

*A  
Staff  
for the  
Mind*

*Kokoro no Tsue*

Shodo Harada

Calligraphy collection  
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*First, I went following  
the sweet grasses;  
Now I return chasing  
falling leaves home*

Hajime hōsō ni shitagatte  
sari,  
Mata rakka o ōte kaeru

始隨芳草去  
又逐落花回

This verse is from the works of the priest Chosha Keijin, whose posthumous name was Shoken Daishi. The 36th case of the *Blue Cliff Record* tells about him.



始隨芳草去  
又逐落花回

The Chinese *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*, a famous compilation that includes the history of the Tang Dynasty, describes the exquisite area from which Chosha Keijin came. This place of incomparable scenery, Chosha, is located in the Hunan area of China, on the southeast shore of Lake Dotei. It is often referred to as one of the most famous scenic spots in all of China.

In the Chosha district Keijin founded the temple of Rokunji (Deer Park), where he lived for a time. Although he was the founder and first head priest of Rokunji, he later disappeared. No one was able to locate him as he wandered freely, following his karmic affiliations and teaching those he encountered along the way.

For the rest of his life he continually moved from place to place, doing so with a huge and free state of mind. What he did in his life is not recorded, only that he did it freely. Yet even in the small amount of information we have about him it can be seen that he was simple and unadorned, yet huge and abundant. He wrote poems like the one at the beginning of this text, with beautiful words that are easy to remember and reflect a deeply poetic mind.

This Chosha Keijin Zenji lived during the same era as Rinzai, Tokusan, and Tozan. They all lived during the most flourishing era of Zen in the Tang dynasty. Chosha was the disciple of Nansen Fugan Zenji, who was in turn a disciple of Master Baso Doitsu, who had been transmitted to by Joshu. Chosha's brother disciple was Riko Taifu, who also received transmission from Nansen.

Chosha was deeply familiar with scholastic works such as the *Flower Garland Sutra*. Nansen's dharma was transmitted to him, and his own poems were deep. He lived an abundant life, full and free.

Once he was asked, "If you cut a worm into two pieces, and they are

both moving, is the Buddha nature in the tail or in the head?"

He responded, "A worm cut into two--which half is the true worm?" In the same way that he was asked, he answered immediately, "You say that a worm is divided into two and it is moving, but where is the Buddha Nature?"

The person of training answered, "Don't answer so casually and vaguely! When one has true wisdom, as soon as he answers, there must be the energy of the heaven's essence in that answer."

To this the master replied, "Of course! The whole of my answer is the energy of the heavens. What it says in the sutras is that in all the eight directions infinitely there is nothing that is moving, yet that whole unmoving universe is in every second transforming, manifesting as the elements of wind, water, earth, and fire, and in that, our five senses begin to function, and then all things are done. So the whole world is the state of mind of the Buddha, and there is no birth or death, creation or destruction, left or right, moving or not moving, no such words as those, even from the beginning. It is clearly written!"

Then he gave his famous words:

Those who study the Way,  
Do not know the real.  
Because from the first they  
recognize  
Only the perceiving mind.  
That which from the  
beginningless beginning  
Has been the source of birth  
and death,  
This is that which stupid men  
Call the original body.

People of training, don't rely only on your knowledge and neglect to realize where that knowledge originates from! To think that only what you understand or see or hear or think or feel or taste is the truth and to rely on that as all that exists is the source of delusion. You have to know the source

of all of these things, or you will always fall into delusion. We all mistakenly take our own ego and its perception as the source. This is a huge error. This is the source of delusion; people think this for their entire lives and never clarify the true source of what sees and hears and smells and tastes and feels. These are Chosha's famous words.

When his master, Nansen, died, Chosha was asked, "Where has Nansen gone?"

He answered, "He is born as the donkey of the east house and the horse of the west house."

The questioner responded, "What does that mean?"

Chosha said, "Where is the donkey, where is the horse? Don't you know? If you want to get on it, get on it; if you want to get down off it, get down off it."

Spontaneously he spat out the truth, unequivocally. When someone came to ask the fundamental truth of the lineage, he would answer clearly, anything extra or any hesitation.

Another time, he was asked about the state of mind of breaking through. He would always answer with excellent words of light and truth. And that huge sharp functioning would always be without attachment--in an instant.

One lovely night he was talking with Master Kyozan of the Iggyo sect, with whom he often spent time. Kyozan pointed to the moon in the sky and said, as if talking to himself, "Everyone thinks about This, but no one uses it." He was referring to True Nature.

Chosha said, "Perfect! So use it!"

Kyozan countered, "No I want YOU to use it!" He had used it immediately.

Chosha stood up suddenly and kicked Kyozan so hard he fell over! It was done as if to say, "I don't use it in such a halfhearted way as you do. You have to use it totally, like that!"

Kyozan said, "That's true, but you are

so rough, like a big ferocious tiger!" From that time on Chosha was known as "Jin (from Keijin) Big Tiger," because he would always act so immediately and fiercely. It is rare to meet up with one like this Chosha Keijin.

One day, probably during the time when he was at Rokunji, he went for a long walk, wandering in the mountains. When he came back to the mountain gate, the story goes that the head monk was waiting there. The monk asked him, "Master, where have you been? There are many disciples gathered here for training--where have you been--just wandering around?"

The head monk was correct to criticize the wandering master. One has to have this kind of functioning, or you cannot protect a dojo.

Chosha responded, "I went to the back mountain to play a little." We need to look clearly at the word *play* to see what it really means here. Chosha said, "First, I went following the sweet grasses." To play is not to be irresponsible. There has to be a goal in our life, or we can't live. Each of us has a goal, to achieve this or that, to build a house, to make a home, or to live in a place of great scenery--we all have deep wishes. Many have missions. People have different plans and values in their lives, and the meaning of life is expressed through them. But when goals are achieved, what do you do?

At this point, we can work toward a new goal, but when this is fulfilled, what then? Here is where we have to see the meaning of the word *play*. We need to have a goal, but if we aren't acting playfully within each and every second of realizing the goal, while in the very midst of living and struggling, if we think we have to wait until later to play, then we aren't realizing the true value of life. So many people in the world live that way, and it makes them very melancholy.

We work when young, hoping to make enough money to be able to live

in a place of great beauty when we are old--well, it doesn't always work out that way. Even if we do realize this goal, we don't know how our bodies will be, whether or not we'll be healthy and free of pain. We may be suffering with a body in pain. What happened to the time for play we have been waiting for? We have to wonder about this.

The play of Chosha isn't like the play of young people today who think they should enjoy themselves while they are young, nor is it only being happy ourselves, thinking that there are infinite sources of happiness. It isn't like that. It makes us melancholy to continue that way, and we need a true goal beyond that. We have to have a goal and put our life on the line for it, but at the same time, in every moment of fulfilling that goal, we need to be playful--not only valuing reaching the goal one day, but also finding fulfillment in each and every moment. How to make this world the best, how to live this life the best, how to make humankind the best--all are important. At the same time, experiencing the essence of our journey is as important as the securing our goal. We must know not just the form of realizing our goals but the essence in realizing them as well.

When this is seen as important, then our religious mind comes into the picture. Living in the world today, full of contradictions and miseries, and yet finding it to be heaven on earth--this is the world of religion. To be able to live in this world which is like hell and find it to be like heaven, to be able to actually live this, is the true worth of religion. This is to be fully awakened within the phenomena of being born and dying. While having desires, within those desires we remain unmoved. No matter the catastrophe, destruction, or hideous situation we find ourselves in, we can be in it with a serene, full, and taut mind.

Rinzai compares it to being "in the middle of town but still on the Way."

In the *Kannon Sutra* it is said that the Bodhisattva has come into this severe and challenging world to play, to be with the phenomena. This doesn't mean to dwell in the viciousness of life but to change our way of seeing things so that we might know the joy of bringing all beings out of suffering. Then, our play is liberating others; likewise, suffering becomes our play, and working becomes our play. In this blood-bathed world where we shave our bones in the efforts to liberate others, this also is play.

Chosha Keijin said he had gone "to play" without thinking about the word. He was clearly expressing his own way of living.

But when the head monk heard the phrase he didn't get it or didn't agree with it and asked, "You said you went to play, but tell me clearly, where did you go to play?"

But Chosha didn't say anything clearly, only answered vaguely that he was in the mountains playing, so the monk had to inquire further. When Chosha had to give an answer, this poem was born of his mouth:

First, I went following the sweet  
-grasses;  
Now I return chasing falling  
leaves home

When I left, those flowers were all blooming. The cherry and the peach flowers were so beautiful, and while I was looking at them they pulled me right into the deep mountains, and then the clover and the dandelions were blooming and the butterflies were dancing, and while looking at them, I arrived home again. In each and every moment's world and encounter we find the meaning of life.

This is not about finding the meaning only when we eventually realize our goal, but about finding joy no matter where we are, no matter what difficult or miserable circumstances we

find ourselves in. Knowing it as our actuality of being alive. This is what Chosha Keijin is saying here. In each and every moment, right here, right now, we visit our true value; we must live wholly and totally in each instant.

This is the samadhi of living the life of the Buddha. Our training should be like this. We do training and talk about satori, but if we drown in the struggle we'll be in hell. Without being attached to a Buddha's state of mind, if we work on each and every single period of practice, then it becomes joyful play and we aren't waiting for some satori to happen some time far away. Instead, everything we do is done with the mind of the Buddha.

In this eternal life we find our true play; in the truth of being alive we play. When Chosha gave this poem, the monk was still not satisfied with this answer. Rather he said, "Fine, but what are you so happy about, wandering around like this?" His implication was that Chosha was a miserable and irresponsible teacher.

The monk was doing his job well, making sure Chosha was not being careless but was instead watching his footsteps. People who work from Monday to Friday often think that they have only the weekend to be happy. After five days of suffering through our work, we try to make up for that with two days of being happy--what kind of life is this? It leaves us looking here and there to figure out where else we should go and wondering what else we can do to be happy. A life lived like that can only be melancholy. This is point being made.

The monk said he understood. Nonetheless, we have another verse that Chosha added, and which we have already written about: "Autumn dewdrops glisten on the lotuses." When the great lotus leaf becomes wilted and dead in the autumn, it is beat upon by the autumn rain, presenting a chill, bleak scenery.

"You may think I am sick and

irresponsible, but it is better than doing what you are doing." In the words "autumn dewdrops glisten on the lotuses" we have that place where all playing and color are also let go of, the world of Nirvana where everything is let go of completely.

First, I went following the sweet  
grasses;  
Now I return chasing falling  
leaves home

This is the world where each and every moment is joyful and the point of being alive. Yet we can't just adapt ourselves vaguely to each moment's experience, or there will be no true joy in our hearts. We have to experience this place of no other, no self, and not one bit of anything in the heavens and earth, like our true zazen. We have to live in this way every single day--and then each day is truthful and playful, and there every day is a day in a life of meaning.

It isn't about enduring pain every day of our lives and looking forward to something else that will come along, later and far away, but for each and every moment to be true, to be our goal, to have a deep worth, to be complete. These are the great words of Chosha Keijin, and there the monk was quieted.

Chosha was always telling this monk to not take his eye off his footsteps, and so he could not reply a single word to Chosha. And even years later Setcho said these were truly the words of the Buddha and an important teaching for how to live our lives. Master Setcho saw the state of mind of Master Chosha and thanked him deeply.

First, I went following the sweet  
grasses;  
Now I return chasing falling  
leaves home

Our lives cannot be lived in a facile, casual, vague way. We have to keep our sight on our very own footsteps and live fully and thoroughly in each second, without being moved around by anything. Then, in each and every moment we will find deep wonder and amazement and joy, and the value of life will be clear. We must hold this kind of life precious.

First, I went following the sweet  
grasses;  
Now I return chasing falling  
leaves home

We too must be able to speak like this about the value of our own life.

江  
碧  
鳥  
愈  
白

*Against the green  
river,  
The birds are even  
whiter*

Kō midori ni shite tori  
iyoiyo shiroku

江碧鳥愈白

Against the green river,  
The birds are even whiter

These lines form a couplet with:

On the blue mountains,  
The flowers look ready to burst  
into flame.

These phrases are found in the work of Toho, a Chinese poet of the Tang dynasty. When these words were written, Chuan was the official capital of China. The city of Seito was considered to be the second capital, and it was here that the Kinko river flowed. Its waters were very blue, sparkling like green jewels. This flowing blue and green seemed to reach from the eternal past through to the infinite future; it was abundant and never-ending.

This river's water flowed like infinite time; yet in every instant it was also changing, never touching the same bank twice. In this one instant there is a white bird, whose brilliant white can be seen against the great blue of the river.

Seito is surrounded by mountains, and in springtime the mountains are so green that they appear blue against the clear blue sky. Within that deep green of the mountains bright red flowers grow in such profusion that they appear to be on fire.

In his poem, Toho is saying, here I am in Seito, the second capital of China. It is fully spring, this year's spring like all springs. I see all of those who have journeyed here, and I become melancholy. How many years have I resided in Seito? Again, I dream of returning to Choan. I came to Seito for a short time but have never been able to return home. When will I ever be able to return to Choan?

In China, Toho is the poet sage of greatest fame, considered a master of poetry even today, but he wasn't recognized as a master until forty years after his death in the middle of the Tang dynasty. Toho was born in 712 under the reign of Emperor Genso, who was overthrown in a famous coup d'état. For the fifty-nine years of his life, Toho was truly in the midst of it all, tasting deeply the bitter flavors of the era.

When the coup occurred, Emperor Genso fled the capital along with his

wife, Yokihi, famous for her beauty. But they weren't successful in their escape. As a young man, Emperor Genso had done an excellent job of ruling the country, but whether he got tired of politics, or lost his passion for it, in his later years the governing of his country became very chaotic. Toho lived his life surrounded by this chaos.

Emperor Shukuso took over after Emperor Genso, and the country was revived. At the time, Zen was centered in Kosei with Master Baso and in Konan with Sekito. This was for Zen an era of great flourishing. National Teacher Echu Kokushi, who had received transmission from the Sixth Patriarch, taught both Shukuso and his son Daiso. When we consider the influence that Echu Kokushi had on both of these leaders, we can see what an extensive influence Zen had on the Tang Dynasty.

Toho the poet was imbued with great integrity. During the Tang, people suffered greatly from the political upheavals. They were taxed heavily, and their sons were conscripted to serve in the army. Toho wrote his poetry to express the pain he saw among people in society and his anger at the evil that was going on. One of his famous poems recounts the lives of people who were no longer there; describing the weeds and ruins where they had lived and how the winds blew through those weeds. He wrote of the transience and impermanence that he had experienced. Understanding this suffering himself, he expressed it for everyone. But he also knew a perspective that was above all of this suffering, and he presented that for everyone as well.

When the capital of Choan fell, Toho, at the age of forty-eight, headed for Seiko. He stayed there three years and made many friends. With the help of these people, he experienced not only pain but also the karmic connections of those he met and the joy of nature. From this he could know the round, huge mind of Great Nature. This

poem expresses this state of mind.

Against the green river,  
the birds are even whiter

The world of nature and the world of humans and of what humans make are all impermanent. They are always flowing, always moving, always in flux. Nothing stays the same. The river flows, and in one instant the birds alight, then fly away leaving no trace. Changes in the seasons bring change to the colors of the mountains and especially to the colors of their flowers. Without our ability to catch the moment, flowers are fallen and gone.

All things are transient, and everything is emptiness. In the mirror of our Buddha Nature everything is reflected, everything is a shadow. This is because the world that is reflected has no actuality. The moment when it is all reflected is, in fact, from the origin a moment of emptiness. It is without birth and without death. Each and every moment in which we are alive is all there is, but there is no actuality to that--everything outside and inside of us is always changing. When we see this, all of the changing becomes a matter of course and we are no longer caught on everything being temporary. We are serene inside.

When we see the world with this quiet state of mind, then the flowing waters in front of our eyes, the waters of the Kinko river, are the eternal now. White birds that cross this river are, in their one instant, eternal. We do not live in some concept of the eternal. In each instant this eternity exists, and we live in that. This is our eternal life. Knowing this, we can't take lightly what we see with our eyes or hear with our ears. Each and every encounter is one opportunity, one chance; what we see is the truth. Those who are traveling are never always on a journey. With this mind, in every single moment of NOW we are safely in our own home.

And if it is seen like this, then every moment, right now, we are in Choan. Being in Seiko is also being in Choan. We can receive it like this. Every day is lived with our whole body and being; we seriously and whole-heartedly live this life that can't be done over. This today, which will never come again, this right now, which will not return, is lived with our integrity. It won't be here again; we can never meet the same person the same way twice.

In his last years Toho was like the Buddha, who by the river's side lay down beneath the Sala tree and died in the midst of his travels. Toho lived simply his whole life. But he had the warmth of a well-ripened person and wasn't moved around by circumstances he encountered. His huge and abundant mind drew many people to him.

In this way the words of his poem teach us truth, and in this way the Zen phrases give life to the truth for all people.

*In a vase,  
a single plum bough*

Heiri isshi no ume

瓶裏一枝梅

The author of this phrase from the Zenrin Kushu collection of Zen sayings is unknown. It's a couplet with:

On the rack, a three-foot sword



The words describe a huge, splendid sword and a fine plum branch in a vase. A sword, which takes away someone's life, and a plum bough, which brings us great relief and quiet as we slowly look at it, are truly opposites.

While the sword on display is the choice of the samurai and a life-taking weapon, that old tree's branch, the single plum bough, is truly the strong, fresh manifestation of new life coming into being. And the power of the ancient plum tree's bough in the vase gives even more weight to the strength of the fine sword. But we have to wonder, what meaning could there be to these words, anyway?

