you have to reveal.”

“Have you eaten your mush?” Land asked.

“Yes.”

“Hurry then, wash your bowl!”

At this, the monk was awakened.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

When Visitation-Land opened his mouth, he revealed gall itself. He put it out there all heart and liver, his entire being, such courage out there, all intimate affection in plain sight. But that monk didn't understand the clarity in what he heard. It was a clear bell, and he took it for a water-jar.

GATHA

...

Struggle to resolve it all in bright insight,
and you upend a life of perennial arrival.

Before you understand lamplight is fire,
your dinner's long since cooked through.

8: WHAT-NEXT INVENTED CARTWHEEL

Master Moon-Shrine Mountain asked the monks: “When What-Next invented the cartwheel, it had a hundred spokes. But what if hub and rim are broken off, spokes scattered away—do you understand the bright clarity of what it could do then?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

See straight through to the bright clarity in this, and your Buddha-deep eye's like a shooting star, the loom of origins playing out its cycles sudden as a lightning flash.

GATHA

...

There where the loom of origins wheels
around, a sage too is bewildered, sets out

wandering above and below through all
four directions—south, north, east, west.

9: VAST INSIGHT SURPASSING WISDOM

A monk asked Master Light-Inception Peak: “The Buddha of Vast Insight and Surpassing Wisdom sat in meditation for ten *kalpas* on Buddha-Way Terrace, but the Buddha-dharma never took shape for him. How is it, in all that time, he never wholly became Buddha-Way’s turning seasons?”

“A question to the point exactly,” replied Light-Inception.

But the monk persisted: “After all that meditation on Buddha-Way Terrace, how is it he never wholly became the Buddha-Way?”

“Because he never became a Buddha.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

I acknowledge that old barbarian's understanding, but not his realization. When ordinary people become wise, they're sages. And when sages become realized, they're ordinary people.

GATHA

...

How can clarity about self compare to clarity about mind at rest?

Clarity about mind—ah—fathom that clarity, and self is grief-free.

And if you know clarity about mind and self, clarity within clarity,

what is there more regal for gods and immortals to declare noble?

10: LUCID-BLACK ALONE IMPOVERISHED

Lucid-Black asked Master Twofold Mountain: “I am perfectly alone now, perfectly impoverished. I’m an alms-beggar here. Won’t you please grant me the sustenance of your teaching?”

“You are Lucid-Black, *āchārya*, great dharma-sage!” Twofold Mountain called out in response.

“Yes,” replied Lucid-Black.

“You’ve savored three cups of clear wine from our ancestral household of green-azure origins. And still you say you haven’t even moistened your lips?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Lucid-Black at that moment in the unfurling loom of origins: who knows what he had in mind? And Twofold Mountain, his Buddha-deep eye whole, saw right through the loom's unfurling origins. Still, you have to ask: "Where was it Lucid-Black, great dharma-sage *āchārya*, savored those three cups of wine?"

GATHA

...

Regal in poverty, like a penniless imperial
minister, *ch'i*-force like a ruthless general,

vast as sky—he hasn't the least livelihood,
and therefore dares contest all that richness.

11: LAND INTERROGATES SHRINE MASTER

Master Visitation-Land stopped at a shrine-master's hut and called out: "Anyone there? Presence? Any Presence there?"

The shrine-master simply held up his fist.

"You can't anchor a boat in water this shallow," said Land. Then he left.

Later he returned to the shrine-master's hut and again called out: "Anyone there? Presence? Any Presence there?"

Once more the shrine-master simply held up his fist.

"Ah you—you can offer up and steal away, put to death and bring to life," said Land. Then he bowed reverently.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

That shrine-master holding up his fist: it was exactly alike both times. How is it Visitation-Land affirmed one and not the other? Speak up! There's such crude deceit here—but where is it? Someone conjure a hinge-phrase! Make it reveal how nothing holds Visitation-Land's tongue back. Building up here, tearing down there, he's perfectly self-possessed—vast and wide open in such wild freedom.

But however true that is, it's also true that Visitation-Land was destroyed by the interrogation of that shrine-master's two manifestations. If he affirms one is achieved and the other not, he hasn't perfected that studied and penetrating Buddha-deep eye. And if he denies one is achieved and the other not, he still hasn't perfected that studied and penetrating Buddha-deep eye.

GATHA

...

Buddha-deep shooting-star eye,
lightning-flash loom of origins:

blade that puts people to death,
sword that brings people to life.

12: CRAG CALLED EMPTY ONE

Master Crag-Auspicious Mountain, magisterial teacher, called out to himself every day: “Empty One!”

And he answered himself: “Exactly!”

Then he said: “Awake! Always awake!”

“Exactly!”

“Through all the marvelous days of times to come, refuse the delusions of people.”

“Exactly! Exactly!”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Old Master Crag-Auspicious—he's buying himself and selling himself at once here. He's playing this game with phantom-faces and ghost-masks, flocks of them. And why's he turned himself into spirits who've already died and died again: one calling out, and one answering; one awake, always awake, and one refusing the delusions of people?

Devote yourself to anything as the one and only, and you're lost. Trust yourself to any *other*, and you're a wild fox full of sly schemes.

GATHA

...

Study Way and you never know what's absolute. Instead, you
cling to those phantoms people have treasured from the outset.

The origin of birth and death, immeasurable, outlasting *kalpas*:
live simpleminded enough, and you see in it your original self.

13: MIRROR-SIGHT NESTLED BOWLS

One day, Abbot Mirror-Sight Mountain nestled his bowls in hand and started downstairs toward the dining hall. On the way, he encountered Snow-Peak Mountain, the cook, and Snow-Peak spoke up: “Old man! No bell announced mealtime, no drum called: where are you going with those bowls?”

Mirror-Sight returned to his rooms.

Later, Snow-Peak told Crag-Summit what had happened, and Crag said: “Even with all his disciples great and small, Mirror-Sight hasn’t understood all the way through to the last ever utterance.”

When he heard about this, Mirror-Sight Mountain sent his attendant to summon Crag-Summit. Crag arrived, and Mirror-Sight asked: “So you don’t approve of this old monk?”

Secretly, without a word, Crag-Summit said what he thought.

Mirror-Sight gave in and walked away. But the next day, when he took his seat before the sangha, he was through and through transformed. Nothing like what he was before.

Dashing out front in the Dharma Hall, clapping his hands together and laughing wildly, Crag-Summit called out: “It’s amazing, old man! You’ve done it, understood all the way to the last ever utterance! In all beneath heaven, there’s no one can help you now!”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

As for this “all the way to the last ever utterance,” Mirror-Sight and Crag-Summit haven’t come close, not in their wildest dreams. Look closely, and you’ll see they’re nothing but a couple of puppets run amok in a show-tent.

GATHA

...

If you fathom the first ever utterance,
you understand the last ever utterance,

no doubt. But first ever and last ever:
they’re never this one utterance itself.

14: WELLSPRING-SOUTH CHOPPED KITTEN

When monks from the eastern and western Sangha Halls began arguing over a kitten, Wellspring-South Mountain held it up and said: “Alright, here’s the deal: if someone can put Way itself wholly into words, the kitten lives; if not, it’s dead.” No one answered, so Master Wellspring chopped the kitten in two.

Visitation-Land, the head monk, was away; but that night he returned, and Wellspring told him what had happened. Visitation-Land took off his sandal and balanced it on his head, then walked out.

“If you’d been here,” Wellspring called after him, “you would have saved the kitten!”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Put it wholly into words, Way itself, right now: what on earth did Visitation-Land mean, putting a straw sandal on his head like that? You here before me in this sangha: if you can conjure a hinge-phrase, you'll understand Wellspring-South Mountain's act was hardly empty. If you cannot, you live in mortal danger.

GATHA

...

If he'd been there, old Visitation-Land
would have turned things upside down,

stealing that knife-blade away, leaving
Wellspring-South begging for his life.

15: FATHOM MOUNTAIN THREE-SCORE

In his student wandering, Fathom Mountain went to study under Cloud-Gate Mountain. When he arrived, Cloud-Gate asked: “You’ve come from where?”

“Raft-Seek Ferry.”

“And where were you for the summer session?”

“With Tender-Reward Mountain, at his monastery south of the lake.”

“When did you leave there?”

“The twenty-fifth day of the eighth moon.”

“I’ll drive you out of here with my stick, three-score blows!” shouted Cloud-Gate.

The next morning, in spite of it all, Fathom Mountain hiked up to Cloud-Gate Mountain again and, deep with inquiry, asked: “Master, you drove me away yesterday, three-score blows. But I don’t understand what I did wrong.”

“You great sack of rice,” shouted Cloud-Gate. “One day south of the lake, the next west of the river. Where are you going, tramping around like this, always on your way somewhere else?”

At that, Fathom Mountain had a great awakening.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

To make source-insight nourishing as cattle fodder, to bid Fathom Mountain farewell on the lone path of Presence, these ten thousand things emerging from the loom of origins: if Cloud-Gate Mountain had done such things, his school wouldn't have fallen into ruins isolate and silent.

Fathom Mountain spent all night in the sea of *yes-this no-that* logic, hoping he would arrive at some realization. He waited clear through till dawn, then went back to Cloud-Gate. This time, Cloud-Gate demolished all explanation. But even if Fathom saw through this with the clarity of immediate awakening, he wasn't scorched clean to his original Buddha-nature.

So, I want to ask all of you here in this sangha: Fathom Mountain's three-score blows, were they or were they not a blessing? If you say they were a blessing, then all the grasses and trees and vast forests should be blessed with those three-score blows. If you say they were not a blessing, then Cloud-Gate's just spreading deception and deceit.

You here before me in this sangha: if you can explain this, illuminate it wholly, you'll speak with the very *ch'i*-breath of Fathom Mountain himself.

GATHA

...

When the lion teaches a cub, it's pure mystery and confusion: to urge

the cub forward, it leaps away, feints and tumbles over.

Met before Absence begins, Cloud-Gate revealed the essence. The first arrow left barely a scratch, but the second went deep.

無

16: BELL SOUND SEVEN-PIECE

Cloud-Gate said: “This world here stretches boundless away. So why let a bell-sound tell you when to don your seven-piece robe?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

All you in this vast sangha—listen now! In cultivating the Way of Ch'an practice, never rely on sound or appearance. Even if sound could awaken you to Way itself and appearance could enlighten mind, there would be no end to the search. Because it's not a matter of understanding, not at all.

The family of monks wearing rag-robles of sages—they may use sound freely and manage appearance closely. That's how they master enlightenment through and through, how they reveal mystery through and through. But for people like that, who can say if sound enters hearing or hearing enters sound? Abounding sound and silence—once they both die away in forgetfulness, how can words explain realization? If you use ears to listen, realization's impossible. But if you use eyes to listen, it's the beginning of a kindred intimacy with things.

GATHA

...

With realization, you see everything's a great family together; and without, you see ten thousand differences and separations.

Without realization, you see everything's a great family together; and with, well, you see ten thousand differences and separations.

17: NATION-TEACHER THREE TIMES

Nation-Teacher Prajñā-Devotion called three times to his attending monk, and three times the attending monk answered.

“I was about to say that I’ve turned my back on you,” said Prajñā-Devotion. “But it’s you—from the very beginning of things, it’s you who’ve turned your back on me!”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

The Nation-Teacher called three times, and his tongue fell to the ground. The attending monk answered three times, and his answers revealed such hidden radiance. The Nation-Teacher was old, his mind perfectly alone. It was like holding an ox's head to grass so it could eat, but the monk couldn't have cared less. If you're stuffed to the gills, what good is gourmet food?

Right now: speak up! Tell me! How is it they turned their backs on each other?

When the nation is lucid, sage talents are treasured. When a family is prosperous, little children are pampered.

GATHA

...

A master's burden is like iron prison-stocks without holes: bequeathed to descendants, it renders idleness impossible.

If you want to support our house, prop up gates and doors, it's simple enough: go barefoot, scale mountains of daggers.

18: FATHOM MOUNTAIN THREE POUNDS

A monk asked Master Fathom Mountain: “What is Buddha?”
“Flax. Three pounds.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Fathom Mountain was old. He'd mastered oyster Ch'an. Barely cracking the two halves of his shell open, he revealed heart and liver, kidney and intestine: his entire being. Right now: speak up! Tell me! Where can you go and stand gazing into this Fathom Mountain?

GATHA

...

Revealing *flax three pounds* in a flash, he made words all kindred intimacy, and *ch'i*-mind too.

But if you start babbling *yes-this no-that* logic, you're just one of those *yes-this no-that* people.

19: ORDINARY MIND IS WAY

Visitation-Land asked Wellspring-South Mountain: “What is Way?”

“Ordinary mind is Way,” answered Master Wellspring.

“Still, it’s something I can set out toward, isn’t it?”

“To set out is to be distant from.”

“But if I don’t set out, how will I arrive at an understanding of Way?”

“Way isn’t something you can understand, and it isn’t something you can not understand. Understanding is delusion, and not understanding is pure forgetfulness.

“If you truly comprehend this Way that never sets out for somewhere else, if you enter into it absolutely, you realize it’s exactly like the vast expanses of this universe, all generative emptiness you can see through into boundless clarity.

“Now, how can you force that into coherence with the logic of *yes-this no-that?*”

Hearing these words, Land was suddenly awakened.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Questioned by Visitation-Land, Wellspring-South Mountain went straight for roof-tiles scattering and ice melting away. He dredged everywhere, but the stale water stayed put. Even though Visitation-Land's awakening was bountiful, he had to practice thirty more years before coming to full realization.

GATHA

...

Spring flaunts a hundred blossoms, autumn a moon; summer brings cool breezes, winter soundless snow.

Absence and its operations all idleness held in mind: here among humankind, isn't that the perfect season?

20: SOMEONE OF GREAT POWER

Master Cascade-Pine Summit said: “How does a person of great power walk without raising a foot?”

Then he continued: “Or speak without moving a tongue?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Cascade-Pine reveals his entire being here, turns heart and intestine inside out, liver and stomach upside down. But those who follow need to make it their own and carry it forward. And if anyone succeeds in that, succeeds with bountiful accuracy, they'd better come face No-Gate! They'll get the beating of their lives! Why? Because to know absolute gold, you must look into the flame!

GATHA

...

Walk, each step kicking this fragrant ocean of a universe head-over-heels, gaze down into the four heavens of *ch'an* stillness,

and still, there isn't room enough to reveal your nature wholly.

—*Go ahead, add your own line here.*—

21: CLOUD-GATE SHIT-STICK

A monk asked Cloud-Gate Mountain: “What is Buddha?”

Cloud-Gate answered: “Dry shit-stick!”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Cloud-Gate reduces our Ch'an household to such poverty you can't find even the simplest vegetables to eat. In all his rush, he doesn't have time for brush-writing, not even quick cursive script. Instead, he just wields his shit-stick—that's how he supports our house, props up gates and doors. You can see in that our Buddha-dharma's flourishing, and its ruin.

GATHA

...

Bright lightning-flash,
spark off struck flint:

blink once and it's all
gone vanishing away.

22: MAHĀKĀSHYAPA DHARMA-TALK FLAG

Ānanda asked Mahākāshyapa: “The World-Honored One passed on to you his gold-filigree robes, but what else did he pass on?”

“Ānanda!” replied Mahākāshyapa.

“Yes.”

“Out front at the gate, the flag announcing my dharma-talk: go tear it down, pole and all!”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

You here before me in this sangha: if you can conjure a hinge-phrase that cuts clean through to the intimate essence of this, you'll see that the regal assembly still hasn't scattered from Spirit-Vulture Peak, that Buddha is still there holding up his flower. But if you can't do that, never once has anyone fathomed the mystery of this mind transmitted to us across *kalpas* from Vipashyin, first of all Buddhas.

GATHA

...

How can a question have the kindred intimacy of an answer?

How many can see into this with every fiber of their being?

Elder brothers call, younger respond: it's our family disgrace.

And there's a springtime outside the seasons of *yin* and *yang*.

23: DON'T THINK RIGHT WRONG

The Sixth Patriarch fled. Lumen, the head monk, pursued him into the Hidden-Vast Mountains, all the way to the pass. When he saw Lumen approaching, the Sixth Patriarch threw his robe and bowl onto a rock, and called out: “This robe is the embodiment of dharma itself. Is that something to fight over? Go ahead: take it!”

Lumen struggled to pick it up, but it was like a mountain: utterly immovable. Hesitant and trembling with fear, he said: “I came in search of dharma, not a robe. You, not yet even a vowed monk— instruct me, open my understanding.”

“Don’t think about right answers, don’t think about wrong,” replied the Sixth Patriarch. “Right here in this very moment, what is the original face of Head Monk Lumen, the face that’s been gazing out since the very beginning of things?”

At that, Lumen had a great awakening. His entire body ran with sweat. In tears, he bowed reverently and asked: “The ancients handed down secret *ch’i*-mind hidden in secret words, but isn’t there *ch’i*-mind more profound still?”

“There’s nothing secret in what I’ve told you here today,” replied the Sixth Patriarch. “If you go all the way back to the beginning, illuminate the gaze of your own original face: that is the secret that stays with you always.”

“Though I’ve long practiced with the sangha at Yellow-Plum Mountain, I never truly awakened to the gaze of my own original face. But here today, thanks to your lucid instruction—I’ve taken a drink, and it’s like the water itself knows how warm or cold the drink is. In this, someone not yet even a vowed monk has become my teacher.”

“If it’s really like this for you, then we share together Yellow-Plum Mountain as our teacher. Take care to treasure and nourish your

right answer.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Here the Sixth Patriarch flees our Ch'an household in a rush, only to become a kindly grandmother cutting clean through to the intimate essence of mind itself. It's like someone peeling a fresh lychee, slipping out the pit, and then putting it in your mouth. All you have to do is swallow it!

GATHA

...

You can't picture it in words—ah—can't capture it in paint.
You can't portray it in praise—ah—just give up experience!

Gazing out since the beginning, can your original face hide?
Even if this world ends in ruin, that *you* remains unscathed.

無

24: IT ALL OUTSIDE WORDS

A monk asked Wind-Source Mountain: “Word or silence—either way you cross over into it all broken between Presence and Absence, the differentiated and the undifferentiated. How do I avoid that transgression altogether?”

Master Wind-Source replied:

I always remember, south of the river, that third month:
mountain-partridge calling out, hundred-blossom scents.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Seizing that moment the loom of origins unfurled, Wind-Source struck like a lightning flash, revealing a path easy to travel. But why grapple with the tongue of that monk sitting there facing him? Why not simply lop it off?

You here before me in this sangha: if you can see right through to kindred intimacy, cut clean through to the intimate essence of this, you'll master the path that sets out beyond selfhood. Right now: just leave it all outside words, nurture that three-shadowed *samadhi* earth, and summon forth Way itself in a single remark!

GATHA

...

Remark revealing nothing of our wind-and-bone nature, you offer ancient insight without a word.

Forge ahead, mouth a yammer of chitter-chatter, and you're tangled in vast nets of bewilderment.

25: THIRD SEAT ELUCIDATES DHARMA

Master Reliance Mountain had a dream in which he traveled across future *kalpas* to the assembly of Maitreya Buddha, where he was given the third seat. Soon, one of the Buddhas there sounded the announcement mallet and pronounced: “Today, our third seat elucidates dharma.”