It is written in the *Records of Rinzai* that in his dojo, during the Tang Dynasty, when the monks of the East and West zendos met, the head monks of each zendo simultaneously gave a great shout.

In ancient China there were so many people doing training in the Zen dojos that they could not all fit inside one building, no matter how great it was. As a result, there would be an East zendo and a West zendo, with five hundred monks in each one doing training and supporting each other in their diligent efforts; for each zendo there was a jikijitsu, a person of responsibility who would teach those training there. Rinzai Zenji was always giving a great shout to manifest humans' great truth. This is so commonly known about him that if you say "Rinzai," the great shout of "Katsu" naturally comes to mind.

When someone would ask him, "What is the Buddha?" he would express a great shout "Katsu!!" as a manifestation of the answer. No cumbersome verbal explanation was offered; rather, immediately on the spot, he would present this actuality of the Buddha.

"What was the intention of Bodhidharma in coming to China?"

"Katsu!"

When asked about the state of mind of Daruma Daishi in coming from India to China, without the slightest interfering thought, Rinzai would give a great shout.

Because Rinzai was always doing a great shout, his disciples as well held this expression important for manifesting their clear mind. At some point the jikijitsu of the East zendo and the jikijitsu of the West zendo met; because they were the leaders, the teachers of the zendo, they perhaps had a moment of consideration, but that aside, they simultaneously gave a great shout.

One monk asked about this, "The two heads of the zendos gave great shouts simultaneously, so which was the host and which was the guest?"

Rinzai Zenji was always strictly teaching about the relationship of guest and host, that the guest is the host, the true master with no speck of ego remaining. This relationship between guest and master is important in all of our interactions in society as well. We are all equal, so it should not be of any concern who is master and who is guest, but on some occasions and at some times this sits well with us, and sometimes it doesn't.

If we invite someone and prepare for them, we are the host and they are the guest. The host or master is also sometimes the guest when invited by someone else. Today I am invited, tomorrow I invite them back and become the master. It is the same for conversing; one person can't always be doing the talking. Sometimes I talk, sometimes I listen. Being able to function with this kind of freedom, without being caught on position but instead able to see clearly and correctly what is appropriate for the time and place, is what gives birth to a society of harmony.

For Rinzai there was special emphasis on the four positions of guest and host and the four relationships between person and surroundings.

*Old bamboo produces  
new shoots*

Kyūchiku shinjun o  
shōzu

舊竹生新筍

These words are from the seventh volume of the teishos of Daito Kokushi, the Kaian Kokugo. They are part of a couplet:

Old bamboo produces new  
shoots,  
New blossoms grow out on old  
branches.

舊竹生新筍

In China, bamboo, plum, orchid, and chrysanthemum are called the four friends, often painted together in pictures, elegant and manifesting purity and the mind of the sage. Because of this they are often carved into drawers and tables and used as designs on kimonos. Another frequently seen combination is that of bamboo and plum and pine, emblematic of congratulations, of celebration.

Bamboo always comes through the cold winter without losing its green color. Of course this is also true of the pine, but bamboo actually grows in the quiet chill of winter, staying strong and cultivating its essence. Because of this, it represents that which perseveres in difficult circumstances without changing its state of being. Because its form manifests this, it is considered felicitous.

Just as bamboo and pine keep their green richness in the severest of winters and embody perseverance as well, so too does the plum blossom blooming in the snow. Even in the snowiest season, regardless of how thin and fragile it appears, bamboo can hold a heavy load of snow.

In the spring the bamboo shoots are a sign of vivid new life. The many varieties of bamboo have been considered a delicacy of spring eating by the Japanese. There are probably few nationalities that are so attached to seasonal foods. In the spring, bamboo shoots are considered most delicious, while in autumn it is the pine mushrooms.

It takes great effort and time to dig bamboo shoots, and if you don't know how to do it right you might end up cutting into and damaging the shoot.

First, you have to go to the bamboo grove early in the morning and look under leaves that have piled up on the ground. The key is to see a bit of a swelling, or a bump in the piles. The bamboo shoots that are still nearly underground are very small, tender,

and flavorful, with no bitterness whatsoever. You can even eat them raw with soy sauce.

When you find a swell, you pull away leaves until you can see the head of a shoot. If you look carefully at the angle at which the bamboo shoot is growing, you can then insert your digging tool in that same direction. This enables you to dig the shoot out in one slash, without cutting into it. This is because the direction from which the shoot slants also indicates where it is attached to its parent root. The shoots grow from the older bamboo's roots. In the same manner, the plum blossom blooms forth from its parent branch on the tree.

Old and new bamboo are one; they share one very subtle world. There's no greater value in life than thinking of one's descendants. When the Buddha wrote in the Lotus Sutra about this state of mind, it was expressed in the story about Choja Guji and the children who would not leave the burning house. This teaching of the transience of all things was a manifestation of the Buddha's expedient means.

In this story Choja represents the Buddha, and the children that will not leave the burning home are all sentient beings. The children are trapped in the world of form, represented by the burning house. Choja uses expedient means to get the children out of the house, telling them there were various animal carts outside. The carts represent the various vehicles of awakening to the true teaching, awakening by hearing the truth and awakening by experiencing the truth.

In the Lotus Sutra, it tells us that, after hearing this story, those assembled practiced industriously and were able to realize freedom from the suffering of the three worlds. In another part of the Lotus Sutra, the great gratitude to the Buddha is related, along with how Kasho Sonja brought in Choja Guji to express this gratitude.

One of Choja's children, when very

small, became lost, and while Choja did everything possible, the child could not be found. Choja thought only about this child. One day in front of his house he saw a young beggar and realized with intuitive direct perception that this was indeed his lost son.

He first tried calling the young man to come to the house, but because of fear the beggar refused, going further and further away. Choja tried a variety of expedient means, as did the Buddha, giving tailored teachings. Finally Choja told the beggar who he was. The son was then able to realize that he had been born and raised in this very house.

The Buddha, in the same way, to liberate all beings from suffering, used every method and mode to share this wisdom. This is well expressed in the story of Choja. One after the other, the Buddha's teachings liberated people from the suffering of the three worlds. But that still wasn't sufficient to liberate everyone. Finally without any expedient means he taught the actual truth. He taught that we do not have to go through ascetic practices; that if we open our mind's eye we deeply see that we are all Buddhas from the origin. Every single one is endowed and complete.

If we open our Buddha eye, we are seeing with the very eye of Buddha. When we open this eye that sees everything, then even if we do not cut away every desire, we can become a Buddha while still having desires. The Buddha gave this wonderful teaching of the Dharma. The mind that is seeking and the mind which is guiding join and share one subtle world.



*The singing of quail,  
The fragrance of  
hundreds of  
blossoms*

Shako naku tokoro  
hyakka kanbashi

鶺鴒啼處百花香

This verse is from the 24th case of the Mumonkan, "Fuketsu's Speech and Silence." Fuketsu received transmission from Nanin Egyo Zenji, who followed Koke Zensho, who in turn received his transmission from Rinzai. Fuketsu was born in the year 896 and died in the year 973. This descendant of Rinzai

kept alive the master's teaching and spread it widely.

These words of Fuketsu Ensho Zenji are part of this couplet:

In my thoughts always, Konan  
in the third month,  
The singing of quail, the  
fragrance of hundreds of  
blossoms.

Kyozan of the Igyo school prophesied that Fuketsu would be the one who would spread the teachings of the Rinzai sect, and this prophesy came true. During Fuketsu's time, the Rinzai line flourished.

Fuketsu was once asked by a monk, "Both speech and silence are faulty in being ri or bi. How can we escape these faults?" The earliest source for these words is in the writings of Jo Hosshi, who expressed Zen prior even to Daruma Daishi.

Jo Hosshi was of the four great translators of the line of great translators under Kumarajiva. Jo Hosshi is said to have incurred the displeasure of the Shin ruler, Yo Ko, who ordered him to kill himself. He asked for and was given a week to live, and during that week he wrote his great treatise. Then he easily and openly received his death. His last words before he was executed were:

The four great elements  
From the first have been  
masterless;  
The five accumulations of  
shadows  
In their origin are empty,  
Laying one's head down  
On the naked blade of a sword  
Is not one whit different  
From cutting through the  
spring breeze.

Jo Hosshi was rare among people of training in having not only clear

doctrine but also a straightforward practice. At the time he lived, more than four hundred years before Daruma Daishi came to China, Zen was being splendidly taught.

The monk asked Fuketsu, "Both speech and silence are faulty in being either ri or bi. How can we escape these faults?" He was trying to defeat Fuketsu with his difficult question, as was a common practice of the time.

This was the same question Jo Hosshi had asked when writing about truth's source, the creation of the universe. All names and all forms are separate from division; they are all together in oneness. The whole universe holds all forms, but each and every one is settled in this great vessel of the universe.

Put another way, all things are settled in awareness. This is ri, that which is separated from all things. That vessel which is separated from all forms works in relationship to karmic affiliation. The earth, the moon, the sun, all planets, all the rivers and mountains on the earth, all the living plants, animals, and every other thing that exists everywhere are all within the great vessel of this universe. Each and every one of these things is the great universe.

It follows, then, that the one small flower in the garden manifests this whole universe; one ant, or the crying voice of one cicada, it too manifests the whole universe. The universe is full with the voice of the cicada; each and every thing in existence is equal. Each and every thing that is manifested is bi.

While all things in existence are individual, from the origin they are all one at the source. The whole expanse of the universe is in all things, and every thing manifests the whole expanse without contradiction. The question the monk was asking is mysterious and subtle; from where to where is the universe's expanse? And from where to where is the phenomena of each individual existence?

It is also put this way in the introduction: "When we enter it is ri, when we leave it is bi." We "enter" when we turn our awareness within. Our eyes put aside their seeing, our ears their hearing, and our other senses as well put aside their functioning and go within. This is called ri.

We lose all touch with the externals but are free within. Said another way, "In all the heavens and earth, only one person." It is this state of mind. The essence of this is having no concern whatsoever with what is going on in the external world. If we look at it from the point of view of Rinzai's four relationships between person and surroundings, this is the place of taking away the surroundings but leaving the person.

The opposite of this is the awareness that is concerned with the external. When all of our senses and awareness take in the phenomenal world, this is the world of bi. We melt into the flowers, we melt into the moon, we become another's words, and we do so completely. Bi is the place where the person is taken away and everything becomes the surroundings.

The monk is asking Fuketsu about the world in which there is neither person nor surroundings, about the source of our awareness. This is the root of the universe where there is no self, no other, and not one single speck of anything.

If we take in these words we shatter the world of ri and are in the world of bi, of phenomena. But if we use no words at all, then we have expression. We may be in the world of ri, but as long as we remain in that world of no discrimination we can't bring that experience to anyone.

Speaking, we are in the world of discrimination. Silent, we cannot guide anyone to the world of nondiscrimination. Speaking, we are caught in bi and lose ri, our the true source. But if we stay with only the source, we can't guide others to

understanding. This is the paradox: embracing the essence of satori, but not lingering so we don't get stuck in the world of ri.

The monk asks, "Both speaking and silence are concerned with the relativity of ri and bi. How can we be free and non-transgressing?" How can we function in this contradictory world without being caught in either discrimination or equality, in either ri or bi? Can we actually realize true freedom without being caught in either words or silence? The monk was not trying to ask some philosophical question. He was asking Master Fuketsu how one can express a deep experience of Zen. This is what this koan addresses.

Taking this as a philosophical question, there isn't a way to express an answer. No matter what words we try, as the Diamond Sutra says, "The mountain is not a mountain yet it is called a mountain." I am not me but I am called me. The world is not the world yet it is the world. This is how we can explain it in words, but this isn't the essence of the situation. The essence has been lost when it is put so.

It's also been called the absolute contradictory self. We can only know this self which is contradictory from experience, but put to words it is still only debating in a rational way. The oriental version of calling it "mu" is also conceptual and abstract and does not go beyond the world of philosophy. But one who has experienced this will not fall into the relative and the mental but will freely use its actual essence. That is not a philosophical expression. This is what Master Fuketsu Ensho Zenji expressed in the very marrow with his answer, which derives from a song that anyone in China would have been familiar with.

The singing of quail,  
The fragrance of hundreds of  
blossoms

He was saying, "I am not falling into bi or ri, into words or silence." He was speaking this truth. But only someone who is completely alive and awake will understand it.

Some might say, "But he used words, didn't he? He used someone else's phenomenal experience, so isn't he falling into bi?" This is the dualistic observation that will be brought up here.

In my thoughts always, Konan  
in the third month,  
The singing of quail, The  
fragrance of hundreds of  
blossoms

These lines are from a well-known song of the Tang dynasty, by the poet Toho, about the spring scenery of Konan. Konan is in Kosho, on the south bank of Dotei Lake, and is said to have the most beautiful scenery in all of China. It's also said that in spring the flowers bloom as far as the eye can see--against the white clouds the peach blossoms seem to extend endlessly. March in Konan is considered the most beautiful month in all of China. It's the best time to hear the song of the quail, a medium-sized bird with a grid of white spots on its back. The song of the Chinese quail is likened to that of the meadowlark of Japan, and the March of China's lunar calendar parallels Japan's April. At this time Konan is filled with flowers, and while you can't see the birds, their song is everywhere, arising from within all the flowers.

Thus, in his song Toho says is saying that this exquisite spring scenery is always held in his heart, never fading. Many people, when this season comes, hum or sing his song:

The singing of quail,  
The fragrance of hundreds of

blossoms

The birds are singing. The fragrant flowers can be smelled, but the quail cannot be seen. The birds are melted into the flowers, but within this world they are also present. The flowers, hundreds of them, are everywhere in full bloom. Is this bi?

To express this unforgettable scenery is bi, of course. But when Master Fuketsu melts completely within this scenery and becomes completely one with it, there is ONLY this spring scenery and no longer any more Master Fuketsu. He's become the spring scenery and become the birds. He has become Toho, but there's no longer any poet Toho there.

Toho has no face left in this. There is only the spring scenery, only the many people for whom it has become their world. There is no longer any need for a special awareness about it. This is beyond the world of speech and silence and is freely manifesting bi and ri. This is the free functioning of Master Fuketsu, and it is this that we have to realize.

The singing of quail,  
The fragrance of hundreds of  
blossoms

The monk came with a difficult rational question. Fuketsu answered without falling into a rational trap--not ignoring the question, without acknowledging any difficulty. Rather, he melted completely within the scenery of this song that anyone in China knows well and with its expression went beyond ri and bi.

Here we have to taste the sharpness of the manifestation of Fuketsu's radiant mind. We can't just work from a rational understanding of this poem. We have to repeat it deeply so many times that we can become one with

the scene too.

In the most profound teachings of flower arrangement, the vase is a flower, the water is a flower, the flowers being arranged are of course flowers, the board on which the vase sits is a flower, the alcove in which it sits is a flower, the flower cutters are a flower, that which puts them in the vase is a flower--there is nothing that is not a flower. This deep, profound teaching is the same as Fuketsu's state of mind.

Arranging just one flower in a vase is to become that flower in the vase. Our small self melts into the flower, into the vase, into the alcove, and into the world of those who see this. Intuitively we become the state of mind of the flower completely and give that life.

The same is true in the world of dance. The audience is the dance, the stage is the dance, and the dancer is completely the dance. All of one's senses and all the people within the whole space are dance, or it isn't true dance.

It's not about the ability or need to demonstrate good form or even about trying to look good. It's dancing without ego. If the ego intrudes, bi and ri again separate and we fall into dualistic thinking. This mind without ego is what Master Fuketsu was expressing in repeating again and again,

In my thoughts always, Konan  
in the third month,  
The singing of quail, The  
fragrance of hundreds of  
blossoms.

We want to taste the flavor of this world completely and fully.

*The white clouds  
embrace mysterious  
rocks*

Hakuun yūseki o idaku

白雲抱幽石

In the Tang Dynasty in China, two eccentrics, Kanzan and Jittoku, lived on a mountain named Tendai. One day the priest Bukkan of Tendai Mountain's temple, Kokuseiji, noticed two strangers wandering around the area. He brought home one of the men and named him Jittoku. Jittoku did many chores and helped out around the temple, while his friend Kanzan continued to live in the mountains.



When Kanzan was hungry, he would go down to the temple to collect the leftovers his friend Jittoku left for him in a bamboo container. When Kanzan was through eating, he and Jittoku would have long conversations, every word deep and profound and in accordance with the Dharma. An official overheard them and began recording everything the pair said. He went to Priest Bukkan and asked to be introduced to Kanzan. But when Kanzan and Jittoku saw Priest Bukkan and the official approaching, they said that they had no need for the over-kindness of Priest Bukkan and ran hand-in-hand into the mountains. They hid and were never seen again.

Many searched in the area where Kanzan had most often been seen, but all they found were poems written on the rocks. These works by Kanzan were copied, collected, and became known as the songs of Cold Mountain.

Towering cliffs were the home  
I chose  
bird trails beyond human tracks  
what does my yard contain  
the white clouds embrace  
mysterious rocks  
every year I've lived here  
I've seen the seasons change  
all you owners of tripods and  
bells  
what good are empty names

Kanzan had chosen to live where the peaks of the tallest mountains pierce the sky. Here no people would come, only the birds that flew through the air. In this place of full, spacious, and open living, all that could be seen were the white clouds passing, the huge rock faces, peaks poking into the sky, and birds passing by. He couldn't remember how long he had lived there. The winter came, then the spring, but he couldn't remember how many times the cycle had been repeated. There was no need for the possessions of society or for any fame or recognition.