Reliance Mountain rose, sounded the mallet himself, and said: “Mahayana dharma is outside the four existential distinctions and free of their hundred negations. Listen closely! Listen closely!”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Okay, right now: speak up! Tell me! Is that elucidating dharma or not elucidating dharma? Open your mouth, and you're lost. Keep it closed, and you're ruined. Not open, not closed—you're off by a hundred and eight thousand miles!

GATHA

...

Beneath bluest midday skies,
amidst dream telling dream,

it's all lies, nothing but lies!
And everyone there's duped!

26: TWO MONKS RAISED BLINDS

Asked by the monks, vast Dharma-Eye of Lucid-Chill Mountain took his place at the front of the meditation hall, ready to give instruction. Eye pointed at the blinds, still down for meditation. Two monks immediately went and raised the blinds. Eye said: “One did. One didn’t.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Okay, right now: speak up! Tell me! Which one did it? Which one didn't? You here before me in this sangha: if you can reveal that Buddha-eye clarity, you'll understand how his blunder ruined him, that Nation-Teacher from Lucid-Chill Mountain. Even so, don't anyone dare start talking about *did* or *didn't*!

GATHA

...

To raise blinds is to fathom empty skies of illumination, skies vast and empty and still not our household inheritance whole,

still nothing like tearing down those empty-expanse blinds, leaving intimacy so full wind's distances open past knowing.

27: IT ISN'T MIND BUDDHA

A monk asked Wellspring-South Mountain: “Is there dharma no one’s ever taught?”

“There is,” replied Master Wellspring.

“What is it, this dharma no one’s ever taught?”

“It isn’t mind. It isn’t Buddha. It isn’t things.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Asked a single question, Wellspring-South measured out our household treasure and squandered it all. What's left but an old broken-down failure?

GATHA

...

Talk only means mirror-sight clarity ruined.
Not a word: that's true success for Absence.

Broad seas are transformed into high peaks,
but how does that explain anything for you?

28: DRAGON-LAKE LONG RENOWNED

Mirror-Sight Mountain hungrily questioned Dragon-Lake into the night. Finally, Lake said: “The night is deep. You should have left by now.”

Mountain bowed in homage, raised the blinds, and left. But seeing it was dark out, he stepped back in and said: “It’s pitch-dark out there!”

Lake lit a paper-lantern candle and offered it to him. Then, just as Mountain reached out to take it, Lake blew it out. At this, Mountain was suddenly awakened. He bowed reverently, and Lake asked: “You just saw the inner-pattern of Way. Tell me, what is it?”

“That from this day on, here amid all beneath heaven, I’ll never doubt the tongue of an old master.”

The next morning, Dragon-Lake took his place before the sangha and said: “Here among you worthy monks is someone with fangs like a forest of swords and mouth like a bowl of blood. Attack him with a stick, and he won’t even turn his head. The day will come when he’ll journey to a lone mountaintop and establish our Buddha-Way there.”

Mountain thereupon gathered all of his writings, his notes and commentaries, carried them to the front of the Dharma Hall, and piled them there. Holding a torch, he explained, “Even if you understand all the intricacies of dark-enigma itself, it’s barely a hairsbreadth adrift in the vast emptiness of this Cosmos. And even if you comprehend through and through that loom of origins at the heart of things, it’s barely a drop tossed into endless seas.” Having said this, he lit the pile of papers, bowed reverently, and then walked out.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Until he'd gone through the gateway and left his homeland, Mirror-Sight Mountain was a mind seething with zeal, a mouth aching to speak out. Full of grand ambitions, he came to these southlands on a mission to eradicate our doctrine of transmission outside teaching. When he reached Revere-Land Road, he ordered a mind-kindle bun from an old woman at a shop.

"Great Mirror-Sight, what's all that stuff there in your cart, all those books and papers?" asked the shop-woman.

"My writings on the *Diamond Sutra*, notes and commentaries," replied Mountain.

"Like it says in your sutra," the old shop-woman continued: "Mind done and gone cannot be realized. Mind now aglimmer cannot be realized. Mind yet to come cannot be realized.' Great Mirror-Sight, which mind is it you want kindled and set ablaze?"

With that single question, Mirror-Sight Mountain was dumbfounded. He stood there like a puppet with its mouth hanging open. Even so, he was too proud to find death in an old shop-woman's words, so he asked her: "Who is it teaches Ch'an around here?"

"Master Dragon-Lake—up the road just two miles."

Mountain set out for Dragon-Lake's monastery, and when he arrived, his blunders completely ruined him. All that he had once said, he now contradicted. And it seems Dragon-Lake was so full of fatherly love for a son that he felt no shame. Seeing a little spark of flame smoldering in Mountain, he grabbed a bucket of rancid water in a wild frenzy and drowned him with it! Destroyed him absolutely!

Find a place of quiet solitude: from there you'll see it's all a grand
ruse and farce!

GATHA

...

Hearing the name is nothing like seeing the face.
Seeing the face is nothing like hearing the name.

No one lops off your nose for crimes committed,
so why all this struggle? It'll blind you for sure.

29: NOT WIND NOT FLAG

The Sixth Patriarch came because the dharma-talk flag was up at the monastery gate, beating there in the wind. He found two monks arguing. One said: “It’s the flag flying.” And the other said: “It’s the wind flying.” They argued back and forth, but couldn’t find an inner principle to agree on.

“It’s not the wind flying,” observed the Sixth Patriarch, “and it’s not the flag flying. It’s mind flying.”

The two monks grew silent, and a little fearful.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

It's not wind flying. It's not flag flying. It's not mind flying. So where is it you can see our teacher the Sixth Patriarch?

You here before me in this sangha: if you can see right through to kindred intimacy, cut clean through to the intimate essence of this, you'll know those two monks paid for iron and got gold instead. Our teacher the Sixth Patriarch, he couldn't resist showing off: that's why everything fell apart.

GATHA

...

Wind, flag, mind: they're all flying.
That lone form led everyone astray.

If insight's nothing but open mouths
talking, who sees words always fail?

30: THIS MIND THIS BUDDHA

Plum-Vast asked the patriarch Sudden-Horse Way-Entire: “What is Buddha?”

“This very mind is Buddha,” replied Sudden-Horse.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

If you can see into this, understand with absolute and immediate clarity—you wear Buddha's robes, eat Buddha's food, speak Buddha's words, live Buddha's life. You are, in fact, yourself Buddha.

So why has Plum-Vast led so many people to confuse a thing's weight with marks on the scales measuring it out? Doesn't he know that once you've said "Buddha," that one word, it takes three days to rinse your mouth clean? And that other guy: when he says "This very mind is Buddha," you should cover your ears and head the other way.

GATHA

...

Clear blue midday skies: cut clean through
to the intimate essence of this, and you're

done searching. To ask *What* is like saying
you've been robbed while holding the loot.

31: VISITATION-LAND QUESTIONS WOMAN

Searching for Master Visitation-Land, a monk asked an old shop-woman: “Where’s the Five-Terrace Mountain road?”

“Dead ahead,” replied the shop-woman.

The monk started walking. But after a few steps, the old woman called out: “A grand teaching-monk! And still, you keep setting out like that?”

Later on, another monk told Visitation-Land about the encounter, and Land said: “Just wait. I’ll go question her for you.”

The next morning, Land set out. When he found the woman in her shop, he asked the same question, and the woman gave the same answer.

Land returned home. When the sangha assembled, he said: “That Five-Terrace Mountain woman—I questioned her to the very heart of it all for you, questioned her until there was nothing left to reveal.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

That old woman—all she could do is sit there in her shop-tent keeping accounts and accusing thieves. Old Visitation-Land hardly looked imposing, so she had no idea he could steal into enemy camps and plunder the loom of origins across borderlands of wide-open *kalpas*. Still, all things considered, it's clear there's blame enough for them both.

Right now: speak up! Tell me! Once Visitation-Land questioned that old woman to the very heart of it all, questioned her until there was nothing left to reveal, where did that leave him?

GATHA

...

The questions are identical,
and her answers both alike.

But there's sand in the rice,
and thorns bristle the mud.

32: SOMEONE OUTSIDE ASKED BUDDHA

Someone outside our Buddha-Way sangha asked the World-Honored One: “I’m not asking about Presence or what can be said. And I’m not asking about Absence or what can’t be said.”

The World-Honored One just sat there, still.

“World-Honored One,” the outsider said in praise and admiration, “vast in compassion, vast in sympathy—you’ve opened the clouds of my delusion, showing me how to enter inside Buddha-Way itself.” Then he bowed reverently and left.

Deep with inquiry, Ānanda asked Buddha: “What did that outsider experience? What did he realize that made him grow so reverent in praise and admiration, and then leave?”

“He’s like a world-renowned horse,” replied the World-Honored One. “If it glimpses even the shadow of a whip, it’s off and running!”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Ānanda was Buddha's disciple, but he had nothing like that outsider's insight. Right now: speak up! Tell me! Disciple of Buddha and outsider: how much difference is there?

GATHA

...

Walk a sword-blade's edge.
Wander an ice-blade's edge.

Stuck on a cliffwall without
stairs or ladders: just let go!

33: NOT MIND NOT BUDDHA

A monk asked the patriarch Sudden-Horse Way-Entire: “What is Buddha?”

“Not mind, not Buddha,” replied Sudden-Horse.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

You here before me in this sangha: if you can see through this wholly,
you're absolutely done with study, done with practice!

GATHA

...

Encounter a swordsman on the road, bare your sword.
But unless you meet a poet, keep your poems hidden.

When you meet someone, talk about things altogether:
talk about this or that, and you never reveal the whole.

34: AND WISDOM ISN'T WAY

Wellspring-South Mountain said: “Mind isn’t Buddha, and wisdom isn’t Way.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Master Wellspring had grown old: he knew no shame. He opened his putrid mouth and revealed our family disgrace for all the world to see. Even so, almost no one understands how deep his affection was.