Man, living in the dust  
is like a bug trapped in a bowl.  
All day he scrabbles round and  
round,  
but never escapes the bowl that  
holds him.  
The immortals are beyond his  
reach,  
his craving has no end,  
while months and years flow by  
like a river  
until in an instant he has grown  
old.

Kanzan asks those in society, How long-lasting are the things you have gathered around you? What have you obtained that will protect you from death? Nothing you have endures.

Humans are born. Without exception all die. What in that life is there to be most grateful for--money? being alive? work? possessions? fame? family? alcohol? truth? Or is it the Buddha or the ability to believe in something? Or enlightenment or merit or a better birth?

When we feel well and energetic, we fear nothing. We think we can do anything. But when we encounter a problem we can't solve, we turn either to religion or to therapy. We think that if we are psychoanalyzed all of our problems will be resolved. But they can't and they won't be solved this way.

While we are still carrying around a small self, there is no true resolution possible. As long as we continue looking outside, there can't be true resolution to the challenge of ego, the small self. Psychoanalysis is a big business and a means both for earning money and for offering one's work to society. That's fine. Because so many look outside themselves for solutions, the numbers of therapists, social workers, and lawyers are increasing in today's society.

Those who turn to religion always think

that there will be something there to help them out, something for which they can be enormously grateful. This is the state of mind of those who are scraping the very bottom. They always think some wonderful miracle can happen, that a sickness which a doctor can't cure will be cured, that business will suddenly boom or a household will become peaceful or some wonderful thing will occur. Many people think that to pray and having something wonderful happen to them is what religion provides. A lot of religions key on this hope, making use of an unhappy circumstance in the worst possible version of what religion is.

This may be fine for people who are interested in a momentary or short-term positive emotional excursion, but a person on the path, whose vow includes the liberation of all people in society, can't be satisfied with the kind of conceptual game that involves worshipping idols, gods, and Buddhas.

That true way of God and Buddha, that which is equal, available, and within all people, is unmoved no matter what occurs. This is what has to be received. True satisfaction won't come from a superficial religion. For one who's wandering and searching for a true spiritual home, it has to be that which is equal, full, and unchanging in all beings; it has to be the world of actually awakening to this clear mind.

We take this true absolute awakening, this singularly clear state of mind, and for a short while we give it the name of Zen. "Those who see the Dharma see me; those who see me see the Dharma." This is what the Buddha taught.

The Dharma and Buddha are one and the same; they are not two. This is the mind in which there is nothing left to be named God or Buddha, only one great vivid and alive life of awe and wonder.

Originally in the world of religion

people were always on their own, always alone--practicing alone, moving alone, walking alone. It wasn't as watered-down as being in a group while trying to sort out their own clutter.

At times like this I lie down in my hut.

Cherries shine with crimson fire;  
willows trail their slender boughs.

The morning sun pops from the jaws of blue peaks;  
bright clouds are washed in green pond.

Who ever thought I would leave the dusty world  
and come bounding up the southern slope of Cold Mountain.

No desires to dislike, no Buddha Nature to have a preference for, no ignorance to be awakened from, and no Buddha to live in accordance with. No hell to be afraid of and no heaven to vow to enter and choose. All the ten thousand things are our footfalls, and there we are settled. It is this state of mind.

We are not living for a tomorrow, nor looking all the time at yesterday's problems. Right here, right now, in this very moment, we find the endless time from the beginningless past, the endless time of the infinite future, and the infinite space into which it opens, and we drink it down. Without this great wonder and joy, where is there value in having been born at all?

The white clouds embrace mysterious rocks

At least once, we have to taste this state of mind beyond even living and dying, in which there is not one obstruction whatsoever.



*A thousand grasses  
weep tears of dew*

Tsuyu ni naku senpan  
no kusa

泣露千般草

A thousand grasses weep tears  
of dew  
A lone pinte sighs in the breeze

Tsuyu ni naku senpan no kusa  
Kaze ni ginzu ichiyo no matsu

*A lone pine sighs in  
the breeze*

Kaze ni ginzu ichiyō no  
matsu

吟風一様松

These lines are also from the works of  
Kanzan.

Wonderful, this road to Cold  
Mountain--  
yet there's no sign of horse or  
carriage.  
In winding valleys too tortuous  
to climb,  
on crags piled who knows how  
high,



a thousand grasses weep tears  
of dew  
a lone pine tree sighs in the  
breeze.

Now it is that, staying from the  
path,  
you ask your shadow, what way  
from here.

The path of Kanzan is, very  
mysteriously, not of the world--no  
vehicles travel along it; no carts  
or horses or people come and go;  
there are no footprints or traces of  
habitation.

The valleys take so many twists and  
turns, I can't remember how many  
there have been and from what  
direction I came. There have been so  
many mountain ridges, I've lost count  
of them all. The thick, dense grasses  
are crying with the dew that has  
fallen; the pines are singing with the  
winds that blow through them.

Here in these mountains, if I miss a  
turn or become confused, the me  
that has a form only has to turn in the  
direction of the shadow of myself and  
ask, "What path are you traveling?"

In this way Kanzan sings of his world.  
His Cold Mountain is the mountain  
in the Mind of each of us--people  
and vehicles and horses cannot pass  
there.

Ridge after ridge, mountains continue  
endlessly. This scenery is the state of  
mind where I have become one with  
the heavens and earth. If we look  
at our lives, we see that there are  
many things we have to think about.  
Forgetting all of those and melting  
into the endless mountain is to know  
the state of mind where we forget  
ourselves altogether. Here there is no  
good or evil, no failure or success,  
no resentment or pride, no sadness  
or happiness. This is the world of  
absolute MU.

It says in the sutras that our era is one  
of diluted teaching of the Dharma.  
We can see this clearly in our daily  
lives. Through the media we hear

of violence, murders, crimes, thefts,  
suicides, typhoons, tidal waves,  
earthquakes, fires, and car accidents.  
Is our culture really evolving, or is it  
going backward? It is hard to say,  
amid so much confusion.

There are five destructive tendencies  
in this era:

- Confusion from deep delusion
- Confusion about the values of  
life
- Confusion about our being
- Confusion about our instincts
- Confusion about our way of  
living

These five reveal the murkiness of the  
era, the extent to which our world  
is sullied. People are attacking and  
clashing with each other in a way that  
never ends. Even if one or two saints  
were to manifest themselves among  
us, or even if a great percentage of  
humanity awakened, it's impossible to  
stop the degeneration of an era when  
we reach this point. We can see this  
today. Truly we are living in a world of  
deeply deluded actions.

The second destructive tendency  
is our confusion about the value  
of life, the value of being human.  
Today we are so focused on enjoying  
ourselves, following fashion, living for  
momentary pleasure, and pursuing  
our self-interests that our life sense,  
our social sense, is obscured.

The third tendency is to assume  
that humans are animals. This is a  
shortsighted and limited point of  
view that negates humans' true  
value, which is solemn and dignified.  
Humanism is one attempt at resolving  
this tendency.

The fourth, confusion about our  
instincts, is an inability to distinguish  
between our healthy desires and  
our attached, unhealthy ones. We're  
born with a strong instinct to protect  
ourselves and to keep our species  
alive by reproducing. We have a

deep, natural desire to do this. But if that instinct is distorted, it becomes an attachment. And what happens when attachment intensifies? Will we become like cats and dogs who only function this way?

Confusion about how we make our living is the final tendency. In order to be able to eat we do whatever we have to--prostitution, lying, gambling, blackmailing--with no concern for the means involved. This delusion destroys our ideas of what is correct and appropriate.

If we list our tendencies like this we can see clearly that we are in the era of the decay of the Dharma. We live in a panic to satisfy our hungers as quickly as possible. From morning to night, waking and sleeping, looking right, looking left, we see only disharmony, unaligned living, constantly wearing at our nerves. We despise each other, insult each other, fight each other, steal from each other, kill each other. Are we not smack in the middle of the era of decay, in which everyone is an angry being?

Is this how it is to be? Is there no other way to live? Rather than remaining in this world of blood, angry beings, and decaying Dharma, if we can awaken to the deep wisdom inside us, the state of mind of Kanzan, we can bring that wisdom to life. No matter how hideous the world in which we find ourselves is, we do not need to be caught in it. We can find the courage within.

But as Kanzan tells us, it's not so simple to deeply understand that this world of frantic noise, murderers, and thieves, as it is, is the land of lotuses.

Even while we are a slave to our egos, not knowing what evil this bag of shit that we are will do next, at the same time this very body is the body of the Buddha. While caught and driven by ego, to dive headlong into the world of Buddha is not a casual act.

A thin, fragile thread of wisdom is inviting us to crawl up, out of hell

and into the world of Kanzan. It's like the thin thread of a spider's web in the story by Akutagawa Ryunosuke. Akutagawa was terrified that the thin thread would break as he climbed it and drop him back into hell; yet while kicking with his dirty shoes at the devils who were trying to pull him back, he kicked so hard that he himself broke the thread. Kanzan's poems are this thin thread of wisdom.

Kanzan is not simplistically disdaining the dirt of the world and writing only of the high world where the birds fly.

A thousand grasses weep tears  
of dew

Diving into this world where everything is equal, we can become this state of mind of clarity and ease, smack dab in the middle of those grasses. We know the absolute mu where we can't see left or right. If we remain stuck in that world of blood, angry beings, and decaying Dharma, we can't discover true wisdom; the world will continue decaying, and infinite numbers of people will continue to be murdered. For this great suffering, the tears of dew are being wept.

A lone pine sighs in the breeze

The great wind that blows through everything isn't only for our own pleasure. Nor is it the wind of an all-consuming hell that agitates and disturbs all we see. The world of Kanzan isn't a world of saving only oneself. If that's what we think, we're wrong about Kanzan's world. We have to look deeply within and inquire.

One day a monk came to speak to Joshu. Joshu asked him, "Where are you going?"

The monk answered, "I think I will go learn in Yureki in Shoho."

Joshu continued, "From the ancient times it has been said that one should not reside where there is Buddha nor should one linger where there is no

Buddha. In all the three worlds we should not mislead people."

The monk said, "Then I am not going anywhere."

Joshu replied, "Go, go! You have to realize deeply that mind of satori. Don't be attached to delusion. The living Zen is not stopped by either ignorant beings or Buddhas."

This world is Kanzan's song.

*Bamboo shadows  
sweep the stairs,  
yet not a mote of  
dust is stirred*

Chikuei kai o haratte  
chiri dōzezu

竹影掃 塵不動

These lines can be found in the fifth section of the Kaian Kokugo.

The poet Santoka writes that in nature, in the scenery of the four seasons, we have a wordless sutra:



竹影掃 塵不動

*Moonbeams pierce  
the bottom of the  
pool,  
yet leave no trace in  
the water*

Tsuki tantei o ugatte  
mizu ni ato nashi

月穿潭底水無痕

No sound no flowers  
Always rain and earth  
Teaches repeatedly of today  
In spring the hundred flowers  
bloom,  
In the summer the breezes  
blow,  
In the autumn the big round  
moon shines brilliantly  
And in winter the snow glistens  
and covers the mountains and  
earth.



月穿潭底水無痕

The infinite emptiness of this immense universe has no beginning or end. The natural way of all things existing is the teaching of the truth of no death.

Bamboo shadows sweep the stairs,  
yet not a mote of dust is stirred  
Moonbeams pierce the bottom  
of the pool,  
yet leave no trace in the water

When the shadow of the bamboo sweeps across the stairs, not a single bit of dust moves. The moon's light pierces through to the bottom of the pool, yet not the slightest scratch can be seen in the water.

In our world there is joy and sadness, love and hate, good and bad people. All manner of feelings arise side-by-side. One who can live amid these complexities and not be buffeted by their winds and waves is a person of true wisdom.

The Buddha, who himself realized this deep wisdom, said, "The good renounce everything. The virtuous do not prattle on about yearning for pleasures. The wise show no elation or melancholy when touched by happiness or sorrow." These words can be found in verse 83 of the Dhammapada.

The Buddha teaches us to have a mind like a mirror and not be caught by the ego. The mind with which we were born can receive everything exactly as it is, but because of ego's clutter, because of attachments to our views, we aren't able to remain in this mind of clarity. It has to be said that this society and its people are very sick.

I had the karmic affiliation to be able to visit the death row of the Arkansas State Prison in America. We met there with two prisoners who had been condemned to death, Jack Jones, thirty-six years old, and Damien Echols, twenty-six years old. They lived on death row with thirty-eight others

in thirty cells. While sitting in their cells all day long, looking deeply and intimately at the time they had left to live, they came to the realization that they wanted to live a life of confession and become ordained. With the help of Priest Kobutsu Malone, they were able to receive ordination, taking the precepts. When I first saw them, even though they were large in build and accompanied on both sides by guards, they seemed to be kind young men. With their hearts full of gratitude, their hands in gassho, and huge smiles on their faces, these young men bowed their heads meticulously. It was difficult to think of them as fearsome murderers.

After a short silence Jack asked me, "What do you think of this place?"

I replied, "The air here is very intense."

"That is right. Concentration is everything here. In every single second we are being given life. Every single day is the last day."

"To see every day as the last day is satori. At my temple, even though there are thirty people of training working together, it is difficult to realize and continue this fullness of concentration."

He said, "I have no time. If I had not been sentenced to die, I would not have been able to realize this. I am grateful for the chance to do zazen. I read books, but there is no book greater than the truth of this one present instant."

Using the shelves of the visiting room as our altar, we prepared for the precepts ceremony. Damien and Jack, accompanied by guards, were brought in. They made their confession and chanted the Sankikai and the Ten Precepts. Finally they were presented with rakusus. First a rakusu was given to Damien, who became Koson Zenji. The words on the back of his rakusu were "Great efforts will, without fail, bring great light." Listening carefully to the meaning of the words, with his

handcuffed hands raised in gassho, he received them with tears in his eyes.

Next Jack was given the name of Dainin. When his rakusu, with the words "Honor the Buddha and love all people," was put on his neck, he bent his big body over and hugged me. Even though my head reached only to his shoulder, I felt as if I had a new, great big child. The ceremony ended with an offering of the four vows, and both men were both given a shikishi with the words:

Bamboo shadows sweep the stairs,  
yet not a mote of dust is stirred  
Moonbeams pierce the bottom  
of the pool,  
yet leave no trace in the water

As I gave them the shikishi, I told them to consider them as the Mind of the Buddha and prostrate to them. After we took a photograph, Kobutsu had a private conversation with each of the men. Then it was time for them to return to their cells. As we parted, Dainin offered these words for my disciples: "Go Straight!" They looked back again and again and, wrapped in gratitude, returned to their cells.

The moon of the Bodhisattva Vow floats always in the air. "If the pure water of clear mind in an ignorant person is realized, the moon of Buddha Nature is always there, alive." This is how it is written in the Flower Garland Sutra. No matter how stupid a person is, no matter how evil, there is no other truth than to clarify the mind. With the mind clarified, we awaken in truth.

Clouds scud along,  
water brims boundless

Kumo sensei  
mizu manman

雲冉冉水漫々

This summer-like, crisp, clean verse is from the Blue Cliff Record. It is from Setcho Zenji's poem on case 62, "Unmon's One Treasure"

Unmon Daishi said to the monks, "Between heaven and earth,



within the universe, there is one treasure. It is hidden in the mountain form."

Within this huge universe, with eternal time piercing through infinite space, there is one treasure. It's a very precious jewel, the most precious of all. This treasure is in the mountain form, the form of the human body. Thus, the most precious jewel in the whole universe is within our physical body.

Unmon Daishi was not the first to use these words. Jo Hosshi wrote them in his great treatise. "Between heaven and earth, within the universe, there is one treasure. It is hidden in the mountain form."

In the whole universe, what's the most important thing? Einstein said that in this universe there are infinite miracles. But among all the miracles, he said, the greatest is that humans can understand, can know. The most important thing can be found within our physical body, and understanding that is the purpose of our birth. No matter how much money we make, we can't take it with us when we die. Neither do we retain high rank, regardless of our attachment to it. These things are but the stuff of dreams that have meaning only while we are alive. Yet, from the endless past to the infinite future, there's a jewel that never decays. It resides in our minds. This is what Jo Hosshi wrote.

Unmon Daishi took Jo Hosshi's words and used them. He began by saying that Buddha Nature exists within our physical body. That same body contains the entire universe, that great life energy; that is our original nature. The knowledge of this comes easily, but Unmon Daishi took it a step further: "You take the lantern, entering the Buddha hall, and take the temple gate, placing it above the lantern!"

Adding on to Jo Hosshi's teaching, Unmon Daishi uses what is right before his eyes to demonstrate

this actuality. Taking the stone lantern from the garden, he puts it in front of the hondo; then taking the great mountain gate, he puts it in the lantern.

Do you understand?

If you do, then you know Jo Hosshi's words from your own experience. If you don't, you've only read words and experienced nothing.

A lantern is small; the hondo is huge. You can put the lantern in the hondo, but to put the mountain gate inside the lantern--that's something else altogether. It's easy to put a small thing inside a larger one, but putting a large thing inside something small; now that requires a huge mind, unencumbered by human mentation or dualistic thinking. If we are fooled by those, then we have no true center.

Rinzai Zenji said it this way: "In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a true person of no rank. It is always coming and going, in and out of our orifices." Within the red-blooded body of each of us there is a Buddha. Because it is a Buddha, it has no rank, and there is nothing about it to be thankful for. Because it is free, it is not confined to the body; it extends in all of the ten directions.

Oh! Great all embracing Mind!  
It is impossible to measure the height of the heavens,  
yet the Mind is above the heavens.

It is impossible to measure the thickness of the earth,  
yet the Mind is below the earth.

The sun and the moon shine with a great radiance,  
yet the Mind is the source of that radiance.

The three great worlds are clarified

The mind is outside of the three great worlds.

Is this the Great Round Bright

Clear Mirror, is this the Great Functioning?

The Mind is embracing the Great Mirror and spreading around the Great Functioning. Within the Mind, the four seasons open in their sequence, Within the Mind the sun and the moon move.

All of the ten thousand things exist within the great Mind.

Oh! Great all embracing Mind!

This is how Eisai Zenji described it. Within our Mind the heavens are spread out and the earth is contained. Within our Mind the seasons change from spring to summer, fall, and winter. In our Mind the flowers bloom and the trees grow leaves that turn colors and fall away. All things are born and ripen within our Mind: cucumbers, pumpkins, tomatoes, cabbage, daikon. We aren't separate from the world; it's all reflected in the mirror of Mind. The outside world and the inside world are one. When we see a sad person we feel sadness, if we meet a suffering person we feel that suffering and respond; without being told how to respond, from our deepest nature we know that we aren't separated from another's pain. Only when we use the mind dualistically do we feel separation. By not separating ourselves from living, we respond to the pain of the inside and outside worlds in exactly the same way. In the same way that we attend to a stone in our shoe without pondering about it, we respond when seeing the suffering of another. Because we have infinite compassion and this wonderful thing called Buddha Nature, we don't need to protect our position or fame. Without seeking a thing, we act.

To be given the opportunity to understand the Dharma is the greatest treasure of our life. In our physical body there is no object to be thankful for, but without being instructed by anyone we can give

birth to great compassion. This is what Unmon Daishi is talking about.

Humans are born with a wisdom prior to experience and prior to knowledge and teaching. It's our endowment from birth. "Unless we become the mind of a baby we cannot enter heaven." Newborn babies know how to drink their mother's milk, without reading about it in a book or hearing explanations from someone else. Without being taught by anyone, they naturally suck the milk and spit out what they don't want. No one taught our eyes to see or our noses to smell. We didn't need to learn how to feel hot and cold. Although what is seen and what sees are not separate, we can perceive differences and from that perception we can move and act. Once our ego is fixed and we act in accordance with our ego's preferences, our actions can be meaningless or have meaning. But such distinctions are based on knowledge and not on our original wisdom. The wisdom we have from the beginning knows no difference between self and other. From this rises infinite compassion.

The mirror doesn't need to make any effort to reflect what comes before it; it doesn't think about whether or not to reflect. The potential for functioning this freely exists within each of us. We are all endowed with compassion that enables us to relate to society, to respond to the great pain of those who are sick and poor and confused.

There's also the compassion that sees how things come into being and fall away in accordance with karmic connections. We can be sick and poor without being caught on sickness and poverty. We don't need to be suffering and miserable! When we clearly know this truth, we are freed from our own pain and delusion.

There is also the compassion that is free of any person or suffering, free of karmic affiliation--a compassion that shines huge and bright like the sun. This is the infinite clear character

that offers compassion without ever being asked, deeply touching all beings. If our mind opens to this, we can know the treasure hidden in the mountain form. We will know this deep compassion.

When Unmon says, "Between heaven and earth, within the universe, there is one treasure. It is hidden in the mountain form," it sounds as if he is just repeating the words of Jo Hosshi. But without getting snagged on words, he continues, "You take the lantern, entering the Buddha hall, and take the temple gate, placing it above the lantern!" Unmon displays the truth to all.

To this Setcho Zenji comments, "Look! Look!" All of you! What does Jo Hosshi mean when he tells us there is a treasure here in the universe? No matter how much dualistic thinking you attempt, it comes to nothing! LOOK LOOK! How about it! Where is the connection between what Jo Hosshi is saying and what Unmon is saying? To crush any mental understanding, Unmon said, "You take the lantern, entering the Buddha hall, and take the temple gate, placing it above the lantern!" How about it? Where is that lantern? Where is that Buddha hall? Look Look! Open your eyes widely and see not with your mental understanding but with your whole body!

Unmon says it like this because he wants us to awaken fully to our Buddha Nature, not getting caught on notions about it. He wants us to know this state of mind, to see it directly, from morning till night, surging through our being and pouring out to fill the heavens and earth, shining brilliantly. This isn't something that one single person can hold on to, or use to attack others and hold over them. It's not about living in a tiny ego world. Rather it's about forgetting our selves and diving into this world, making society our body and allowing the universe to be our life energy, continuing this functioning whether we are waking or sleeping. Is even one person like that?

That one person has to be awakened in each of us, and that is exactly what Unmon is doing in this case.

Clouds scud along,  
water brims boundless

"Between heaven and earth, within the universe, there is one treasure. It is hidden in the mountain form." This awakening is exactly as big as "Clouds scud along, water brims boundless." In the sky the clouds flow by, one after the next; we can see the water flowing in front of our eyes. Can we understand this scenery?

Clouds scud along,  
water brims boundless

This abundant world of clouds, full of water gathered from all places, is the state of mind of "You take the lantern, entering the Buddha hall, and take the temple gate, placing it above the lantern!" Does everyone understand the actuality of this?

"This bright moon! You have to see it for yourselves!" The brilliant moon illuminates the white flowers; receiving that moon they shine pure white. The white moonlight and the white flowers meld to shine together as one. Which is the moon and which are the flowers?

Is the lantern shining the hondo or is the hondo shining the lantern? It becomes impossible to tell which is the object and which is the subject, which is seeing and which is being seen. Am I the moon or is the moon me? Am I the white flowers or are the white flowers me? With this huge mind there isn't the slightest separation. Can you understand this?

Clouds scud along,  
water brims boundless

Huge clouds come forth and then fade, one after another without end, and their water fills the whole universe without ever stopping. We have to know directly this mind where we become the flow of the clouds, where we become the water's flow. For one who has realized this mind, there's nothing to be afraid of. Wherever something needs to be done, we immediately respond without being asked. If there's just one person like this, the world will be brought back to life and revived.



*I sing of the blue  
mountains that  
fill my eyes*

Manmoku seizan  
(o ginga shi)

満目青山

This is from a poem by a disciple of Hogen Buneki Zenji, the Tendai master Tokusho Zenji.

Hogen Buneki Zenji was ordained at the age of seven. Early he trained as a scholar and focused on Confucian and preceptual works, excelling at literature and poetry. He gained stature for his thesis, but he cast it aside one day after being deeply touched by something. Leaving everything, he embarked on a pilgrimage as a monk.

Later he did sanzen with Enryo Zenji of Chokei-in, but though he trained there, he couldn't open his mind completely. Enryo then sent him to train with Master Chiho of Seiiko. While Buneki was en route the road became impassable due to treacherous weather so he laid over at Jizo-in for a while. The master there was Jizo Keichin, who when he saw Buneki understood that this was not a common monk. As he talked with him he saw that Buneki was deeply versed in the theories and practice of solipsism and other disciplines.

As they spoke one day about Jo Hosshi's words, "The heavens, earth, and I are of one root, all of the ten thousand things and I are the same." Jizo Keichin asked Buneki, "Are you and all the things in existence the same or different?" When Buneki said they were different, Jizo Keichin spread two fingers and said, "There. They are already separated." Buneki understood and said, "The same!" Jizo Keichin again put out two fingers to say that they were separated again.

Buneki could not respond to this clearly and pondered it deeply. Because the weather now was clear and the road no longer impassable, Jizo Keichin asked, "Buneki--the weather is good. Where are you headed now?"

He answered, "I am not going anywhere in particular, if not the east then the west. I will go freely this way, freely that way."

Jizo said, "For a Zen monk, in pilgrimage, how is it?"

"I don't know."

"What don't you know? That

is also an answer."

With these words Buneki suddenly understood.

As Buneki was about to set off on his journey, Jizo pointed at a nearby rock and said, "You said that all things are within our own consciousness. If you say that all existence is in accordance with our awareness, then is this rock inside your mind or outside your mind?"

Buneki said immediately, "This is only in our mind."

Jizo sighed and said, "Here you are going on a journey and you have to carry along this heavy rock! What a terrible thing!"

Buneki understood but had no clue how to answer. He decided to stay with Jizo and continue doing sanzen with him, undergoing his deep interrogation.

During that time Jizo brought into their discussion many questions about the Flower Garden Sutra. But no matter how Buneki answered, he always said, "You still don't understand the Dharma."

Buneki asked Jizo to please teach him, from his deep compassion.

Jizo replied, "You have to bring the Dharma from your own belly and not rely on someone else. Then you will truly understand how all the teachings are within you."

Upon hearing these words, Buneki became covered with sweat and, like a barrel whose bottom has dropped away, felt all of his confusion and doubt disappear. In this way he was completely awakened and received the transmission of the Dharma. Later known as Master Hogen, he taught many famous teachers and was himself a famous teacher at the temples of Shoroji and Seiryoji.

When Master Hogen was at Seiryoji, five hundred monks came to train with him. Among them was Tokusho, who would become the National Teacher

of the Tendai sect. He was there for a long time and, even though he had not received permission to teach, he believed himself to be enlightened. Because Tokusho thought that he had already realized the truth deeply, he felt that he did not need to do sanzen anymore. One day when Hogen was on the high seat giving a Dharma talk, a monk asked, "What is the one drop of water of Sogen?" He was asking about the essence of the teaching of the Dharma that flowed from the temple, Sogen, of the Sixth Patriarch and on down through Seigen Gyoshi and Sekito Kisen.

Hogen without hesitating said, "THIS is the one drop of Sogen."

The monk who had come forth didn't understand and returned to his seat. But Tokusho, who was standing in the back of the room, upon hearing Hogen's words suddenly realized deep awakening. In tears and with enormous gratitude, he offered incense in the direction of Master Hogen and wrote a poem.

This mountain of Tendai,  
Matters of society are nowhere  
to be found here  
The whole universe, all within  
me  
All of the ten thousand things  
are my body.

He sent this poem to Master Hogen, and Hogen in great joy gave him transmission, saying that he should teach broadly. Hogen recognized the great essence of awakening in Tokusho's poem and said that he would be known for his great teaching. Confirming and approving him, he said, "You are going to function even more than me."

The heavens and earth, as they are,  
are my body; all of the world in all of  
the ten directions is me. The universe  
is me; I become the sun and its shine,  
become the mountains, standing  
tall and green, become the rivers,

flowing in the valleys. Everything in  
the universe is me, and that is the  
promised land, the eternal truth in  
the one instant of the present. The  
eternal is the present, the present  
is the eternal, and in this way we  
see God and know the truth. This is  
what is meant by seeing the truth in  
ourselves. In this way we find refuge in  
our own true mind. Rather than being  
limited to a small self, beyond time  
and space we become the universe,  
becoming the sun's shining and the  
mountains soaring and the autumn's  
wind blowing.

It's zazen that allows us this state of  
mind. It's not the sitting of zazen that's  
the goal, but becoming this clear huge  
mind.

*Under an autumn sky  
on an empty plain,  
not a traveler in sight*

Shūten kōya kōjin tayu

秋天曠野行人絕

This line is from the Tang dynasty poet Jo Shorei. Known professionally as Shusei Ko, he wrote many poems that became popular. Shusei wrote about his homeland, and this poem is about the feelings of a soldier in the national army for his country and his home.

Under an autumn sky on an  
empty plain, not a traveler in  
sight

A horseman comes from the  
east. Who could that be?



秋天曠野行人絕

The horseman can be seen far in the distance. The white reeds of this area can be seen spreading in every direction, but if I look toward the capital city I can't see it and I wonder when I'll be able to return there. It seems so far away. But the water of the Yellow River flows towards the capital, my hometown, without stopping. The huge autumn sky can be seen in every direction, but there isn't one single person or even a shadow of a person anywhere.

The soldier who is the guard in this far-away place is thinking of his family, his homeland, his home, his friends, his brothers and sisters, though he can't see them. His duty and loneliness are well expressed in Shusei's poem--he is alone under the huge sky, watching the flow of the river, and suddenly in the distance there is someone on a horse headed toward the capital. Who is this lucky person? There isn't any way the soldier could know him. But he's so envious. Like that person, he longs to experience a day of returning to the capital.

It's said that 1400 years ago Daruma Daishi, known in India as Bodhidharma, journeyed from India to China. China then was divided into two countries known as Ryo and Gi. When Daruma Daishi reached China after three years of traveling and many bitter experiences, he was received by the emperor of Ryo.

It had been prophesied that a living Bodhisattva would come from India. Ryo, who was so committed to Buddhism that he was known as the Emperor of Buddhist Mind, wanted to make sure that Daruma Daishi was welcomed properly. He told all of the people of the country to come forth to welcome him. Daruma Daishi was more than 150 years old when he arrived and the emperor was 57, at the height of his most rational thinking.

The emperor had been industrious about building temples, recruiting monks, and copying sutras. He actually wore a kesa over his official clothing

and taught the Dharma. At that time Buddhism was perceived as a means for gathering merit, and the emperor asked Daruma Daishi how much merit he could expect to gain from all of his work. Of course, after having bragged about all of the ways in which he followed the Buddha, he expected to hear that he would receive a great deal of merit. But Daruma Daishi said honestly, "No merit." This was an answer of deep essence.

If we do things to gather merit, we erase all merit by leaving behind the notion of wanting that merit. All we gain is the heaviness that is the source of our pain. We have to do away with all of that and while doing something good not be self-conscious of it. Emperor Ryo, while doing good things for many people, was still aware of the merit of having done them. This was his mistake.

Changing the direction of the questioning he asked, "What is the highest truth of the Dharma?"

The emperor had studied the works of Fudaishi and Priest Hosshi and Priest Shomyo. They taught that in Buddhism there's a way of deepening oneself and of liberating others. In this way of the mysterious non-two, one clarifies the truth ceaselessly while at the same time thinking of society and helping many people. To do one's own deepening while helping others is the essence of the Buddha's awakening. Because this truth of the non-two is the most important thing, the emperor had studied it thoroughly and taught it. That day he had worn his kesa over his official clothing and taught the people in his offices that politics and Buddhism are not two, that things and the mind are not two, that life and belief are not two, that ordained and non-ordained are not two. It was from this point of view that he asked, "What is the highest truth?"

But Daruma Daishi responded, "Only emptiness, no holiness." He was completely uninterested in any such high truth as holiness. There is no such

truth to be thankful for. Any awareness of something as holy is already one step removed from the primary. He was saying this clearly.

There was a vast difference between the state of mind of the emperor and that of Daruma Daishi. Daruma responded from that place of emptiness without holiness, that mind which touches nothing and is touched by nothing; the crossing to China had taken him three years, but he didn't keep grasping after it. When the emperor asked if there was something to be gained from studying the Dharma, something to be thankful for, he was asking from his own experience, but Daruma Daishi ignored it. He took everything away from the emperor.

Finally the emperor asked, "You're the one who received the teaching of the Buddha, aren't you someone to be thankful for? You say that there is no holiness, but what about you and your teaching?" This was something the emperor had had to ask.

Daruma Daishi answered, "I don't know."

He threw it all away completely. He wasn't simply contradicting the emperor. In every answer he was speaking the truth. But in any truth there are different levels of understanding, in how a mind interprets the essence of it, and ultimately in how it's received. No matter how kindly it's taught it might not be received in the same way.

We identify ourselves by our names, but these are only tags added later, as are our ideas and knowledge. Ideas and thoughts all come after we are born. Before birth there was no such thing. That clear mind is the primary; emptiness, not holiness, is clearly what there is. Once we begin carrying around ideas of society and helping others, it's not the truth, no matter what people say. That's why Daruma Daishi answered, "I don't know."

Finally the emperor could not believe

the words he heard. Though Daruma Daishi had answered simply and clearly, the difference in their states of mind was too great. The emperor could not grasp those words. For Daruma it was evident that the conversation was going nowhere, so he left and went northeast to the country of Gi.

Though the people had hoped to hear his teachings, Daruma went to the mountains. He saw no one. Shortly after he left, the emperor called in Shiko, who was also known as Ho Shosho, and told him what happened. Shiko responded that the emperor had let go of a very important person. The emperor was very sorry and started to go after Daruma, but Shiko said, "Stop! Stop! Even if the entire country goes after him, he won't come back here."

The emperor had asked about the greatest truth, but he saw it only from an external point of view. While the original Daruma was right in front of him, instead of deeply seeing this Dharma treasure, he focused on the external and missed the essence. The highest teaching was there in front of him and is directly here in front of us. Daruma never came or went from India. He is every day together with all of us, waking and sleeping and functioning completely. We realize this.

Setcho Zenji wrote a poem about this encounter:

The holy teaching?  
"Emptiness!"  
What is the secret here?  
Again, "Who stands before  
me?"  
"No knowing!"  
Inevitable, the thorns and  
briars springing up;  
Secretly, by night, he crossed  
the river.

All the people could not bring  
him back.  
Now, so many years have gone  
by,  
Still Bodhidharma fills your  
mind--in vain.  
Stop thinking of him!  
A gentle breeze pervades the  
universe.

The master looks around:  
"Is the patriarch there?"  
--Yes! Bring him to me,  
And he can wash my feet."

If we seek out Daruma Daishi, outside of ourselves he'll never be found. Kensho isn't about looking at our true nature and being thankful for it; that's a huge misunderstanding. Rather, every day we eat and shit and from morning to night shine as brightly as we can. Kensho isn't something over there; if it isn't present in every moment of our functioning, then whose functioning is it? If we aren't looking at it like that, it's all conceptual.