GATHA

...

When skies clear, the sun appears.
When rain falls, the earth's moist.

Things seen become sincerity felt:
he says it all. Still, is that enough?

35: TWAIN-BEAUTY'S SPIRIT FLED

Master Fifth-Patriarch Mountain asked a monk: “Twain-Beauty’s sky-spirit fled to a life with her true love, leaving her earth-spirit to live on at home. Which was the actual Twain-Beauty?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

You here before me in this sangha: if you awaken to the actual in this, you'll understand we come and go through one husk after another, like travelers wandering from inn to inn. If you're free from doubt, you've cut clean through to the intimate essence of this. You don't run around confused in life. And when death suddenly comes, the elements in you all scattering away—earth and water, fire and wind—you don't panic like a crab dropped into boiling water, its seven claws and eight legs scuttling around frantically. That—that is to master no words and nothing to say.

GATHA

...

Cloud and moon are both the same,
stream and mountain each different.

Ten thousand blessings, ten thousand
blessings: they're one, they're many.

36: MEET SAGE-MASTER WAY

Fifth-Patriarch Mountain said: “You meet a sage-master of Buddha-Way on the road, meet him not with words and not with silence. Right now: speak up! Tell me! How do you meet him?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

You here before me in this sangha: if you can see right through to kindred intimacy, cut clean through to the intimate essence of such a meeting, nothing can keep you from blessings full of joy. If you're free from doubt, you'll cut clean through to the intimate essence of eyes, where places and things reveal every depth of sight.

GATHA

...

You meet a sage-master of Way on the road,
meet him not with words and not with silence:

bloody his face, break his jaw, and suddenly
you'll understand it all with such deep ease.

37: CYPRESS IN OUR COURTYARD

A monk asked Master Visitation-Land: “What is it, that *ch’i*-mind Bodhidharma brought from the West?”

Land replied: “That cypress in our courtyard.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

If you can face that place where Visitation-Land's answer emerged and see through answers to kindred intimacy whole, cut clean through to the intimate essence of all this, then you're free of teachers: no Shākyamuni Buddha in times gone by, no Maitreya Buddha in *kalpas* to come.

GATHA

...

Words can't say the life of things;
nor talk render the loom of origins.

Depend on words and you're lost;
refuse them and you live delusion.

38: WATER BUFFALO PASSING WINDOW

Fifth-Patriarch Mountain said: “It’s like a water buffalo passing your window. Nose, horns, four hooves: they all lumber slowly by. But then, how is it the tail never goes past?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

You here before me in this sangha: if you can turn things upside down, revealing Buddha-eye clarity whole, and then conjure a hinge-phrase, you'll requite the four forms of loving-kindness and preserve the three realms of existence. If you're free from doubt, you'll see with perfect clarity exactly where that tail begins.

GATHA

...

If it goes past, it falls into a ditch.
If it comes back, it's all shambles.

A wisp of tail: seen with absolute
clarity, what strange wonder it is!

39: CLOUD-GATE ALL WRONG

A monk asked Cloud-Gate Mountain: “Radiant brilliance silently illuminates this Cosmos vast as Ganges sands...”

Before he could finish, Gate suddenly broke in and said: “Isn’t that the first line of Simpleton-Extent’s enlightenment poem?”

“Yes.”

“Exactly! You’ve got it all wrong!”

Two hundred years later, Master Mind-Demise returned to this, saying: “Okay, right now: speak up! Tell me! Where was that monk’s mistake? How is it he got it all wrong?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

You here before me in this sangha: if you can see through this wholly, see the lonely and perilous heights in Master Cloud-Gate's method, and how the monk got it all wrong, then you're worthy to teach all heaven and earth. But if you can't understand with radiant insight, you'll never save even yourself.

GATHA

...

Cast a hook into such wild cascades,
and whoever's greedy takes the bait.

That promise you are: even begin to
speak, and it scatters back into ruins.

40: KICKED OVER WATER-JAR

When River-Act Mountain was head cook, Hundred-Elder Mountain needed someone to found a new monastery on Upper River-Act Mountain. He called his sangha together in the Dharma Hall, and said: “Whoever can reveal *seeing deeply into things themselves*—that person will go.” Then he put a water-jar full of pure drinking water on the ground and said: “Don’t anyone call this a water-jar. Okay. Now, what do you call it?”

“Well, you can’t call it a gate-bolt,” pronounced the head monk.

Hundred-Elder turned to River-Act Mountain and asked. River-Act danced out, kicked over the water-jar, and skipped away.

“Mountain’s defeated the head monk!” called out Hundred-Elder, full of laughter. And so, he appointed River-Act to open the new mountain.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

River-Act Mountain met the occasion with such courage. Hundred-Elder corralled him, and he jumped the fence. So why didn't he leave? Considering all he endured to found the new monastery—it's clear he chose a life heavy and onerous, rather than light and effortless. And for what? He just traded his kitchen headscarf for iron stocks!

GATHA

...

Flinging all his bamboo ladles and basket-scoops away,
he suddenly broke loose into broad and radiant daylight.

When Hundred-Elder tried to slam the gateway closed,
River-Act danced free on tiptoe, like a drugged Buddha.

41: BODHIDHARMA SILENCE THIS MIND

Bodhidharma sat facing a wall. The Second Patriarch stood outside in the snow. To prove his determined sincerity, he cut off his arm and presented it to Bodhidharma, then said: “Your disciple’s mind is not yet silent. Please, Master, silence this mind.”

“Bring your mind here,” replied Bodhidharma, “and I’ll silence it for you.”

“I’ve searched and searched, but I can’t find my mind.” “There, you see, I’ve silenced your mind through and through.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

That old broken-toothed Barbarian—he sailed across a hundred thousand miles of ocean, coming here quite sure he was the greatest thing ever. But that's like waves churned up without any wind. And when he finally welcomed a disciple at his gate, it was that cripple: nothing of his six senses, his very roots, nothing whole. It's so ridiculous! Dark-Enigma-Sand Mountain, that great master—he couldn't read four words, but he could fish perfectly well.

GATHA

...

Come east, wielding sheer fact
to teach, you point straight at it.

Still, that clamor plaguing our
monasteries: it began with you!

42: GIRL AWAKENED FROM SAMADHI

In those long-ago days of the World-Honored-One, Manjushri went to the assembly of Buddhas and found they had all gone back to their ancestral homes. The only one left was a girl meditating next to Shākyamuni Buddha, deep in *samadhi*'s three-shadowed earth. Manjushri said to Buddha: "How is it this girl can sit beside you, and I cannot?"

"Why not rouse her?" replied Buddha. "Why not summon her from *samadhi*'s three-shadowed earth, and ask her for yourself?"

Manjushri walked around her three times, then snapped his fingers. He carried her away to the purest Brahma heaven, exhausted his supernatural powers, and still couldn't wake her.

The World-Honored-One said: "Even the power of a hundred thousand Manjushris couldn't wake this girl from her *samadhi*-meditation. Down below the underworld are twelve million kingdoms, kingdoms vast as Ganges sands. There, the Bodhisattva of Deceived-Wisdom lives. He can wake this girl from *samadhi*-meditation."

A moment later, the illustrious Deceived-Wisdom emerged out of the ground. He bowed reverently to the World-Honored-One; then the World-Honored-One issued his imperial command. Deceived-Wisdom went and stood before the girl, then snapped his fingers. At this, the girl awakened from her *samadhi*-meditation.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Old Master Shākyamuni Buddha—he covered the whole stage in theater without the least success. Right now: speak up! Tell me! Manjushri was the teacher of Shākyamuni and the other Seven Buddhas—so how is it he couldn't wake the girl from her *samadhi*-meditation? And Deceived-Wisdom, a rank novice—how is it he could wake her? You here before me in this sangha: if you can see right through to kindred intimacy, cut clean through to the intimate essence of this, you'll know the bustling industry of our everyday thought and worry is itself *samadhi* vast as that *samadhi*-meditation practiced by the ancient Buddha-Dragon.

GATHA

...

One could awaken her, the other could not:
either way, they move with perfect freedom.

Spirit masks, ghost faces: it's all deception.
Truth is, we live free and easy on the wind.

43: ORIGIN-MOUNTAIN'S ABBOT-STAFF

Master Origin-Mountain raised his bamboo abbot-staff before the sangha and said: “Alright, you monks. If you say this is a bamboo abbot-staff, you violate what it is. If you don’t say it’s a bamboo abbot-staff, you deny what it is. So, right now: speak up! Tell me! What is it?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

If you say this is a bamboo abbot-staff, you violate what it is. If you don't say it's a bamboo abbot-staff, you deny what it is. You can't answer with words; you can't answer without words. Quickly now: Speak up! Tell me quickly: what is it?

GATHA

...

Raising his abbot-staff, Origin fulfilled our
ancestral imperative to kill and bring to life.

Once you weave *deny* and *violate* together,
Buddhas and patriarchs beg for their lives.

44: BANANA MOUNTAIN'S TRAVEL-STAFF

Offering instruction to the sangha, Master Banana Mountain said: “If you have a travel-staff, I’ll give it to you. If you don’t have a travel-staff, I’ll take it from you.”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

It's your support when crossing a river where the bridge has collapsed. It's your friend when returning to your home village on a moonless night. If you call it a travel-staff, you'll plunge straight as an arrow into hell.

GATHA

...

Everywhere deep and shallow in this
world held in the palm of your hand,

it supports heaven and sustains earth,
keeping Ch'an alive wherever you go.

45: WHO IS THAT SOMEONE

Fifth-Patriarch Mountain, Dharma-Expanse teacher of patriarchs, said: “Even Shākyamuni and Maitreya Buddhas are servants to someone else. Right now: speak up! Tell me! Who is that someone else?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

See that *someone else* fully, understanding clearly, and it's like meeting your father at an intersection. Would you need to ask strangers passing by if it's him?

GATHA

...

Never draw someone else's bow.
Never ride someone else's horse.

Never show someone else's flaw.
Never probe someone else's life.

46: STEP BEYOND A FLAGPOLE

Master Rock-Frost said: “On top of the dharma-talk flagpole, a thousand feet up, how do you step out beyond?”

And an old master of mirror-sight clarity said:

If you sit deep in meditation atop the dharma-talk flagpole, you’ve begun. But it’s not clarity absolute. A thousand feet

up that flagpole, at the top, step out beyond—then you’ll see in the ten distances of time and space, your very self entire.

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

Step out beyond perfectly, self soaring perfectly out beyond, and you'll wonder if there's anywhere that isn't all praise and honor. So, right now: speak up! Tell me! On top of the dharma-talk flagpole, a thousand feet up, how do you step out beyond? Huh?!

GATHA

...

Buddha-gate eye gone dark, you confuse a thing's weight with marks on the scales measuring it out.

Venture self to give life away: fine, but that's still just a blind monk guiding a band of blind monks.

47: BUDDHA-LAND'S THREE GATEWAYS

Master Buddha-Land Mountain established three gateways to test his students:

“Open wild origins and penetrate depths of dark-enigma: that’s the only way to see your original-nature.

“So tell me, you monks here now today: your original-nature, where is it?”

“Know your original-nature in and of itself, know it perfectly, and you’re free of life and death.

“So tell me: at death, when the radiance of your eyes is falling away, how can you get free of life?

“If you’re free of life and death, perfectly free, you know where you dwell in the end.

“So tell me: the four elements you are—earth, air, fire, water—when they scatter away, where is it you’re going?”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

If you conjure hinge-phrases for these three gateways, you'll be in accord with wherever you are, empty and facing there Ch'an's ancestral nature, its origin-tissue. If you're free from doubt, coarse food fills you easily. Just chew it well, and you won't go hungry.

GATHA

...

A single thought sees everything across measureless *kalpas*, everything happening across measureless *kalpas* alive today,

alive here now looking through that single thought, looking clear through here now today into the very bottom of things.

48: HEAVEN-PEAK'S SINGLE PATH

A monk asked Master Heaven-Peak Mountain: “For holy Buddhas everywhere throughout all ten distances of time and space, there’s a single path entering the gate of nirvana. But I can’t find that Buddha-Way path anywhere.”

Picking up his staff, Peak traced a line on the floor and said: “It’s right here!”

Later on, the monk asked Cloud-Gate Mountain. Picking up his fan, Master Cloud-Gate said: “This fan leaps out into Thirty-Three-Peak Heaven, to lofty Sumeru Mountain at the very center of the Cosmos, where it slaps Lord Śakradevānām Indra’s nose. And if someone takes a stick and even so much as touches a carp in the eastern sea, rain pours down by the bucketful!”

NO-GATE'S COMMENT

...

One of them goes deeper and deeper to wander across sea bottoms, stirring dirt up into scattering dust. The other ascends higher and higher to stand on mountain summits, whipping waves up, billowing white-caps into sky.

One holding fast, one breaking free—they each stretch out a hand to support and continue our Ch'an household's teaching. But they're exactly like two horsemen crashing into each other.

There's no one here in this world who can see straight through to the very bottom of things. If you look closely with eyes of perfected clarity, you see even these two great elders don't have a clue where that Buddha-Way path is.

GATHA

...

In that moment before you take a first step, you've arrived.
In that moment before your tongue moves, you've spoken.

Things begin in loom-of-origins beginnings, all abundance,
and we know them there: Presence alive in this very mind.

NO-GATE'S AFTERWORD

IN THEIR INSTRUCTION, our ancestral patriarchs reveal the loom of origins and origin-tissue itself. Following them and trusting sincerely to the depths that these sangha-cases open, I begin without the least trace of words. Turning my skull inside out and laying my eyeballs bug-eye bare, I show everyone here in this sangha how to see for yourselves with absolute and immediate clarity, how to make that ancestral teaching your own and carry it forward. There's no need ever to search outside yourself.

If you've mastered this, really mastered it, you understand my explanations before I say a word. There's absolutely no gate to enter and no staircase to climb. You just stand proud and walk right through the gateway, no thought of asking permission from some guardian. Then you'll see right through Dark-Enigma-Sand Mountain, that great master, when he says: "No gate is the liberation gate, and no *ch'i*-mind the Buddha-Way *ch'i*-mind." And Cloud-Lucent Mountain, when he says: "If you illuminate Way itself with understanding's radiant clarity, you see that it's simply this, this, this here right now. Then how could you pass through and not continue on beyond?"

All this talk of mine: it's like dirt smeared into ox-milk. If you pass through the no-gate gateway wholly, you understand No-Gate's a useless dimwit. And if you don't pass through the no-gate gateway wholly, you betray what you yourself are. They say it's easy to understand nirvana-mind with radiant clarity, and difficult to understand knowledge-mind with radiant clarity.

But if you can understand knowledge-mind like that, you'll see that everything from your own household to the entire nation—it all

abides in and of itself tranquil and serene.

*At the Bestowal-Accord reign's inception,
five days before our summer session's
end, recorded in reverence here by No-
Gate Prajñā-Clear, eighth descendent of
Aspen-Crag Mountain.*

NOTES

Chapter titles are all made up of four ideograms, a play on the “set-phrase” often used in Chinese writing and speech. A set-phrase is a telegraphic four-word phrase that refers somehow to an ancient text or legend, a phrase that distills into four scarcely grammatical words all the dimensions of a story or anecdote or idea. The Chinese often use such set-phrases to make a complex point in an elegant and terse way, and there are so many set-phrases that they are collected in special dictionaries.

INTRODUCTION

Prajñā: The Buddhist term for perfected wisdom that is beyond all teaching and texts, enlightenment in which consciousness is empty of all ideas and discriminating thought—and so, identified with Absence.

NO-GATE’S FOREWORD

mind: Consciousness emptied of all content: empty-mind. See Key Terms.

courtyard gate: A traditional Chinese house had a low wall surrounding a courtyard in front. This wall had a double gate allowing entry to the courtyard and house. The wall was capped with roof tiles, and it extended over the gate with an enlarged cap that formed a kind of roof for the gate. In a literal sense, this is the gate that recurs here in *No-Gate Gateway*.

dharma: See Key Terms.

whatever enters through a courtyard gate: In addition to the more literal sense: perceptions entering mind from outside.

Bestowal-Accord reign, *wu* year of the rat: 1228.

Dragon: Dragon was China's mythological embodiment of earth's generative natural process, the awesome force of change. Both feared and revered as the mysterious force of life itself, dragon animates all things in the unending cycle of life and death and rebirth. As it embodies the process of change itself, dragon appears only to disappear again, and so is in constant transformation. It roams seething waters, and in autumn it descends into deep pools and lakes, where it hibernates until spring, when its awakening is the awakening of spring and the return of life to earth. It rises from the depths and ascends into the sky, its voice filling the spring winds that scatter autumn leaves. It takes the shape of storm clouds, its claws flashing as lightning. It produces life-bringing spring rains, and its rippling scales glisten in the bark of rain-soaked pines.

sangha-case: *Koan* in Japanese. See the [Introduction](#).

loom of origins: See Key Terms.

gate...roof-tiles: The courtyard wall was topped with roof-tiles. So this might be talking about the roof tiles on the wall above the courtyard gate and/or the roof-tiles on the house itself.

Star River: Our Milky Way.

Way: See Key Terms.

Absence: See Key Terms.

Presence: See Key Terms.

1. VISITATION-LAND DOG NATURE

no...Absence: For a discussion of this, perhaps the most important sangha-case in Ch'an literature, see the Introduction, [here](#).

Buddha-nature: See Key Terms: Buddha.

eye: See Key Terms: Eye/Sight

occurrence appearing of itself: *tzu-jan*. See Key Terms: Occurrence

samadhi: A meditative state of undifferentiated awareness: empty-mind free of dualistic distinctions such as consciousness and empirical reality, Absence and Presence, etc. Hence, consciousness

woven wholly into the Cosmos. The full Chinese term used to phonetically render the Sanskrit *samadhi* is 三昧地, which tellingly translates as “three-shadowed earth.”

2. HUNDRED-ELDER WILD FOX

fox: The fox was popularly seen as a crafty trickster-spirit that can wreak havoc in your life. And so it is an image for clever over-intellectualizing that is the opposite of direct Ch’an insight.

Mountain: Ch’an monasteries were typically located in remote mountains, and Ch’an masters leading those monasteries generally took the names of those mountains as their own: a reflection of how deeply Ch’an masters identified with mountain landscape.

kalpa...Kāshyapa Buddha: A *kalpa* is a world-cycle of 4,300,000 years. Kāshyapa was the sixth of the mythic Seven Buddhas of antiquity who lived in previous *kalpas* (see [here](#)). Shākyamuni Buddha, founder of Buddhism, was the last. Kāshyapa, who lived in the previous *kalpa*, is therefore the Buddha who preceded Shākyamuni.

karma: The widespread idea of karma involving multiple lives (as in Chapter 2) registered only as popular legend for Ch’an masters and artist-intellectual culture generally. They saw it more realistically as something like the law of cause and effect, the law driving change, where one thing leads logically to the next.

hinge-phrase: A surprising and revelatory comment uttered by either a master or a student. Uttered by a master, it opens a profound realization in a student, an awakening. Uttered by a student, it reveals that the student has attained such a realization or awakening.

travel-staff: Rough-hewn staff, perhaps seven feet tall, which is cut in the mountains and left mostly in its natural state. Carried by monks as they traveled the country visiting different Ch’an monasteries to learn from different masters, the travel-staff came to symbolize essential Ch’an insight, original Buddha-nature, etc.