In every moment we are this vivid life energy that sees, that hears, that feels--there is no Daruma apart from that. He tells us not to think about it. We wonder who we should ask and what kind of training we should do. Throw away such a beggarly attitude. Everywhere you go, and in everything you do, Daruma will be clearly present. All day long this truth is completely revealed, in our ears as hearing, in our eyes as seeing, never ceasing, just as it is. This isn't a concept about someone named Daruma; for each and every one of us, right here and right now is the perfectly fulfilled place. Everywhere, brilliance and light soar forth. The wind that blows across the whole world cleans everything.

Under an autumn sky on an  
empty plain, not a traveler in  
sight  
A horseman comes from the  
east. Who could that be?

This is what the poet wrote, but it's not about a capital city far far away. This very place at this very moment is our hometown, our home country, and our whole world. When we experience the life energy that fills the universe, then everywhere we are is home, and wherever we are is our Buddha Nature and Daruma. There is nothing but Daruma in all we see, and hear, and feel.

*A running stream, the  
cold mountain path*

Ryusui kanzan no michi

流水寒山路

This verse can be found in the fourth section of the Kaian Kokugo, Hakuin Zenji's work on the writings of Daito Kokushi.

A running stream, the cold  
mountain path  
Deep in the clouds, the old  
temple bell

The steep path up the mountain of  
Kanzan follows the stream, climbing



alongside it. Untraveled by people, it climbs upward, twisting deep into the mountains. From somewhere far away a temple bell can be barely heard, eternally ringing, singing the deep serenity of that state of mind of the deep mountains.

Daito Kokushi says, "All Buddhas are completely awakened to the deepest truth." What sutra is this? Only the rain and the earth and the days that follow one right after another. Now! Now! Here! Here! In each and every moment, all the heavens and earth are one sutra!

Spring has one hundred flowers. In the summer there's the breeze; in the fall, the moon; and in the winter, the snow. These are the endlessly taught Dharma.

One monk said, "All of the Buddhas come forth from here, what is this?"

Master Shusan Seinen answered, "Your voice is too loud, people will laugh at you! How can you be smack in the middle of the sutras and then ask about them?"

The monk replied, "Then how should it be received?"

Shusan said, "Don't spoil it! The place where it isn't spoiled, that is what you take."

Master Shusan instructed the monk this way.

Kozan Koku was also called Kotei Ten. He did sanzen with Maida Soshin Zenji.

One day Soshin Zenji asked Kozan Koku, "You know well the part of Confucius' Analects where he says, 'I am hiding nothing from you.' This is exactly the same as in the path of Zen. How do you interpret those words?"

Kozan Koku answered, "No, I don't know." This is the only answer he could possibly have given.

As they talked they were walking in the mountains together, and the air was permeated with a wonderful

fragrance. Maida Soshin Zenji said, "Do you smell that fragrant olive flower?"

"Yes, I smell it well."

Maida Soshin Zenji then said, "I have nothing to hide from you!"

Upon hearing this one sentence, Kozan Koku had a deep realization. What is it that sees? What is it that hears? What is it that smells?

Another time a monk said, "I am still very unripe at training. Please tell me the path to satori."

Gensha Shibi Zenji was the master to whom the question was posed. Gensha cupped his ear and said, "How about it? Can you hear the sound of that babbling brook running through the valley?"

"Yes, I can hear it."

Gensha said, "Right there! That is your entrance. Go in from there!"

All day and all night we do "Mu." As it's written in the Mumonkan, "In all the twenty-four hours of the day, work intently at it. Do not attempt nihilistic or dualistic interpretations." Standing, sitting, sleeping, and waking we continue with that Mu. Even a person who is usually full of thoughts and ideas and opinions can cut all of it away, every last bit of it. While doing this great cleansing, the ability arises to know the place beyond all of our previous conditioning and knowledge. We realize this place where we can't know what to think or do or how to figure anything out. Thinking is no longer a possibility. Zen is not about thinking about what something is; Zen is the experience itself.

In the deepening of the mind state, we use Mu to touch this purity of mind. But this isn't about a notion of nothing. If we carry along an idea about what Mu is or how it should be done, it can't become that real Mu. Only when we drop the idea that we can hold on to even a thought of Mu can we reach the actual state of mind

*Deep in the clouds,  
the old temple bell*

Jin'un koji no kane

深雲古寺鐘

of forgetting ourselves completely and forgetting anything we see or hear. Nothing that we see or hear remains in our mind. There is nothing to hold on to and nothing to seek externally. There is only the world that comes; matching perfectly to it, we become the hearing of what is there to be heard and the seeing of what is there to be seen.



When a dog barks, we only hear "bow-wow." If a sparrow chirps, we hear only the "cheep-cheep." This pure state of mind is what we return to. This isn't something that we can be taught by someone or learn in school or read about in a book. Only that which is holding on to nothing at all can perceive with the very same state of mind with which we are born. When suddenly we pierce this barrier, we astonish heaven and shake the earth. We know the place where we see with the same eyes as the Buddha and the Patriarchs and hear with the very same ears.

This is the touching of the root of Mu, and when we have experienced it we know why Joshu said "Mu," not from mental understanding but because we have become his very state of mind. The generations of Patriarchs, Daruma Daishi, the Sixth Patriarch, Hyakujo, and Rinzai all have the same ears and eyes, and with them we hear and see and can understand. Completely seeing with the eyes of the Buddha and Daruma Daishi, we can know what is meant by,

A running stream, the cold  
mountain path  
Deep in the clouds, the old  
temple bell

We can taste fully this deep state of mind.

If we understand Mu, then we are asked to stop the ringing of the temple bell on the far mountain. And we know immediately what to do. At the beginning of each sutra it always says, "Thus have I heard . . ." Anan Sonja heard the Buddha's words and began his retelling of them in this way. The others who had heard the Buddha speak checked the words and confirmed that there were no mistakes. Then what Anan remembered was edited. Sutras are not words and phrases but that same state of mind of the Buddha. We must become that

and see and hear from there. That is the Buddha Dharma, and to manifest that we have the sutras. Instead of trying to mentally understand them, when we can become them in this very moment, that life energy becomes the whole universe. The ears of this very moment become the sounds of the whole universe; the eyes of this very moment become the scenery of the whole universe.

This is where the clear truth of the Buddha Dharma is manifested.

*The moon is in the  
blue sky,  
The water is in the  
bottle*

Tsuki wa seiten ni ari  
mizu wa heiri ni ari

月在青天水在瓶裏

This verse is also from the fourth section of the Kaian Kokugo. Daito Kokushi gave a teaching on the Buddha's birthday. With one hand pointing to the heavens and one finger pointing to the earth, he announced that there is only One.



Pointing his finger at the heavens, he asked, "What is there? The moon is in the blue sky!" Pointing a finger at the earth, he asked, "What is there? The water is in the bottle."

But as always, everyone is looking at the phenomena and neglecting the actuality. The more we think in terms of things to be thankful for, the more we think of ourselves as splendid and deserving. Everyone prays so thankfully to some golden Buddha, but where is such a thing?

Our truth is not the Buddha's form! It is our originally clear mind, this firm sturdiness with which we were born, which can't be spoken about and can't be decorated.

Yet we always pour sweet tea over the statue of the Buddha on his birthday. How can we pour tea over a thing that has no form and yet fills everything?

With his whisk Daito hit the table loudly. He pounded it as if to say, "Don't look away from IT!"

The Buddha said, "In all the heavens and the earth, only one person."

Where is there any meaning in those words? There's no such thing as a god in the heavens to save people and or a devil on earth to punish people. Yet people interpret these words in that way. But what difference does the interpretation make? There's still no truth of the Buddha or of the Buddha Dharma there!

Humans' true nature, the pure mind with which we are born, isn't something that can be produced by training. From birth we are endowed with a clear bright mind. The moon can be reflected there exactly as it is, and that reflection is the original truth. But people always add in aspects of their own ego; rather than experiencing the moon, they start trying to explain it and attempting to mentally understand it.

We can't create this pure mind by training, but unless we remove the dust of decoration, things can't be

reflected as they are. People without pure experience, no matter how great their ideas and thoughts are, can't give them life. Here Mumon Ekai Zenji says, "Concentrate yourself into this Mu, with your 360 bones and 84,000 pores, making your whole body one great inquiry." To the base of awareness, tear down the walls and remove the layers of decoration. It's not about becoming something but about razing all of the mental constructs that attempt to understand and make order of things. Shave all of that away! "In all the twenty-four hours of the day, work intently at it. Don't attempt nihilistic or dualistic interpretations." It's impossible to attempt some logical understanding by proposing a self and an other. It doesn't function that way.

This is the place of becoming precisely

The moon is in the blue sky,  
The water is in the bottle

Here there is no blue sky and no bottle, no moon and no water. This state of mind is what we have to taste thoroughly.

Is the light me, or am I the light? A poet has written that "the moon is me and I am the moon. Sitting until no difference can be told, the moon of autumn." Of course this can't be just a pat explanation. If there is even one lingering bit of mental understanding, it's not the true moon or the true water in the bottle.

When the Buddha said, "In all the heavens and the earth, only one person," pointing a finger to the sky and a finger to the earth, his meaning was not in his gestures. But the more we explain the further away we get. When we hold on to not one thing and say nothing, then we can receive the moon and the bottle clearly.

Day and night work intently at it: "muuuu, muuuuu, muuuuu." In our mind we undergo a great cleaning. If that cleaning reaches everywhere,

then everything in all of nature is me,  
and the heavens and earth and I are  
one, complete. To have the clarity of  
this seeing is called opening the eye of  
Buddha wisdom.

The Lotus Sutra tell us, "A Buddha  
appears in this world to open the  
treasury of truth, to indicate its  
meaning, to cause sentient beings to  
see into it with the eye of wisdom and  
to cause sentient beings to enter it  
and abide in it."

This wisdom eye sees beyond all  
rational ideas and concepts. For all  
beings to be able to open this eye of  
the highest quality, the Buddha came  
into this world.

The moon is in the blue sky,  
The water is in the bottle.

*The moon is setting  
in the frosty sky  
It's almost midnight.*

Sōten tsuki ochite  
Yoru masa ni nakaba  
naran to su

霜天月落夜将半

The moon is setting in the  
frosty sky  
It's almost midnight.  
With whom can I share these  
winter images  
caught in the still pond?

Soten tsuki ochite  
Yoru masani nakaba naran to  
su  
Dare to tomoni ka  
Chotan kage wo terashite  
samuki

This is from the 40th case of the Blue Cliff Records. In this case Setcho Zenji has added this poem:

Hearing, seeing, understanding,  
knowing,  
Each of these is not separate.  
For him mountains and rivers  
do not appear in a mirror.  
The moon is setting in the frosty  
sky  
It's almost midnight.  
With whom can I share these  
winter images  
caught in the still pond?

"Hearing, seeing, understanding, knowing, each of these is not separate." This isn't something to grasp mentally or conceptually. With the whole of our body-being we see the actuality, we hear the actuality, without notions about what the name of the flower is or what's causing the sounds we hear. When we see, we see with our whole body, becoming a single seeing eye. When we hear, our entire body is our ear. This is our way of becoming one with what we are seeing and hearing. Then, "For him mountains and rivers do not appear in a mirror."

There is no longer any twofold relationship between what is seen and what is doing the seeing. We perceive with our whole body and become completely one with what we are perceiving. This is the actuality of being alive. If we try and add a mental understanding it creates a gap between subject and object. When nothing is inserted between that which is seeing and that which is being seen, we perceive the actuality of life's energy.

On a chill winter night when the frost is falling and the moon has already set, everything becomes darker and darker. Is it me becoming the darkness or the darkness becoming me and

extinguishing the light? There's no seam here. If I look for my body it can't be found, and there isn't even a single cat in sight. The wind doesn't stir. This is the kind of midnight being described in these lines. Water fills the pond to the brim. There's a slight reflection of the mountain, but it's not possible to tell what's the mountain and what's the pond, what's the tree and what's the forest. No seam can be seen. The surface of the water and the mountain are only one. The tree and forest are one. There is no distinction between perceiver and perceived. All are melted in round oneness. This is what the Priest Setcho Juken is singing.

In China during the Tang dynasty Nansen received Baso Doitsu Zenji's Dharma transmission. Nansen was a brother disciple of Hyakujo and the teacher of Joshu, who it was said would surpass even his teacher. Nansen was famous for the words, "Everyday mind is the Path." As a matter of course in our everyday lives we all see and hear and talk. We laugh and cry and get angry. That is our everyday way of being, and it's also the path to satori. That way of being, as it is, is Zen. But it's true only if we are free from stagnancy and ego clutter.

One day while Nansen was cutting weeds a monk from far away came along and asked, "What is the Path of Nansen?"

Because Nansen was famous, the monk wanted to ask about his teaching.

Nansen thrust out the tool he was using to cut the grass and said he had bought it for thirty cents. The monk was astonished. He had asked for the truth, and he had received the price of the master's cutting tool.

The monk said, "I'm not asking about your tools but about the truth of the Path."

Master Nansen said, "I have used it, and it cuts well!" Ignoring the monk, and he went back to work.

*With whom  
can I share these  
winter images  
caught in the still  
pond?*

Dare to tomo ni ka  
Chōtan kage o terashite  
samuki

誰共澄潭照影寒

This monk had thought that there is some special thing in this everyday mind that is the Dharma. He had thought that in our everyday life there's something hidden that we need to discover and have awakened in us. He was very unripe. For Nansen, his life was Zen. What else is there to

誰共澄潭照影寒

awaken to and uncover? When our mind lights nowhere, when it is alive and vivid, that bright clear living mind is what acts and functions. Where we get caught is on our ideas about this. For the monk it was a great answer to receive.

Along with Nansen's monks, the philosopher Riko Taifu also did sanzen with the master. But he couldn't drop his mental baggage. Once he told Nansen that he'd read something interesting in the works of Jo Hosshi: "The heavens, earth, and I are of one root, all of the ten thousand things and I are the same." He told Nansen, "What a mysterious, excellent thing Jo Hosshi has said! Don't you think it's superb?" Riko Taifu was quite satisfied with himself. He proclaimed, "He is one with the heavens and earth and of the same root. The mountains and rivers and cows and horses are all the same. There is nothing more than this in Zen's satori either!"

Nansen looked at the flower in front of him, a chrysanthemum, and said, "People of the world today look at this flower see it as if in a dream."

Do those who look at the flower really see it as one with all things? Can they see it as it is, without adding their own ideas about it, like tacking on the wonderful words of Jo Hosshi? Why do you want to be satisfied with playing with ideas? Nansen responded firmly with a stinging rebuke.

Here Setcho Zenji adds a couplet,

For those who sufficiently have  
it  
For those who don't, Rosan's  
rain, Sekko's tides

Rosan is known for its beauty in the rain, and the tides from the Sekko, which are so strong and rise so high, are exquisite. Anyone who beholds it is deeply moved. But there is still a vast distance between those who've been there and seen it for themselves and

those who've only heard about it.

The words of Jo Hosshi express truth. But only looking at them intellectually isn't the same thing as knowing the experience for oneself. We have to know the experience of losing our own body and letting go of our thinking to know what it means to be one with the flower and not see it as a dream. If we don't, then we can't say we are one with all beings completely.

The actuality of being one with heaven and earth and knowing we are of the same root can't be divided into subjective and objective. It's not about understanding this. But when the eyes that see the world and the world that is seen become completely one and the same, then for the first time we know the true essence of life.

"The moon is me and I am the moon. Sitting until no difference can be told, the moon of autumn." When we become clear to this point, we know the source of our true original mind. "The heavens, earth, and I are of one root."

To merely say that we are one with the heavens and earth is far removed from the actual expression of clear original mind. "For him mountains and rivers do not appear in a mirror." In these words there's no idea about reflecting or being reflected. Only pure shining in bright oneness. This has to be experienced, or no matter how skillfully you explain it it won't be realized.

Dogen Zenji said it as, "Hearing it as it is, without thinking about it, our ears just as it is, the drop of water from the eaves." And Daito Kokushi said, "If we see it with our ears and hear it with our eyes it is beyond doubting, the rain dropping from the eaves."

We don't see with our eyes or hear with our ears but do both with our whole body. We hear with the raindrop from the eaves and become that drop totally. This is why Setcho said,

Hearing, seeing, understanding,  
knowing,  
Each of these is not separate.  
For him mountains and rivers  
do not appear in a mirror.  
The moon is setting in the  
frosty sky  
It's almost midnight.  
With whom can I share these  
winter images  
caught in the still pond?

We can see with our ears and hear with our eyes, we can taste with our nose and smell with our mouth. In a very real way our senses aren't separate. The mountains and rivers that are reflected aren't just the reflections of real mountains and rivers. There are only Rivers! There are only Mountains! In this deep profound mind there is no mental concept of hearing or seeing. Eternal time is expressed here in the world of nature, deep in the mountains, in the quiet serenity of the water that's so deep the bottom can't be seen. This is true stillness. Beyond any sound our body is pierced through by the cold winter air with which it has become one.

Earlier the moon had shown this view, but now the moon is gone and the scenery obscured by blackness. There is nothing to see and no one to be seeing. There are no more thoughts, no self-conscious awareness. We have dissolved into this world of oneness and converge with it.

When we know this serenity we can say, "The heavens, earth, and I are of one root." But how many have realized this true experience? Anyone can play with the Buddha's words or memorize the Patriarchs' words and repeat them, but can we manifest that state of mind? In order to keep Buddhism

from degenerating into something that will cause people to suffer, we must know the real experience.

Tonight, forgetting time, forgetting your body, sit until you merge with the heavens and earth. Do zazen to this point and taste the flavor of this living actuality.



*My bamboo hat is  
weighed down with  
Wu mountain snow.*

Kasa wa omoshi  
goten no yuki

笠重呉天雪

This line is from the seventh section of the Kaian Kokugo and is also found in the second volume of the Shami Kumo Sho. It is part of a couplet:

My bamboo hat is weighed  
down with Wu mountain snow  
My shoes are scented with  
flowers from fields in Ch'u

During a severe winter in the country of Wu, the bamboo hats become heavy from the weight of snow. Without speaking, one person walks down the snowy road. During springtime in the country of Ch'u, the straw sandals carry the scent of myriad flowers. For monks and people of training, while traveling on pilgrimage, there are good and bad times along the path.

It was Daito Kokushi who taught that people of training should always go in one straight line without stopping. Wearing straw sandals and an appropriate robe to reflect the season, carrying bowls for eating, a sutra book, with kesa for special ceremonies, the person of training has everything necessary and seeks the truth. Sometimes there's food, and when there's not, we put eating aside. Sometimes there's shelter, and when there isn't, we sleep in the fields. Doing a pilgrimage around Shikoku, like the roots of weeds, we open to the deep and profound marrow of the truth. This is the goal of our zazen.

We are born into this world to realize kensho. To realize our true nature, our true source. This is wholly the goal of training. There's nothing but this to pay attention to and nothing but this in which to take refuge.

Daruma Daishi journeyed from far to reach China. "To see directly into the true mind and become Buddha"-to directly perceive our true nature and experience satori and become Buddha--for him there was no meaning in anything else. The many thousand sutras exist only to bring each and every person to awakening. Words can only be fingers pointing to the moon; they aren't the truth itself.

In days past, Japan's emperor was as deeply respected as a god. Among the many generations of emperors there was one named Hanazono, who founded Myoshinji. He did sanzen with Daito Kokushi and with Kanzan Muso Daishi. From this he had a deep awakening, realizing the marrow of truth of the Dharma.

Emperor Hanazono was training with Daito Kokushi when he clarified the one great matter, the true source of all being. Daito Kokushi confirmed his awakening and shared the great joy. Hanazono's gratitude was so immense he vowed to become a beacon for all in society, helping to spread the Dharma and becoming a refuge for all people. He vowed to do this without ceasing and recorded his great wonder and joy.

He expressed the same joy in his final poem. The subject of it was his practice of twenty years. He had not lightly attempted a year or two of practice but had done sanzen every day, never missing a chance. Finally he met with spring, encountering his true nature and seeing with the eyes and ears of the Patriarchs. He came to know this great joy with the eyes of the Buddha and the ears of Daruma. Within that joy he could live each day without holding on to or seeking anything. He lived every single day in this huge abundant state of mind.

Yet when Emperor Hanazono was training he wrote that no matter what the weather was, no matter what's occurring nearby, you must continue; doing sanzen and practicing with no concern for your surroundings. The teaching of the Buddha is to realize kensho, nothing else.

In the same way, Master Tosotsu says that anyone can look good doing ascetic training, but it's meaningless if you can't manifest that true mind of this very moment beyond dualism and experience and thoughts and ideas. Can you express that place with not one speck of duality? Everyone responds, "How can we express something that isn't there?" But one who has truly died and been reborn can easily and abundantly express that.

When we actually return to our source, we resolve the matter of life and death on the spot. There's no need to wait until our physical death to know this. When the light leaves our eyes, how

will it be? We weren't born to live a life of confusion and melancholy. We can't be that irresponsible. Every day we have to live with responsibility and serve people in society.

If we've truly resolved this question we know where we go when we die. How about it? When you die, where do you go? Tell me now! Tosotsu was shrewd and kind in encouraging a living, inventive, and creative effort. This is the value of our being born, and in this we can find our true joy.

*They haul snow to  
fill the old well*

Yuki o ninatte kosei o  
uzumu

坦雪填古井

Another version of this verse is, "They haul snow to fill up the river." The Shoyo Roku, one of the records of the Patriarchs, includes this as part of its 77th case. The words express a world of making wasted efforts, of doing work with no possibility of fruition, of liberating all sentient beings.

The lazy Tokuun came down  
many times  
From the summit of the mystic  
peak.  
Engaging foolish wise men,  
together  
Filling the well with snow.



The mystic peak of Myobucho is written of in the Flower Garland Sutra. Zenzai Doji decides to visit fifty-three wise Zen monks, beginning with Tokuun Zenji. For an entire week he tries gaining access to Tokuun. Finally he is able to see him. The Myobucho referred to here is the highest peak of a mountain, representing awakened mind, that absolute place where not a speck of anything lingers. Here there's no self or other, not a trace of a person or an animal or an insect. This is the world of our zazen, where there is no self, no speck of anything in the heavens and earth. This is the state of mind where we lose track of our body, of the zendo, and of this very world. This Myobucho is the source of the wisdom of Manjusri.

Zenzai Doji calls on fifty-three wise people of Zen training, going first to Shoraku Kokui, where Myobucho and Tokuun Zenji are. He has heard that Tokuun Zenji has never once come down from the highest peak of Myobucho, his state of mind of enlightenment. He resides only at the summit of satori. Of course Zenzai Doji can't meet with Tokuun. Within this mind of no self and no other, where there's not one single fleck of anything in the heavens and earth to be concerned with, there's no way to encounter someone who is sought. Where could he be found?

However, while Zenzai didn't meet Tokuun on Myobucho, he did meet him on an entirely different mountain. For the sake of Zenzai Doji, Tokuun rolled all of the past, present, and future into one moment. This moment is where all of the Buddhas have their truth, the source of all wisdom. In the Flower Garland Sutra it is described as the eye of seeing clearly the truth in all worlds.

This is a very strange story indeed! It relates that Tokuun Zenji was on Myobucho and never came down. He could not be seen, yet Zenzai Doji was able to encounter him for one mind moment on another peak and hear his

teaching. If Tokuun never came down off Myobucho, where is this other mountain?

Tokuun never, for one second, left Myobucho. For the sake of liberating all beings he came down off the mountain of form called Myobucho, but everywhere he went was still that state of mind of Myobucho, the state of being of not having extraneous thoughts. The ongoing continuation of clear mind moments was all there was. This is the meaning of his never having left the mountain. Whether eating, shitting, or bathing, he remained in that place of continuous clear mind moments. In the midst of this awakened mind, he liberated others.

Zenzai Doji thought that he had met Tokuun on a different peak, but Tokuun met him right on the peak of Myobucho. This mind of continuous clear mind moments is the satori of everyday life. If we leave that everyday world, we fall into the realm of nihilism. We can't throw away our life in the actual world and abandon the liberation of all beings. If we think there's a separate world from the peak of Myobucho, we create a falsehood. Our everyday life must be the same as Tokuun's stay on Myobucho, never coming down. This is how it must be.

Honen Shonin said you should repeat the Buddha's name in the midst of all your life, not just now and then and between working. This is truly the world of ceaseless clear mind.

The lazy Tokuun came down  
many times  
From the summit of the mystic  
peak.  
Engaging foolish wise men,  
together  
Filling the well with snow.

Hakuin Zenji wrote these lines about the fifth of the five ranks:

1. The Apparent within the Real
2. The Real within the Apparent
3. The coming from within the Real
4. The arrival at Mutual Integration
5. Unity Attained

A broken-down priest comes off the mountain and with another stupid foolish priest puts snow in a well. Of course, no matter how much snow they put into the well, it doesn't fill up. Anybody knows that. But ours is a world of ignorant people. To leave our seamless world of oneness, going into the world of discriminating thought and liberating confused and deluded people, would seem as useless as putting snow down a well. Nevertheless, it must be done. If it isn't, it's not the Buddha Dharma. "Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to liberate them." This is our training.

This state of mind has to be deeply realized or it's not the Buddha Dharma. There can be no Dharma essence without satori, but if we carry that satori around with us, it's not the Buddha Dharma. Once we awaken and realize satori, we have to throw it away, and like a simple fool, dive into the middle of society. We must be exactly like Tokuun on the peak, never leaving that place where not a speck of anything can light. While maintaining this mind, we must enter into society and manifest it, or the Buddha Dharma will be destroyed and there will be no liberation of people in the world.

Once a monk asked Joshu,  
"What is Myobucho?"  
Joshu replied that he would not answer that.  
"Why won't you answer?"  
"If I answer you, you will

probably fall immediately from the peak of enlightenment into the deepest hell."

This is what Joshu answered, and that is the Myobucho's answer exactly as it is. Joshu expressed Myobucho splendidly.

*Beyond the  
balustrade,  
the mountains are  
deep and the waters  
cold*

Kanzen yama fukaku  
shite mizu samushi

檻前山深水寒

The line is from Setcho Zenji's poem on the second case of the Blue Cliff Record, "The Great Way Knows No Difficulties." The line preceding it is: "At the edge of heaven the sun rises and the moon sets." The sun rises from the east, and the moon sinks into the west. The rooster crows at the break of dawn, and every four years there is a leap year.



Things as they are is the way of nature; without thinking, nature functions. With nothing extra, this is the Great Way, the way of the heavens and earth that no one can alter. People are born, grow old, and die. This is our way. We receive morning and evening whether we're rich or poor, stupid or smart; regardless of circumstance, we all receive the Great Way.

People represent only a small percentage of the Great Way, and so we live in accordance with it. These are things we can't change.

At the edge of heaven the sun rises and the moon sets,  
Beyond the balustrade, the mountains are deep and the waters cold

All beings share the blessings of the sun's light and warmth, yet we are all different. When we do zazen in the temple in the mountains, we see the river flowing outside the window. In the deep shadows of the hills the water looks so cold. Does the water look cold because it is so deep in the mountains, or are the mountains deep because the water is so cold? If we look closely at it we have to ask why. Though it's called the Great Way, each and every thing has its own particular essence.

The flowers blooming in the garden are many colors--yellow, red, white, and purple. Some have many petals, others have few, all blooming at different times. While we might say, "At the edge of heaven, the sun rises and the moon sets," if we look closely we see that each and every thing is different. Yet while each is different, all partake equally of this world from which they can't be separated.

Master Joshu worked with the words "the Great Way knows no difficulties" for his entire life. They are from the verse On Believing in Mind written by Sansho Kanchi Zenji, which begins, "The Great Way knows no

difficulties, if we refrain from picking and choosing. Only when freed from hate and love, it reveals itself fully and without disguise."

Joshu cherished these words and taught them often. The Great Way is that path which all beings must travel. Everyday mind is the path. Our eyes are horizontal above our nose, which is vertical. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west. The rooster crows at dawn and every four years there's a leap year. There's no Path apart from this and nothing difficult about it. The orders of the heavens are the natural way. Living in accordance with them is the Path.

The mind with which we are born is called our human character. Living in accordance with that mind is the Path. The Path isn't difficult unless we begin adding on our likes and dislikes and ideas about how things should be done. Because we have preferences and stand apart, we make it hard. Why are our eyes horizontal? Why is our nose vertical? When we add on ideas and thoughts about things, we get caught on each and every one of them. If we can just accept things as they are, it's easy to receive them simply. When "my feelings" get involved, then liking and disliking enter the picture.

The sun doesn't rise or set because we will it to. When we want rain to fall, the sun keeps right on shining; when we want a sunny day, it seems it almost always rains. When thoughts of gain or loss enter the picture, our Path becomes unclear and we're lost. When we receive things exactly as they come, it's fine if it's clear and fine if it's cloudy. Fuji is a mountain. When we add ideas and feelings to that we become confused. We stop feeling the necessity of satori.

Have you not seen the idle man of Tao  
who has nothing to learn and nothing to do,  
Who neither discards wandering thoughts nor seeks the truth?  
The real nature of ignorance is Buddha-nature;  
The illusory empty body is the Dharma body.  
After realizing the Dharma body, there is not a thing;  
Original self-nature is the innate Buddha.

These words are from the Song of Enlightenment of the Fourth Patriarch, Yoka Daishi. They describe being in the very midst of the Great Way.

A tenth of an inch's difference,  
And heaven and earth are set apart

Joshu said, "People have to cut away all of their aversions and preferences, then it reveals itself fully, but I am not in that either."

A monk got snagged on these words and said, "If you are not in that place where it is revealed clearly, then without that to rely on, what do you rely on and protect?" He was caught in dualistic thinking.

"If you ask me that, I don't know either!"

Joshu didn't give a great shout or hit the monk with a stick. He was not moved around at all by his question.

The monk persisted, "If you don't know, then why do you say those words?"

Joshu said, "I understand well what you are saying. Your reasoning is correct. But the shallow understanding that comes from correct reasoning is of no use whatsoever. Go prostrate over there someplace and then go home."

Joshu had quickly and easily cut the monk off.

What is the Great Way and what does it mean to say it's not difficult? The more you speak about it, the more confused you'll be.

At the edge of heaven the sun rises and the moon sets,  
Beyond the balustrade, the mountains are deep and the waters cold

In ancient times the family of Layman Pang worked with the question of "The Great Way knows no difficulties, if we refrain from picking and choosing." Layman Pang explained at length how difficult it is to live in accordance with the Great Way. His wife responded by asking, "What is difficult about that? Everyone in the world is a Buddha!" Then his daughter added, "There is nothing difficult or easy about it. When you encounter food you eat it and when you meet up with tea you drink it! That's all there is to it!"

The entire family each expressed this in a different way, but their answers all embraced the Great Way. Just as Setcho has written, "At the edge of heaven the sun rises and the moon sets."

In just this way the sun rises in the east, the moon sets in the west. The rooster crows at dawn and every four years there's a leap year. Without exception, we all receive the grace of things exactly as they are. The mountain is a mountain and the water is water. From the point of view of "At the edge of heaven the sun rises and the moon sets," everything is clearly equal and the same. As Layman Pang's wife said, "It is easy!" Still, "Beyond the balustrade, the mountains are deep and the waters cold." Each and every thing is also different in its own way, and those qualities must be considered. If we add in any idea of a small "I," it's not the Great Way. We have to realize this place beyond any

addition of ego and dualistic thinking. And that is what Layman Pang is saying is difficult. Whether it is easy or difficult, each day we eat meals and become the meals, we read sutras and become the sutras, we do zazen and become the zazen, we work and become the work completely. We become the very teaching. When we meet joy we become joy and when we meet suffering we become that suffering. When we meet sickness we become sickness and when we meet a catastrophe we become that catastrophe completely.

If we don't become each moment and each thing completely, the path can't be fully traveled. The actualization of this, the experience of it, is Zen.

*All ten thousand  
things reveal great  
radiance*

Banbutsu kōki o shōzu

萬物光輝生

The source of this line isn't clear, but the Buddha's awakening is the source of the state of mind it expresses. The words convey the essence of the actual experience.

One day Unmon Bunen Zenji held up his staff before a gathered assembly and said, "This staff becomes a dragon and swallows down the whole universe. All the mountains and rivers and the whole world. Where do they go? This staff becomes a dragon and swallows down the whole universe! All of the mountains and rivers and the whole earth are swallowed down completely. Where can we be? How



about it?" In front of everyone he held out the staff and asked this.

We live in a world full of dualism. We can't live if we separate ourselves from our thinking. Doing so would make us ignorant. But because of the knowledge we've gathered, we think of things as good and bad and judge them accordingly. That's why we're always at odds with each another. Because our horizons are narrow and we get caught on how we'd like things to be, we're unable to see the whole picture. Saying that we act with integrity, we're in fact caught in our narrow way of seeing.

Saying that it's for the sake of God, we take the lives of others. It's hard to cut the roots of thoughts when we continue to pour energy into them. Like ghosts and phantoms that get caught on trees and grasses as they pass through them, there are phantoms that feed on our thoughts and sycophants that live on our ideas. Despite the fine things these phantoms proclaim, they're only conceited appreciations of our own extraneous ideas and opinions. Instead of being caught by these, we have to realize that mind which never moves and never changes. This truth must be experienced. Then our lives and society must be rebuilt from the bottom up, or we can't say we are living a life of truth.

"This staff becomes a dragon and swallows down the whole universe!" Unmon is not saying something meaningless. He's saying that just once we have to cut away all of our small-minded ideas and opinions and attachments and open our eyes to that which unites all living beings, that thing which never changes. Then no part of humankind can be left out, not a single person. In realizing this mind in all of us, we give birth to true humans.

While all 5,048 sutras teach this, for Unmon it was all said in, "This staff becomes a dragon and swallows down the whole universe! All the mountains

and rivers and the whole world, where do they go?" We have to just once let go of all of our ideas and thoughts and self-conscious awareness. They do not disappear, but we can stop giving them attention and holding on to them. If we can just once let go, then we become the very thing itself, seeing not from a deluded point of view but encountering the actuality directly. This eye has to be opened. When it is we can know the state of mind of a newborn baby, and from there we can receive the whole world. Then everything we see and hear and think is fresh and new and all of it is truth.

On the morning of December 12, having let go of all self-awareness, the Buddha saw the morning star and became it completely. He exclaimed, "How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings are endowed from the origin with this clear mind to which I have just awakened."

How wondrous! All of the ten thousand things are the Buddha's life and all of them shine radiantly! All of us have this wisdom from the origin. Not through training but from the beginning we are all endowed with this state of mind, which is not the slightest bit different from that mind of the Buddha! When we receive this world as it is, without any ego filtering, that is our original mind exactly as it is. How wondrous!