Bodhidharma: The semilegendary figure who supposedly brought Ch’an to China from India (hence the ironic descriptor “Western

Barbarian”) in the sixth century. He is therefore the first patriarch in the Chinese lineage. The name means something like “Awakened-Dharma.” And in its Chinese transliteration, it means “Wisdom-Polished.”

5. INCENSE-REGAL STUCK HIGH

Buddha-eye: The mirror-deep eye gazing out with the clarity of an empty awakened mind. See Key Terms: Eye/Sight.

Maitreya Buddha: One version of Buddhism’s mythic history speaks of five Buddhas. Shākyamuni Buddha, founder of Buddhism, was the fourth. The fifth was Maitreya, who will appear sometime in the next *kalpa*.

6. WORLD-HONORED HELD FLOWER

Shākyamuni: The historical Buddha, founder of Buddhism.

eye’s treasure-house: See Key Terms: Eye/Sight.

formlessness: The tissue of reality seen as a single whole, as Absence. See the Introduction, [here](#).

dharma-gate: See No-Gate’s Foreword, which equates this dharma-gate with the No-gate/Absence-gate.

Lao Tzu: Founder of Taoism, the philosophical framework for Ch’an. See the Introduction, [here](#).

9. VAST INSIGHT SURPASSING WISDOM

Buddha-Way: Tao (Way), the generative ontological tissue, adopted to Buddhist terminology but without any real conceptual change. See Key Terms: Way (Tao).

10. LUCID-BLACK ALONE IMPOVERISHED

āchārya: In early Buddhism, a venerable master of the dharma.

11. LAND INTERROGATES SHRINE-MASTER


shrine-master: A very advanced monk who has received

transmission from a master, and then gone to live at a small local shrine hut to perfect insight through solitary meditation.

12. CRAG CALLED EMPTY ONE

Empty One: Literally “host,” this term (主) has two specialized Ch’an meanings: first, “host” as a master or teacher, and opposed to “guest” (客) as a student who would enter the monastery as a guest; and second, “host” as one’s original Buddha-nature, or empty-mind, and “guest” as one’s everyday mind with its thoughts and memories. These two meanings are parallel, as empty-mind is finally the teacher, and for a student, everyday mind is trying to learn from empty-mind.

fox: See [here](#).

absolute: The Chinese word is 真, the nebulous etymology for which seems to originate in early renderings of an eye with a line:  Hence, “the eye seeing straight,” from which came “straight, honest, direct,” and eventually “real, actual, perfectly true.” This etymology suggests Ch’an’s roots deep in ancient Chinese culture, for the word’s fundamental meaning seems essentially Ch’an in nature: “to see the world with this depth and clarity, sight mirroring things perfectly.” See also Key Terms: Eye/Sight.

13. MIRROR-SIGHT NESTLED BOWLS

Mirror-Sight: *Te* (德) was a key philosophical term in Taoist thought, where it traditionally translates as “Integrity.” In fact, it is the “Te” of the *Tao Te Ching* (*The Classic of Way and Integrity*), where it means “Integrity to Way,” in the sense of “abiding by Way,” or “enacting Way.” But a deeper etymological translation is something like “heart/mind-sight clarity” in an active verb sense. That is, heart-mind seeing empirical reality clearly, or in Ch’an terms: sight as empty-mind mirroring reality with perfect clarity.

14. WELLSPRING-SOUTH CHOPPED KITTEN

put Way itself wholly into words: There’s a clear echo here of the seminal first line from the *Tao Te Ching*: “A Way you can call Way

isn't the perennial Way," or alternately, "A Way that can be said isn't the perennial Way."

15. FATHOM MOUNTAIN THREE-SCORE

student wandering: Student monks typically traveled around learning from different teachers.

yes-this no-that: The idea that one should not choose yes-this or no-that is a recurring idea in *Chuang Tzu* (two examples among many might be Chuang-Tzu 2.8 and 5.6). Only by accepting the unfolding of *tzu-jan* as it is can one dwell wholly as a part of that unfolding. As soon as you begin to judge, approving of some things and disapproving of others, wishing they were otherwise, you have separated yourself from the selfless unfolding of *tzu-jan*.

16. BELL SOUND SEVEN-PIECE

see everything's a great family together: This is to see the tissue of reality as a single formless whole, as Absence.

17. NATION-TEACHER THREE TIMES

Nation-Teacher: Prajñā-Devotion was appointed to this position by the emperor, who took him as his personal teacher. This appointment thereafter became traditional, as in Chapter 26 (No-Gate's Comment).

18. FATHOM MOUNTAIN THREE POUNDS

What is Buddha?: In another of his literary calculations, No-Gate includes this same question multiple times: Chapters 18, 21, 30, 33. And not surprisingly, the answers are wild and contradictory.

19. ORDINARY MIND IS WAY

idleness: Idleness is the effortless and spontaneous movement of Way. To live in idleness was therefore a spiritual ideal widespread among the artist-intellectuals of ancient China, a kind of meditative

wandering in which you move with that effortless spontaneity of Way, a practice that ideally becomes the essence of daily life. Etymologically, the ideogram for idleness connotes “profound serenity and quietness,” its pictographic elements rendering a tree standing alone within the gates to a courtyard, or in its alternate form, a moon shining through open gates: 閑(閒).

20. SOMEONE OF GREAT POWER

ch’an stillness: *Ch’an* is the Chinese translation of *dhyāna*, Sanskrit for “sitting meditation.” The Ch’an sect takes that name because it focuses so resolutely on sitting meditation. See the Introduction, [here](#).

22. MAHĀKĀSHYAPA DHARMA-TALK FLAG

Mahākāshyapa: See Chapter 6 for the story of Buddha transmitting the dharma to Mahākāshyapa by holding up a flower.

Dharma-Talk Flag: A flag raised on the monastery flagpole to indicate that a dharma-talk is imminent. Hence, an image for enlightened talk and ideas, which are not to be trusted.

Ānanda: Ānanda was a disciple of Buddha for many years. Upon Buddha’s death, he became the disciple of Buddha’s successor, Mahākāshyapa. This is the story of his awakening, the moment he became the second of the legendary Indian patriarchs in the Ch’an lineage.

Vipashyin: First of the Seven Buddhas of mythic antiquity, Vipashyin lived many *kalpas* ago. Shākyamuni Buddha is the seventh in this legendary lineage. See [here](#).

yin and yang: The two fundamental forces of the universe: female and male, cold and hot, dark and light, earth and heaven. They arose from an undifferentiated primordial unity, and their interaction gives birth perennially to the empirical universe, its ten thousand things, and their constant transformations.

23. DON’T THINK RIGHT WRONG

Sixth Patriarch: Prajñā-Able (Hui Neng) is generally considered, with the exception of Buddha and Bodhidharma, the most important figure in the Ch'an lineage. His life and thought is recorded in *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*. The events in this chapter belong to the legend of Prajñā-Able's awakening, an archetypal tale in the Ch'an tradition. In brief, the story goes like this: Prajñā-Able was an illiterate pauper who went to study with Patience-Expanse (Hung Jen), the Fifth Patriarch, at Yellow-Plum Mountain. When Patience-Expanse chose Prajñā-Able, a lowlife newcomer, to be his heir, the monks were furious, and there were hundreds of them. Prajñā-Able fled the monastery, carrying with him the robe and bowl that were passed from master to master as a sign of dharma transmission. He was pursued by hundreds of monks who wanted to kill him and reclaim the robe and bowl. The pursuit lasted two months, and only Lumen, the head monk and a strong former general, had the endurance to catch the Sixth Patriarch. It is their encounter that is recounted in this chapter.

Prajñā-Able thereafter practiced in isolation for about fifteen years before he emerged and began teaching. The events in Chapter 29 occurred when he began teaching.

Yellow-Plum Mountain: The Fifth Patriarch, who gave transmission to Prajñā-Able was abbot at a monastery on Yellow-Plum Mountain.

24. IT ALL OUTSIDE WORDS

the differentiated and the undifferentiated: Literally, 離 ("separate" or "to leave"? meaning reality undifferentiated or *separate from* linguistic distinctions, and 微 ("subtle" or "minute"? meaning reality differentiated into the *subtle* diversity of the ten thousand things and the linguistic distinctions that correspond to that diversity. As such, they are virtually synonymous with *Absence* and *Presence*, respectively (for which, see Key Terms).

I always remember...: Here, Wind-Source Mountain is quoting a classical poem, though its source is unclear.

25. THIRD SEAT ELUCIDATES DHARMA

Maitreya Buddha: See [here](#).

four existential...negations: A comically complicated system of ontological distinctions from ancient Indian philosophy and logic.

27. IT ISN'T MIND BUDDHA

Broad seas are transformed into high peaks: The ancient Chinese understood large-scale geological processes.

28. DRAGON-LAKE LONG RENOWNED

Long Renowned: This title and the first couplet of the *gatha* assume knowledge of another detail in the story of the encounter between Mirror-Sight Mountain and Dragon-Lake. In other accounts of this story, when Mirror-Sight Mountain arrives at Dragon-Lake's monastery, he says: "Dragon-Lake has long been renowned, but here I find neither dragon nor lake." Dragon Lake responded: "Now you face that very Dragon-Lake."

Mirror-Sight Mountain: The tale in Chapter 13 comes from Mirror-Sight Mountain's maturity. Here we see him in his younger years.

inner-pattern: See Key Terms.

dark-enigma: See Key Terms.

mind-kindle bun: A type of bun commonly sold in street-shops.