From the time of our birth we have gathered knowledge and preconceived notions. Because we can't let go of them we get caught on form and gird our own position. Because we can't let go of our education and learning, we can't see. Although we never lose our original nature, we aren't able to use it.

In order to use this true nature we have to do this great cleaning. Then, in our eyes it will be seeing, in our ears it will be hearing, in our mouth it will be eating, in our hands it will be grasping, and in our feet it will be walking. Our true original nature, unhampered by our

ego, will see the world exactly as it is.

“All ten thousand things reveal great radiance.” Only when we know this experience can we say this. Each thing’s reflection of the sun’s light is insignificant compared to the truth of experiencing this.

When we hold on to our problems, no matter how bright the sunlight is, we will still sink into darkness. But if we realize this place, even if we are in a dark world, everywhere light will shine through the darkness and illuminate each and every thing. Everything we are aware of, we will love. All of the ten thousand things, all of phenomena, will be in our heart, and we will love them all from the deepest place in our mind. As it says in the Lotus Sutra, “In all the three worlds everyone is my child, and all the three Worlds are my home.”

When we are empty of ego, we can love everything we see. When we are not caught on a small self, we have the wisdom to see the whole world and love all of it. That is our original nature, our purest actual way of being. All of these qualities are the Buddha.

When we can live like this, every person we touch and each thing we encounter is true and fresh and newly born. Will we know this great wonder and live it every day, or will we continue to suffer? It’s very important for each of us to realize this.



*Purple-gold light  
illuminates  
the mountains  
and rivers*

Shikon kōjū  
Senga o terasu

紫金光聚照山河

This verse is also from the fourth section of the Kaian Kokugo. It is a couplet with “In heaven above and in the world below, spirit abounds.”

The purple-gold light is the radiance that shines forth from the body of the Buddha, illuminating all of the mountains and rivers. This golden violet light of truth shines on everything in this world. The awakening of the Buddha, just as it is, awakens all humans, casting a glow over everyone. This is the way it’s taught.

The sutras tell of a huge dark field,

without a trace of light. There are countless plants there, but because it's so dark the field can't be plowed or tilled. The plants growing there are pitiful and melancholy, each thinking it's alone.

Suddenly a very advanced person arrives. In his hand he carries a burning branch that illuminates the entire field. The plants that have been low and isolated in the darkness stand tall in the light, and each one is astonished to see that it's in the midst of many others. They all give great cries of joy and start hugging one another.

This field is life, and the darkness is not knowing the light of real wisdom. A plant in the darkness can't know other plants or be farmed. Born and dying alone, unable to make a contribution, of course it's lonely. The advanced person who comes with the burning branch is the Buddha bearing the light of wisdom. He shines it on life, and those who are illuminated by it are astonished and full of joy. No matter how many tens of thousands of people are living in the same country, if they can't see each other, each one lives alone. The light of true wisdom helps us to see each other and live harmoniously.

Purple-gold light illumines the mountains and rivers  
In heaven above and in the world below, spirit abounds.

The wisdom of the Buddha brings great joy. The value of harmony among humankind and the wisdom of the Buddha's teaching are expressed in these words.

The Buddha asked everyone around him, all the disciples and Bodhisattvas, to visit the ailing Vimalakirti, but no one wanted to go because they were afraid of Vimalakirti's severity. Finally Manjusri went. Vimalakirti's truth is the teaching of the mystery of the non-two. It's not just the wisdom of the relative, but a wisdom beyond

paradox and the relative. This is the essence of Buddhism, expressed in Vimalakirti's silence. This deepest wisdom can be known only from experience and from letting go of everything.

Our attachment to being a me has to be ripped out completely, and then we become one with this whole world. This is the marrow of Buddhism. If we speak about it, we are making a judgment, and that is already dualistic and relative. Even the Buddha can't put it into words.

It has to be beyond mental understanding. This means not silence but receiving and accepting everything that comes.

Purple-gold light illumines the mountains and rivers  
In heaven above and in the world below, spirit abounds.

This wisdom is what we have to awaken to, and when it is revealed we understand the words of the Buddha: "How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings are endowed from the origin with the bright clear wisdom to which I have just awakened." All beings in the whole world, without exception, are in the Buddha Sea. If one person awakens to this, then everything in existence, all of the trees and grasses and all beings, becomes Buddha. In this way just one Buddha's awakening becomes the true awakening of all beings.

Are we to be fortunate in this world, or unhappy?

We are what we think  
Having become what we thought,  
Like the wheel that follows the cart-pulling ox,  
Sorrow follows an evil thought.

We are what we think,  
Having become what we

thought  
Like the shadow that never leaves one  
Happiness follows a pure thought.

One person's awakening illuminates the whole world and brings light to all people. My awakening is not mine alone but that of every being

*To make up with  
diligence for his  
inability*

Gon o motte setsu o  
oginau

将勤補拙

This verse is from the 32nd case of the Blue Cliff Record, "Tei Joza Stands Still." Rinzai appears in this case, and this verse is from the lines that Engo added to Setcho's words.

No human is perfect; it's human to behave unskillfully. Once we know where our faults lie, it's up to us to look at them, work on them, and make up for them. To make up for our weaknesses, we have to make bone-breaking efforts. This is the creative way of a person of Zen.

Tokusan's Dharma was transmitted to Seppo, Ganto, and Kinzan. When



the three of them were all still young monks, they made a pilgrimage all over China. At one point, they decided they wanted to learn directly from Rinzai and taste his severe way, so they journeyed together to meet this master.

As they neared Rinzai's temple, a very large monk came towards them. They told him where they were going, and he said, "How unfortunate! Rinzai has just died."

They were crestfallen. Although they had lived in the same age as Rinzai, they hadn't been able to meet and train with him. They wouldn't be able to hear his Dharma directly or touch the deep flavor of his character. Since the monk was of the assembly of Rinzai, they asked if he would share one of Rinzai's Dharma teachings.

The monk said, "In this five-foot lump of red flesh there is a true person of no rank. It is always coming and going, in and out of our orifices. If you have not seen him, see him now!"

This was a core teaching of Rinzai, and the monk expressed it with great energy and power. Ganto spat out his tongue in astonishment. Seppo screamed, "That Rinzai is a great thief!" Kinzan responded, "Why are you so caught on a person of no rank? There is no such thing as that either! You don't need any such explanation!"

Hearing this the monk grabbed Kinzan and said, "Then how about this, this true person of no rank? HOW about it?! Speak!!" Kinzan gasped and turned pale and looked as if he was going to faint.

Ganto and Seppo hurriedly apologized for Kinzan, saying he was young and didn't yet know much about training. Finally the monk loosened his grip, saying, "If these two senior brothers of yours were not here I'd have killed you!!"

The monk was Tei Joza, and this is the only case in which he appears. We don't know how he later expressed

his Dharma, but clearly he was deeply enlightened.

When Tei Joza was training with Rinzai, he asked Rinzai, "What is the body of the Buddha Dharma." Rinzai grabbed Tei Joza by the lapels and punched him. Rinzai was of a slight build and Tei Joza was a very large man, but Rinzai still attacked Tei Joza and splendidly showed his Dharma. Tei Joza fell over and almost passed out.

When Tei Joza was barely able to sit up, one of his seniors said, "Tei Joza, prostrate! The koan is over." It is the custom in Zen to bow both before and after a koan. Tei Joza somehow managed to prostrate, and immediately he was deeply enlightened. His enlightenment experience was similar to that of Rinzai, who had been given sixty blows three times in a row by Master Obaku. Rinzai had asked Master Obaku three times what was the ultimate point of the Buddha's teaching and was hit each time. Convinced that he had no karmic affiliation with Master Obaku, Rinzai went down off the mountain and met with Master Taegu. He asked him what his mistake had been with Master Obaku. What had he done wrong?

Master Taegu said without hesitation, "How kind Obaku is!"

As he spoke, Rinzai understood for the first time that the ultimate teaching of the Buddha can't be found in a rational explanation. The ultimate fulcrum of Buddhism is the source of our life energy, and it can't be said with words. That is why Obaku had hit him so many times. Obaku was asking, "Do you get it? Do you get it? How about this? Do you get it now?"

When Rinzai grabbed Tei Joza's lapels he was saying to him as well, "Do you get it? Do you still not understand?"

As long as we rely on explanations and mental habits, we can't know the true origin of the universe. With narrow thoughts, we become blind, deaf, and dumb. We hear the words

but can't find the source. With WHAT will we get the truth? These blows were one of the ways in which Rinzai could teach Tei Joza through a living process.

"You have to PROSTRATE!" he was told by a brother monk, and since he had done prostrations countless times before, with that cautioning he immediately prostrated, and for the first time he knew clearly beyond rational understanding and judgment. The realization came forth of itself, from the pure functioning of Tei Joza. He was astonished.

The sutras tell of Jo Kyo Bodhisattva, who didn't chant sutras or practice zazen but every single day prostrated to every person he met and said, "I have nothing against you. I see in you a true Buddha." Some people hated that so much they threw stones at him or hit him with a stick. Still he continued to say the same thing, again and again. It says in the Lotus Sutra that this was one of the Buddha's past lives.

In another sutra it tells of a young man who every morning when he washed his face vowed to all the Buddhas in the ten directions. The Buddha saw this and asked him why he did that. The young man said he had learned it from his parents.

The Buddha said, "You are doing such a good thing, you should know the meaning of it. I will tell you. Bowing to the east is expressing gratitude for the grace of your parents; to the south is for your teachers; to the west is for your siblings, spouse, and children; and to the north is for all of your friends and the people close to you. Looking up is a prostration to the truth of the whole universe, and looking down is a prostration to all of the people who are ignored and stepped on. Thanks to them as well, today we are given life and can prostrate. For the people who are suffering the most we feel deep sorrow, and therefore we bow to them." This is how the Buddha taught him.

"Tei Joza!!!! Why don't you prostrate?"

Here his everyday practice came to life without a thought of being added to it. He worked diligently, using his practice to shave the ego away and then shave it away again. In the dojo we do things secretly that no one else wants to do, such as cleaning the toilet and polishing the floor. In this way we purify our mind, working on the places where we know we are unripe and undeveloped.

Because he had practiced thoroughly, Tei Joza could prostrate naturally, without even thinking, and through this a new life was born. This didn't happen from a conceptual practice or from putting society aside, but from having done his practice every day, for all beings. When we have deepened in mind, we can prostrate and realize true awakening, making up with diligence for our inability.

We are all full of ego. For all of society we have to shave it away again and again, and then we can know that satori is not an explanation or a concept.



*Be master wherever  
you go*

Zuisho ni shu to naru

隨處作主

This is the most famous verse of the Records of Rinzai. If we stay in our true center, then no matter where we go, anything we do is truth. This is what the couplet tells us. But it also begs the question. Where is this mastery and center? It can't be the ego and its hardened views--those are desires, things on which we become stuck. We can't call that our true master, or we confuse everything.

Once Rinzai Zenji said to his students. "You of the Path, if I was to say what is most important, it is confidence." He didn't mean the limited confidence of the ego. That confidence depends on

*Then wherever you  
are,  
things are as they  
truly are*

Rissho mina shin nari

立處皆心

an external position, and when that position is gone, it'll go as well. This isn't the way of a person of Zen or of one who would "Be master wherever you go." That confidence arises when the mind which believes and the mind which is believed in are one. The Buddha said to Ananda, "Be a refuge unto yourself, take the Dharma as your refuge. Be your own guiding light, make the Dharma that guiding light." Don't look to others for guidance and refuge. The self and the Dharma are one and the same. The world and the self are one and the same. The body is the Dharma and the Dharma is the



body. This is what's most important. The true Dharma has no form, yet it manifests in all of the ten directions.

The truth which pierces through the periods of past, present, and future doesn't change. This is the truth of not holding on to anything; no self and no other. From here all of the ten thousand things are born. This is the source of the universe. We have to awaken to this place of true belief and refuge, or we can't know true confidence. Otherwise, we will be confident only when things are going the way we want them. We lose confidence when they aren't. The path of Zen is not limited in that way.

Be master wherever you go  
Then wherever you are, things  
are as they truly are.

Rinzai Zenji says we lack confidence because we're used by our surroundings. We have to use our surroundings rather than be used by them. Surroundings and states of mind are like any vehicle: in order to function they require someone able to use them. Even when we have realized the Buddha's great state of mind, it's still only an environment. There has to be a master of it who is able to use it. We must become the state of mind of the Buddha, but once we have, that which comes forth from that state of mind is not yet the actual base for our functioning.

A Bodhisattva manifests as an environment of compassion. But no matter how compassionate the Bodhisattva is, that which is manifested is still only the vehicle. Satori that comes from the true pure mind, because it comes forth from something, is also a vehicle. Even if our state of mind is separated from time and space and we call it nirvana, even if it is completely free of mind, body, and person, as long as it's something that's come forth, it's still a vehicle. The manifestations of this vehicle are

infinite. It can be manifested as an impoverished person or a sage, as a good person or an evil one. The one who drives that vehicle is the true master, the only one in the whole universe, in all the ten directions. There's nothing other than this person of the Path who relies on nothing.

As it says in the sutras, if we live and work in accordance with things as they are, it's like the moon that's reflected in every body of water. That person of the Path who relies on nothing is manifested in all forms and is the source of everything that's manifested.

We always look around at each other's faults and switch our attention from thing to thing. We have to make use of our surroundings rather than being used by them. Instead of looking at others, we should look at ourselves. Instead of being an angry guest, one who's used by others, we can be the master. It's often said that one who doesn't need life doesn't need money or fame either. A person like that can use whatever comes along, no matter how difficult it is. When we completely become whatever comes along, we are not moved around by it. Why is that? Because there's nothing to be moved around by. If one notion intrudes there, our mind becomes divided. As Rinzai says, no matter how deep our state of mind, with one superfluous idea the devil of delusion comes forth and even a Bodhisattva becomes a devil's vehicle. This is how it is if we look outside ourselves for the truth. This has to be stopped.

So often we are eager to have others think we are correct; we want approval or want people to think us good and kind. Though things are always changing, we easily become stuck in wanting them to be one way rather than another. We can't allow our mind to be divided. No matter how difficult the waters, we must jump right in. Then we can know this place of confident functioning. We know it completely right here and now and

know what it means to be that person of the Path who relies on nothing.

Originally there's no satori or ignorance, no enlightened person or ignorant person. The man of the Path has learned to lean on nothing. If we can put our root firmly into that, we can know the mind expressed this way:

Be master wherever you go  
Then wherever you are, things  
are as they truly are



*Sun-faced Buddha  
Moon-faced Buddha*

Nichimen butsu,  
Gachimén butsu

日面佛月面佛

The verse is from Baso Doitsu Zenji. The Dharma was transmitted from Rokuso Eno Zenji to Nangaku Ejo Zenji and then to Baso Doitsu. He was born in 709 and died in 788, and the wind of today's Zen was born of him.

Baso Doitsu spoke these lines near the end of his life. They build on the fundamental view of the Sixth Patriarch but then take it one further, actualizing it within everyday life. Baso Doitsu Zenji gave life and depth to the Zen of China. He was truly one who lived the words that great functioning isn't limited by the rules.

He's been described as glaring with huge eyes as fearsome as a tiger and walking like an ox. He had 139 disciples in sanzen and 84 deeply awakened disciples to whom he transmitted his Dharma. Th Baso Doitsu Zenji, also known as Badaishi, had great merit. His Dharma was transmitted to Chizo Seito Zenji, Nansen Fugan Zenji, and Hyakujo Ekai Zenji, great masters of the Zen world.

Hyakujo Ekai Zenji brought the Zen of the Sixth Patriarch and of Baso Doitsu Zenji even further into the actuality of everyday life. It was he who established the various rules and regulations that we follow in the Zen dojo. From where to place footwear to how to perform the various ceremonies, Hyakujo Zenji meticulously aligned all of our rules and observances. Thanks to him our dojos function smoothly.

After Hyakujo Zenji had completed his training, he returned to Baso Doitsu's temple and was greeted with such a great shout that he was unable to hear anything for three days. This is how strong and energetic Baso Doitsu Zenji was.

About one month before his death, Baso Doitsu Zenji was walking in the mountains, when he came to a fairly wide-open space. Pointing to it he said, "Bury my bones right here." The next day he was bedridden.

The day before his death, the local official responsible for the temple came to visit him and asked, "How are you feeling?"

Baso Doitsu Zenji answered, "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha."

Sun-faced Buddha and Moon-faced Buddha are names in the sutra of the three thousand Buddhas. The Sun-faced Buddha is 1,800 years old, and the Moon-faced Buddha is one day and one night old. Baso Doitsu was answering that he was both a long-lived Buddha and a short-lived Buddha. When there are Buddhas who live 1,800 years and Buddhas who live only one day and one night,

something like sickness is no problem!

He had prophesied that he would die and now, liberated beyond life and death, he was saying, "The sufferings of sickness? I give no attention to something like that!" At the end of his life he expressed the truth beyond life and death precisely; it could only have been said in these words: "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha."

Later Hakuin said that those who knew the sound of the one hand clapping could know "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha."

We do zazen, we do sanzen, and we present ourselves as people of training, but if we can't see where we go at death, we are pathetic.

Master Tosotsu Juetsu said, "Leave no stone unturned to explore profundity, simply see into your true nature. Now, I want to ask you, just at this moment, where is your true nature? If you have realized it, you are free from life and death. But tell me, when your eyesight deserts you at the last moment, will you be free from life and death? When the four elements separate, where will you go?"