29. NOT WIND NOT FLAG

Sixth Patriarch came: In Chapter 23, the Sixth Patriarch leaves the monastery after receiving transmission. He thereupon wandered for fifteen years, and this chapter recounts the moment of his return to Ch'an circles.

dharma-talk flag: See [here](#) for the metaphoric import of this flag.

30. THIS MIND THIS BUDDHA

What is Buddha?: As noted before, this archetypal question recurs

numerous times in *No-Gate Gateway*, in Chapters 18, 21, 30, 33. But here, compare especially Chapter 33 where the same master, Patriarch Sudden-Horse, gives the exact opposite answer.

33. NOT MIND NOT BUDDHA

What is Buddha?: Here, Sudden-Horse first dismantles the answer he gave in Chapter 31, and then the question itself.

35. TWAIN-BEAUTY'S SPIRIT FLED

Twain-Beauty: In legend, Twain-Beauty grew up with her cousin, and the two were so close they assumed they would one day be married. When Twain-Beauty's father betrothed her to another man, the grieving lover set out down the river for a new life. Before he had gone far, he heard the sound of footsteps running along the bank, and soon Twain-Beauty bounded onto his boat. Overjoyed together, they continued to their new home, where they lived happily for some years, bearing two children. Eventually Twain-Beauty longed so to see her parents that the couple returned to her home. The lover went to see her father and explain; but the father couldn't understand because, as he said, Twain-Beauty had been there at home all those years, lying sick in bed. When the lover brought Twain-Beauty to the house, the sick Twain-Beauty rose from her bed and ran to meet her counterpart. When they met, their two bodies came together into one.

Fifth-Patriarch Mountain: Another name for Yellow-Plum Mountain, location of the Fifth Patriarch's monastery (see p. 54 and note). This master became abbot at the same monastery, and he took the mountain's name as his own.

spirit: In ancient China, spirit was not conceived as an immortal "soul," as in the West. Instead, it was considered a condensation of *ch'i* energy, which dissolves back into the overall movement of *ch'i* at death. In popular thought, there were two dimensions to this spirit: a sky-spirit (魂) that drifted away into the sky at death, and an earth-spirit (魄) that went with the body into the ground, where it slowly dispersed. The sky-spirit can also leave the body temporarily when a

person is startled or during sleep (when it might visit the dreams of others). This sky-spirit is the part of Twain-Beauty that followed her lover away, while her earth-spirit remained at home.

38. WATER BUFFALO PASSING WINDOW

four forms of loving-kindness: Those bestowed by parents, nation, living beings everywhere, and by the three Buddhist treasures: Buddha, dharma, sangha.

three realms of existence: The realm of human desire, the realm of forms, and the realm of the formless.

39. CLOUD-GATE ALL WRONG

you've got it all wrong: Cloud-Gate is not saying that the monk quoted the poem inaccurately.

40. KICKED OVER WATER-JAR

seeing deeply into things themselves: The mirror-deep seeing at the heart of Ch'an understanding, here described using a term (格) taken from Confucius, who considered it a practice of final wisdom that can transform not just the individual, but all of society. Confucius describes it in this very influential passage from *The Great Learning*, a passage that no doubt influenced Ch'an thought deeply:

In ancient times, wanting to illuminate luminous Integrity in all beneath heaven, they began composing their nation. Wanting to compose their nation, they began putting their families in order. Wanting to put their families in order, they began cultivating themselves. Wanting to cultivate themselves, they began rectifying their minds. Wanting to rectify their minds, they began trueing up their thoughts. Wanting to true-up their thoughts, they began siting their understanding. And to site understanding is to see deeply into things themselves.

Once things themselves are seen deeply, understanding is sited.

Once understanding is sited, thought is trued-up. Once thought is trued up, mind is rectified. Once mind is rectified, self is cultivated. Once self is cultivated, family is in order. Once family is in order, the nation is composed. And once the nation is composed, all beneath heaven is tranquil.

all he endured: Founding the new monastery proved arduous indeed for River-Act. He remained with Hundred-Elder for years, leaving only after Hundred-Elder died. He then went to Upper River-Act Mountain, where he spent eight years living in solitary poverty before disciples finally began gathering around him. Eventually, with the help of the local governor, an illustrious monastery was constructed.

42. GIRL AWAKENED FROM SAMADHI

Manjushri: The incarnation of wisdom and teacher of the Seven Buddhas (see below).

Seven Buddhas: The Seven Buddhas of mythic antiquity who lived in successive *kalpas* (world-cycles each lasting 4,300,000 years), one per *kalpa*: Vipashyin, Shikin, Vishvabhū, Krakuchchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāshyapa, and Shākyamuni. Hence, Shākyamuni Buddha, founder of Buddhism, was the last of them. In another version of Buddhism's mythic history (see [here](#)), there are five Buddhas.

ancient Buddha-Dragon: Nagya, Buddha conceived as a dragon. For the philosophical implications of dragon, see [here](#).

43. ORIGIN-MOUNTAIN'S ABBOT-STAFF

Abbot-Staff: Symbol of a person's status as a Ch'an master who is the abbot of a monastery.

44. BANANA MOUNTAIN'S TRAVEL-STAFF

Travel-Staff: See [here](#).

45. WHO IS THAT SOMEONE

Maitreya: See [here](#).

46. STEP BEYOND A FLAGPOLE

flagpole: Used for the flag that indicates a dharma talk is imminent, hence its metaphoric resonance. See Chapters 22 and 29, and note to p. 52.

47. BUDDHA-LAND'S THREE GATEWAYS

Buddha-Land: Tushita, in Buddhist mythology, the pure land where the legendary lineage of Buddhas (see [here](#)) live before coming to earth.

original-nature: Consciousness emptied of all contents. See Introduction [here](#) and Key Terms: mind, Buddha.

empty: Synonymous with *empty-mind* and *Absence*.

48. HEAVEN-PEAK'S SINGLE PATH

Heaven: Not the usual word for heaven/sky (天), but 乾: title of the first hexagram in the *I Ching*. 乾 emphasizes heaven as the active generative force of the Cosmos, and it combines with 土申 (title of the *I Ching*'s second chapter), earth as the receptive generative force. It is the ceaseless interaction of these two cosmological principles (the grandest manifestation of *yin* and *yang*) that generates the process of change.

Śakradevānām Indra: Supreme deity of Vedic mythology, a sky god who rules the weather in particular (cf. *carp* and *rain* in the following sentence), with the help of the thirty-two devas who live on the other thirty-two peaks of this Thirty-Three-Peak Heaven.

stirring dirt up: Another reference to long-term geological processes, through which sea bottoms become dusty mountaintops.

NO-GATE'S AFTERWORD

nirvana-mind: Mind empty and without differentiation, the

apparent goal of Ch'an practice.

knowledge-mind: The mind of thought and ideation, the tangles of differentiation. That is, mind in its everyday engagement with the differentiated world of many things: knowing them, analyzing them, using them.

KEY TERMS

An Outline of No-Gate's Conceptual World

Ch'an's conceptual framework can easily be outlined by defining a few foundational terms, and our understanding of Ch'an changes dramatically when we realize that they are all either Taoist terms or Buddhist terms that have been redefined as Taoist concepts. This grounds Ch'an in Taoist cosmology, where reality is a generative ontological tissue to which consciousness belongs utterly (see the Introduction, p. ixff.). Concepts at this foundational level blur, and Taoist terminology proliferates—creating a host of virtually synonymous terms in the attempt to elucidate fundamental reality. Ch'an continues this intellectual habit, redefining a number of Buddhist terms and pushing them to that foundational level.

PRESENCE 有

The empirical universe, described in Taoist philosophy as the ten thousand living and nonliving things in constant transformation.

See the Introduction, [here](#)

Ref: [here](#)

ABSENCE 無

The generative tissue from which the ever-changing realm of Presence perpetually arises. This tissue is the ontological substrate infused mysteriously with a generative energy. Although made of the same stuff as Presence, it is *Absence* because it has no particular form. But because of its generative nature, it shapes itself into the individual forms of the Cosmos, then reshapes itself into other forms:

the ten thousand things in the constant process of change. In fact, a more literal translation of *Absence* might be “without form,” in contrast to “within form” for *Presence*. Absence is known directly in meditation (widely practiced by ancient Chinese poets and intellectuals), where it is experienced as empty consciousness itself, known in Ch’an terminology as “empty-mind” or “no-mind”: the formless generative source of thoughts.

See the Introduction, [here](#)

Ref: [here](#)

WAY (TAO) 道

The Tao of Taoism. As the generative ontological process through which all things arise and pass away, Tao might provisionally be divided into Presence and Absence. *Tao* is a prime example of overlapping terminology struggling to name the fundamental nature of reality, for in practice Tao is nearly identified with Absence because however much Presence takes its various forms, it always remains part of the ongoing generative process of formless Absence.

Tao represents one of the most dramatic indications that conceptually Ch’an is a refinement and extension of Taoism, because the term *Tao* is used extensively in Ch’an with largely the same meaning. It sometimes simply means “the Ch’an path to enlightenment,” a usage that parallels its use in Taoism (but even here the philosophical meaning resonates, as this usage implies that the particular practices of Taoism or Ch’an are part of Tao’s ongoing process). But more often, it is Tao as a generative ontological tissue, exactly as in Taoist texts like *Tao Te Ching*. In this sense, it is often best translated “Buddha-Way”; and in fact, it is sometimes combined with *Buddha* to form literally the term *Buddha-Way* (p. 24)—but its meaning remains virtually identical to the Taoist Tao. *Buddha-Way* also reveals how the term *Buddha* becomes an essentially Taoist concept in Ch’an (see entry on *Buddha* below).

See the Introduction, [here](#)

Ref: *passim*.

OCCURRENCE 自然

A central concept in Taoist ontology/cosmology, *tzu-jan* is a way of describing the process of Tao that emphasizes individual entities rather than the process as a whole. The literal meaning of *tzu-jan* is “self-ablaze.” From this comes “self-so” or “the of-itself.” As a philosophical concept, it becomes “being such of itself,” hence “spontaneous” or “natural.” But a more revealing translation of *tzu-jan* is “occurrence appearing of itself,” for the term is meant to describe the ten thousand things burgeoning forth spontaneously from the generative source (Presence from Absence), each according to its own nature, independent and self-sufficient, each dying and returning to the process of change, only to reappear in another self-generating form. Living as an integral part of that process was a spiritual practice (*wu-wei*, for which see the Introduction, [here](#)) widespread among artist-intellectuals of ancient China, and it informs Ch’an practice in fundamental ways: the wild antics of Ch’an masters, the way one responds to a sangha-case, etc.

See the Introduction, [here](#)

Ref: [here](#)

LOOM OF ORIGINS 機

A mythological description of *tzu-jan*: the particulars of the generative Cosmos in constant transformation. Chuang Tzu, the seminal Taoist writer, describes that ontology/cosmology like this: “The ten thousand things all emerge from a loom of origins, and they all vanish back into it.”

See the Introduction, [here](#)

Ref: [here](#)

DARK-ENIGMA 玄

Another example of concepts blurring at foundational levels, *dark-enigma* was functionally equivalent to Absence, the generative ontological tissue from which the ten thousand things spring—but

Absence before it is named. Or more properly, it is Way before it is named, before Absence and Presence give birth to one another—that region beyond name and ideation where consciousness and the empirical Cosmos share their source. *Dark-enigma* came to have a particular historic significance, for it became the name of a neo-Taoist school of philosophy in the third and fourth centuries C.E.: Dark-Enigma Learning, a school that gave Chinese thought a decidedly ontological turn and became central to the synthesis of Taoism and Buddhism into Ch'an Buddhism.

See also the Introduction, [here](#)

Ref: [here](#)

ORIGIN-TISSUE 緣

緣 is virtually synonymous with *Absence*, *Tao*, and *dark-enigma*: reality as a single tissue, undifferentiated and generative. Birth, the formation of the ten thousand individual things, is described as 緣合 (*yüan-ho*): “origin-tissue coming together.” And death, the unraveling of individuation, is described as 緣離 (*yüan-li*): “origin-tissue scattering.” So the vast and ongoing transformation of things is this origin-tissue coalescing into individual forms and then dispersing back into a single undifferentiated tissue.

Ref: [here](#)

INNER-PATTERN 理

The philosophical meaning of *inner-pattern*, which originally referred to the veins and markings in a precious piece of jade, is something akin to what we call “natural law.” It is the system of principles or patterns that governs the unfolding of *tzu-jan*, or the manifestations of origin-*ch'i* as it takes on the forms of the ten thousand things. Inner-pattern therefore weaves Absence and Presence into a single boundless tissue. But concepts at these ontological depths blur, especially in the intermingling of Taoist and Buddhist thought; and in the hands of various writers, *inner-pattern* appears virtually synonymous with a host of other key concepts: Tao,

tzu-jan, Buddha, *prajñā* (empty awakened mind: see [here](#)).

Ref: [here](#)

CH'I 氣

氣 is often described as the universal life-force breathing through things. But this presumes a dualism that separates reality into matter and a breath-force (spirit) that infuses it with life. Like the Absence/Presence dichotomy, that dualism may be useful as an approach to understanding; but more fully understood, *ch'i* is both breath-force and matter simultaneously. It is a single tissue generative through and through, the matter and energy of the Cosmos seen together as a single breath-force surging through its perpetual transformations. In its originary form, it is origin-*ch'i* (元氣), which is essentially the same as Absence, though perhaps emphasizing Absence as dynamic and generative. Origin-*ch'i* is made up of *yin* and *yang* completely intermingled and indistinguishable. Once origin-*ch'i* separated out into *yin* and *yang*, *yang* rose up to become sky and *yin* sunk down to form earth. Always in motion, animating all things, *ch'i* is a kind of tissue that connects each individual always to the empty source.

Ref: [here](#)

MIND 心

In Ch'an parlance, *mind* principally refers to consciousness emptied of all contents, a state reached through deep meditation: hence, *mind* as "original-nature" or "Buddha-nature." This consciousness in its original-nature is nothing other than Absence, that generative cosmological tissue—for it is the empty source of thought and memory, and also an empty mirror open via perception to the ten thousand things of Presence. So once again: Ch'an's conceptual framework is fundamentally Taoist in nature.

Ch'an sometimes also uses *mind* in the common English sense of the word, as the center of language and thought and memory, the mental apparatus of identity. This usage is necessary in order to

describe the goal of Ch'an practice, which is to replace mind as the analytical faculty with *mind* as consciousness emptied of all contents. From this come the terms *empty-mind* or *no-mind*—which are, confusingly, virtually synonymous with *mind* in its primary Ch'an sense.

In ancient China, there was no fundamental distinction between heart and mind: 心 connotes all that we think of in the two concepts together. In fact, the ideogram is a stylized version of the earlier 𤝵, which is an image of the heart muscle, with its chambers at the locus of veins and arteries. This integration of mental and emotional realms allows the Ch'an experience of empty- or no-mind to be not just a spiritual or intellectual experience, but also a rich emotional experience.

See also the Introduction, [here](#)

Ref: passim.

CH'I-MIND 意

Containing the pictographic element for *mind* (心), 意 has a range of meanings: “intentionality,” “desire,” “meaning,” “insight,” “thought,” “intelligence,” “mind” (the faculty of thought). The natural Western assumption would be that these meanings refer to human consciousness, but 意 is also often used philosophically in describing the nonhuman world, as the “intentionality/desire/intelligence” that shapes the ongoing cosmological process of change and transformation. Each particular thing, at its very origin, has its own 意, as does the Cosmos as a whole. 意 can therefore be described as the “intentionality/intelligence/desire” infusing Absence (or Tao) and shaping its burgeoning forth into Presence, the ten thousand things of this Cosmos. It could also be described as the “intentionality,” the inherent ordering capacity, shaping the creative force of *ch'i*.

This range of meaning links human intention/thought to the originary movements of the Cosmos. And that link explains this translation's use of the term *ch'i-mind*, which is meant to open the cosmological context for the idea of an “intelligence” that infuses all

existence, and of which human thought is but one manifestation (although even here, notice No-Gate always deconstructs mind as the center of thought and ideation). So, 意 is a capacity that human thought and emotion share with wild landscape and, indeed, the entire Cosmos, a reflection of the Chinese assumption that the human and nonhuman form a single tissue that “thinks” and “wants.” Hence, thought/identity is not a transcendental spirit-realm separate from and looking out on reality, as we assume in the West. Instead, it is woven wholly into the ever-generative *ch’i*-tissue (or as it might have been expressed in ancient China: they are particular condensations of *ch’i*-energy), which is to say they are woven wholly into a living “intelligent” Cosmos.

Ref: [here](#)

BUDDHA 佛

Buddha refers most literally to Shākyamuni, the historical Buddha, but also to a host of other Buddhas in Buddhist mythology. Beyond its use as an element of storytelling, Ch’an invests no faith in those mythologies. And it is primarily interested in Shākyamuni at the deep level of his essential nature, which is his empty-mind. So the meaning of the term *Buddha* expands to mean empty-mind, emphasized in the term *Buddha-nature*; and because empty-mind is the central concern of Ch’an, Buddha also came to mean the essence of Ch’an. This empty-mind is available to each of us, so Buddha-nature is our original-nature, which opens the possibility both of meeting the Buddha and the patriarchs directly, and also of being indistinguishable from them, of being Buddha oneself (a common theme of No-Gate’s). And finally, as empty-mind is indistinguishable from Absence or dark-enigma, *Buddha* becomes synonymous with those terms too, and even the generative Tao (Way) itself. Hence, *Buddha* is absorbed into the Taoist cosmology, becoming another term used to describe that generative tissue that remains always just beyond language, most explicitly in the term *Buddha-Way* (see entry above for *Way*).

See also the Introduction, [here](#)

Ref: passim.

DHARMA 法

Dharma in Ch'an is the teachings of the Ch'an tradition. But Ch'an's essential teaching is outside of words and ideas, and here is *dharma*'s most fundamental meaning: the sheer thusness of things that is the true teaching. And this is actually the term's primary use in *No-Gate Gateway*—virtually synonymous with *tzu-jan*, *Tao*, *Absence* (*emptiness*), *dark-enigma*, even *Buddha*. Another example of a Buddhist term being adapted to function at the deepest ontological/cosmological levels of the Taoist conceptual framework, where concepts blur together.

Ref: passim.

EYE/SIGHT 目, 眼, 見, 直, etc.

Once mind is emptied of all content (through meditation and sangha-case practice), the act of perception becomes a spiritual act: empty-mind mirroring the world, leaving its ten thousand things free of all thought and explanation—utterly simple, utterly themselves, and utterly sufficient. This is the heart of Ch'an as a landscape practice. In such mirror-deep perception, earth's vast rivers-and-mountains landscape replaces thought and even identity itself, revealing the unity of consciousness and landscape/Cosmos that is the heart of sage-dwelling not only for Ch'an practitioners, but for all artist-intellectuals in ancient China. But it is especially important for Ch'an. In fact, [Chapter 6](#) says the essence of Ch'an is the “perfect dharma of the eye's treasure-house.” And so, to emphasize the sense of a mirror-deep eye gazing out with the clarity of an empty awakened mind, *Buddha-eye* is sometimes used here in the translation of these terms. This perceptual clarity is itself nirvana or awakening, and it is always available in everyday experience. It is another way of meeting Buddha and all the patriarchs directly, but also of being indistinguishable from them, of being Buddha oneself.

See also the Introduction, [here](#)

Ref: passim.

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