Master Tosotsu Juetsu Zenji put these questions to his monks. If you have not actually experienced the "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha" of Badaishi, you won't be able to understand. Even if you've trained for many years, if you can't realize this state of mind, your training has been wasted. It has no meaning.

This isn't about someone else. No one can live forever. The end will come for each and every one of us, whether we're enlightened or not. When the Buddha was born he said, "In all the heavens and earth, only one person."

We have to see clearly that at the moment we are born, when we give that great birth cry, we are holding on to nothing at all. There is only that great cry, as it is. This is true not only of the Buddha but of everyone. We are all born with this state of mind

of "in all the heavens and earth, only one person." This is true not only of people but also of flowers, animals, and the birds. All living things are "in all the heavens and earth, only one." But only humans can realize this, and this is where the dignified value of humans lies. Though we are humans, if we don't awaken to this state of mind we can't say we have realized, "In all the heavens and all the earth there is only one person." Those who do not awaken to this live a pathetic life of delusion, mistaking ego for the deepest true value.

Badaishi's words, "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha," express that mind that unites all beings. We must awaken to that. Then we will have no need for our own personal pain, insecurity, and misery; we'll need only that truth which unites all beings. When the local official, representing all of the people in society, came to visit Badaishi, he was told, "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha." Did he receive these words in an enlightened way or a deluded way? Did he see with enlightened eyes, or did he only see Badaishi's physically weakened body and feel pity for him? Was he in that state of mind where you can't be moved about? Whatever his state of mind was, Badaishi took it all away.

Everything that humans hold on to, good and bad, happy and sad, has to be thrown away or we can't know the mind of Badaishi. Even if we present the appearance of a person of training, it will be obvious at the end of our life if we haven't practiced to this point. If we're still attached to the physical body and emotions, we won't be able to hide that insecurity. The mind of Badaishi is not a place we can reach through mental understanding.

Badaishi could tell what the officer's state of mind was, whether it was splendid or narrow, but whatever it was, he took it away from him completely. This is Badaishi's true place, manifested in "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha."

In the Edo period there was a priest named Sengai from Hakata who made very simple but very expressive paintings. When he was on his deathbed his disciples asked for his last words. He said, "I don't want to die! I don't want to die!" His disciples were astounded. Their great master couldn't be saying that! Everyone would laugh! So they asked him to say something more appropriate. The priest said, "Really really!"

If someone who has not awakened were to say, "I don't want to die," we could understand it, but these words coming from a master are hard to fathom. But Sengai was not moved around by that; he had no need to look good for his disciples. Looking good for society has no meaning whatsoever.

The famous poet Masaoka Shiki wrote on his deathbed,

The gourd flower blooms  
The mucous gathers,  
Is this where I become a  
Buddha?

The gourd grows in the summer. In June, on the verge of death, Masaoka Shiki spoke the words of the season. If the mucus didn't stop, he was finished. Even if he tried with everything he had to fight against dying, he'd still be physically miserable and psychologically wretched. Instead, he looked directly at that which was dying.

The gourd flower blooms  
The mucous gathers,  
Is this where I become a  
Buddha?

This is the way he could look at it without getting caught on himself. He was in terrible pain, but while being in the middle of that pain he looked directly at it without getting stuck on

it. Right in the midst of dying, he was not caught on dying. He truly lived the path of haiku with deepest faith and determination.

Yamaoka Tesshu was another who wrote much about Buddhism. Miserable and suffering terribly, he sat zazen. He wrote about sitting zazen in physical misery, and at dawn seeing the crow fly away. In the same way, Yamaoka Tesshu also left at dawn. He realized the state of mind that comes and goes nowhere and then expressed his deepest truth.

Our zazen can't be done casually or superficially. People suffer great pain at death. We have to pierce beyond our physical and mental suffering and see what it is that is actually suffering, and then pierce through that as well. We have to realize what's real and actual, or zazen isn't of any value. It can't be merely the hobby of a person with plenty of free time.

Myokonin of the Pure Land Sect said that at death he would not become a Buddha, a Buddha would become him, Namu Amida Butsu. He also said, "My death has been taken away from me by Amida. My death is over, the funeral is finished, and the joy after that, Namu Amida Butsu. While I am chanting, the problem of dying has been taken away. Amida took it away and the funeral is over. Everyday I wake up and think, I am alive another day! I have gained another day! Full of gratitude and wonder, I am not asking for something, only thankful, Namu Amida Butsu." This state of mind of profound belief is the state of mind of Zen.

Finally arriving, we see that death is the same as rebirth. We pierce through the question of life and death or our practice is of no value. If we just do zazen, sitting and examining our thinking, we won't awaken. We have to pierce the question of living and dying and of time and space, and in that we must grasp the One Truth. We can't receive this from someone else. We have to offer everything we are

to it, or the experience isn't possible. But the experience is possible, and we can realize eternal life. When we experience this, we know that true compassion is not an explanation but an actuality.

Badaishi is not saying "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha" from a place of misery and suffering. He's expressing the One Truth of many thousands of millions of years.

This has nothing to do with whether we are good or bad, or with who has power in this world, or with who is praised and who is criticized. Whether it's 1,800 years or one day and night is irrelevant. From the ancient times through the infinite future, deluded or enlightened, Badaishi pierced it all. We have to realize this truth, and for doing so we make strong, diligent efforts in our training. The truth isn't for other people; in fact it's not for a purpose at all. But while we're still stuck in our own shell we can't possibly know this. Only when we've broken through can we say this.



*Crouch under the  
high heavens,  
tiptoe over the deep  
earth*

Kōten ni segukumari  
kōchi ni nukiashi su

高天踮厚地踏

This poem is from the work of ShiKyo from China. People say that the heavens are high and because we live under such an elevated sky, we have to be able to stand up tall and walk big. But in doing so we often become careless and shortsighted. We say the earth is thick, but if we don't tread lightly and mindfully we might trip and fall. Because the world is so confused, we can't lose focus. People don't like to be told this, but for precisely that reason we frequently make mistakes. As a Zen phrase, these words refer to our daily attention to our behavior.

As Mumon Ekai writes in the preface to the koan of Joshu's Mu, with all of our 360 bones and all of our 84,000 pores we have to employ every ounce of energy in this great matter of Mu. We have to put our whole body and being into this Mu and become it completely. We can't live our lives superficially. No matter what circumstance we find ourselves in, we have to become completely immersed. If we don't, we lose sight of what matters.

In all of the twenty-four hours of the day, we put everything into focusing on Mu. This doesn't mean we become blind, but because we are always concentrating we become one with each thing we do. It's as if we have a red-hot iron ball caught in our throat, which we can't swallow and we can't spit out. With our whole body and being we throw ourselves into what we are doing, and it becomes clear that there's no value at all to any idea about good and bad or gain and loss. Going beyond any dualism, our body and being and the universe become one. This essence is what enables us to realize the place where we let go of all of our conditioning and preconceived notions, all of our mental understanding and intellectual knowledge. No reasoning or mentation reaches us. Our body and mind resonate with this deep essence until we and the heavens meld into one.

We become like a person who has seen a dream that he's unable to share. Unless we free ourselves from any notion of good or bad, there's no true master in our lives. We can't resolve this just by wondering whether or not we'll be happy tomorrow. What's most important is how we relate to the life energy of right here, right now. When this essence is strong, everything we see and touch is the one truth--not an explanation but the thing itself. With that clear wisdom, everything we touch is fresh and true. This is the actual experience of Zen, the manifestation of the living energy

of Zen.

Though we can realize this, if we allow our essence to dissipate, we lose it. We must continue until it is second nature and useful in our everyday life.

Crouch under the high heavens,  
tiptoe over the deep earth.

These words refer to the experience and all of the roads leading to it. Then we take that experience and give it life through our continuous clear mind moments. It can't be put to use in daily life through reasoning. We have to continually work with it, creatively and inventively.

*Once the two swords  
have crossed points  
Retreat is no longer  
possible*

Ryōjin hokosaki o  
majiete  
Sakuru o mochiizu

両刃交鋒不須避

These lines are from a poem that continues:

The master swordsman  
Is like the lotus blooming in  
the fire  
Such a man has in and of  
himself  
A heaven soaring spirit

These lines were written by Tozan Ryokai Zenji about the fourth of the five ranks, Arrival at Mutual Integration.



Hakuin Zenji's teacher, Dokyo Etan Zenji, said the Patriarchs provided the five ranks in order to clarify the wisdom of people of practice. From the four great wisdoms they offered these five ranks. The four great wisdoms are:

The Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom  
The Universal Nature Wisdom  
The Profound Observing Wisdom  
The Perfecting of Action Wisdom

As we first undertake the practice of Zen, realizing satori is the central goal of training. But when our training ripens, we're able to touch the deep source of our mind. Then the four great wisdoms can pierce our collective unconscious and lay open the dark source of the ego. In doing so they brightly illuminate our mind's true source. When we've realized this essence, we know its reality even in the world of discrimination in which we live and work. But we have to look at it closely, or we become confused. We have to continue making great effort, working diligently, or that which we have realized will remain unclarified and unripened. If wisdom is not well polished, we won't be able to polish the wisdom of others--we won't be able to teach. For this purpose the five ranks were taught.

This teaching originated with Master Sekito Kisen, Master Yakusan Igen, and Master Ungan. Tozan Ryokai then wrote a poem to capture the essence of each rank. Many people of training have used his poems to deepen their own experience while polishing their wisdom. This is the Zen way of teaching and ripening wisdom.

These five ranks are:

1. The Apparent within the Real
2. The Real within the Apparent
3. The coming from within the Real
4. The arrival at Mutual Integration
5. Unity Attained

These five ranks enable us to take our experience of the equal and the differentiated, to take the Buddha Dharma's infinite manifestation, and use it for all humankind. While living this way, we come to know:

Once the two swords have  
crossed points  
Retreat is no longer possible  
The master swordsman  
Is like the lotus blooming in the  
fire  
Such a man has in and of  
himself  
A heaven soaring spirit

When we've reached this level, we're smack dab in the middle of actuality. Each person we encounter helps refine our wisdom, teaching us how best we can function.

Two adepts meet with their swords drawn. They're both at the razor's edge; if either allows the slightest gap, death will result. This essence is necessary not only for martial artists but for humans in all of our relationships, business and social. Without it, we can't meet equally. The meeting of the adepts, allowing not a single gap, is like the single lotus that blooms in the fire. Its whole being is taut and full, with no room for the slightest gap, or it will burn and perish. At the same time, within this, the great brightness of heaven shines; without this actuality, our functioning becomes dull.

Yamaoka Tesshu trained with Yuri Tekisui of Sogenji. Yamaoka Tesshu lived during the period in which the Meiji era began and was the greatest swordsman of that time. He followed the path of kendo and realized the way of the sword and Zen as One. Even without drawing his sword, through the energy that surged from his pores, he lived through this difficult time. Daily he did zazen and polished his sword.

One day he had a match with another top swordsman, Asari Matashiru

Yoshiaki. His opponent was a great master, and there wasn't a gap. Yamaoka Tesshu was large and powerful. His opponent was small and, from Tesshu's point of view, not very advanced. But for whatever reason, he couldn't win. The form of his opponent loomed so large in front of him that he couldn't move.

He realized that it wasn't a problem of technique, so he decided that he had to work on it from a different level. He went to see Master Yuri Tekisui, with whom he had been doing sanzen since his youth. He told his teacher about his challenge, and Tekisui Zenji gave him this poem as his koan:

Once the two swords have  
crossed points  
Retreat is no longer possible  
The master swordsman  
Is like the lotus blooming in  
the fire  
Such a man has in and of  
himself  
A heaven soaring spirit

Tesshu felt this koan very deeply and worked on it industriously for three years. But every time he did sanzen, he was hit by Tekisui, who said each time, "You don't think you are going to understand a koan like this with a state of mind like that, do you?" No matter what answer he brought, he was hit. When he was eating, he would think of his chopsticks as two swords. He woke his wife up in the middle of the night and asked her to hold a sword and act as his opponent. His wife, afraid for his sanity, wanted him to stop doing zazen. But nothing could stop him.

Each time he went to sanzen, his teacher hit him without reserve. His fellow swordsmen offered to return the blows for him, but Tesshu said, "Did you really think I'm going to get killed by that priest?"

Hirumana Senzo, a great figure of the time, was fond of saying how much he had given. Hearing him, Tesshu

realized that it was very important to remain unaffected by the gains and losses of business. If you think about gain, you get excited, and if you think about loss, you become tight and tense. It's not possible to succeed in a business this way. It's important to keep your mind clear and always remember the larger picture, without an attachment to what comes and goes. Tesshu felt that this also must be true for swordsmanship. He decided to live in this way, with no concern for gain and loss.

Once the two swords have  
crossed points  
Retreat is no longer possible  
The master swordsman  
Is like the lotus blooming in the  
fire  
Such a man has in and of  
himself  
A heaven soaring spirit

He wrote in his diary that he shouldn't lose sight of this way of seeing. For years he worked on the koan. Finally his karmic affiliations had ripened and he was able to apply his realizations about Hirumana Senzo to the way of the sword.

He realized there was no opponent facing him and no self holding the sword. The sword was held by that which extended throughout the whole universe. While continuing to train his students in swordsmanship during the day, at night he did zazen, working on refining that full taut state of mind.

On the twenty-ninth day of March, as he sat in zazen, he suddenly realized that clear state of mind. In what felt like a single breath, the heavens and earth were still; there was nothing to hold on to; nothing to seek. He realized the night had ended and it was morning. He'd been sitting with his sword as if facing an opponent, but the large shadow of his small opponent was no longer there.

He called his top student. Facing him, holding his wooden stick, the student

said, "Sensei, please forgive me!"

"Why!"

"I have been doing matches with you for many years, but I have never encountered this before. This is my first experience of this: I can't stand in front of you."

"Is that so? You feel it too?"

Immediately Tesshu went to see Asari Matashiru Yoshiaki and asked for a match.

Asari Matashiru Yoshiaki was happy to see him. He could tell from the way Yamaoka Tesshu wore his gear and moved how truly taut and sharp he was. He said, "You are completely different from before." He then gave him the profound rank of the One Sword Line. This was on the thirtieth day of March in the thirteenth year of the Meiji period.

The Sixth Patriarch said that the zen of zazen is to add no external thoughts to any experience, and samadhi is to be unmoved by anything from within. This state of mind is manifested in "Once the two swords have crossed points, retreat is no longer possible." In order to focus and concentrate this way, we purify our mind and gather it to a single point. From here that kind of functioning is born.

We carry around many memories and much anger, joy, and sadness, and these intrude into all we do. Because of this, people of the path look with at each thing they do as if it is the last thing they will ever do. Those following the path of archery, for example, think that their next arrow is the last they will shoot. The person of tea sees the tea being served is a unique opportunity, the last tea of their whole life. In this way, people clarify their state of mind.

## *The juniper tree in the front garden*

Teizen no hakujushi

## 庭前柏樹子

In the Tang Dynasty there was a famous Zen Master named Joshu. A monk asked him, "What was Bodhidharma's intention in going to China?"

Joshu answered, "The juniper tree in the front garden."

What did Daruma Daishi travel from India to do? What was his state of mind at that time? At the time of Joshu, it was common for monks to ask such questions: What's the ultimate truth of the Dharma? What is the Buddha? What is the actuality of the Buddha?

In India the Buddha represented an



庭前柏樹子

absolute, true, substantial body of truth. But by Joshu's time, Buddhism was more than a philosophical search for the truth. It was about how to hold our mind in everyday life.

How should our mind be? How should it be used? How do we take care of it? What's the best and most truthful way to live? How do we not get caught in ideas of a small self while remaining clear and unconfused? How do we work creatively on our state of mind? Who can teach us the best way to be human? These were the questions people were asking at the time.

During the Sixth Patriarch's time, this was the direction in which practice was moving. By the time the transmission reached Joshu, functioning in everyday life had become the focus of people's questions. How do we clarify our mind twenty-four hours a day? How do we express true Mind? How should we use this clarified mind? This was the place from which people of practice worked.

The monk who asked Joshu about Daruma Daishi's intention in coming to China was familiar with this way of working on everyday mind. When 1,500 years ago, Daruma Daishi crossed the Bengal Bay by ship, sailing through great storms all the way around the peninsula of Malay and on to China, it was a huge adventure. What was his intention in going so far? Why did he do that? From this view, the monk inquired of Daruma Daishi, asking about his mind as a means of looking at how one's mind should be.

Rinzai Zenji answered the same question by saying that if Daruma Daishi had had the slightest bit of intention, he couldn't have saved even himself. If he had had the smallest self-conscious awareness of wanting to save someone, that would have been an egoistic thought, and even now he would not be liberated. But if there's no intention, why would he come?

Was there intention or not? Of course he came and taught the true correct

Buddha Dharma, but did he intend to do that? Did he think he was going to save the Chinese? If he did, then Daruma was still unripe. His Dharma would have been lukewarm. When the sun comes up and shines its light on all things, does it have an intention to do that? If it did, then every day, it would wonder why no one ever thanked it. This is a huge process whereby all of the ten thousand things are given light. But we aren't like the sun. Because we don't let go of self-awareness, we aren't free of suffering. If there had been intention, Daruma Daishi couldn't have saved himself, but if he had no intention, there was no reason for him to have made the journey. Certainly he did not travel so far to spend nine years looking at the wall of a cave. He could've done that in India. He didn't have to travel to China to do that. Was there intent in Daruma's coming to China or not? Why did he go so far, anyway?

In our everyday life, no matter how honorably we act, no matter how splendid what we do seems, if we act with self-conscious awareness our actions will become confused.

Christ said it clearly: "Don't let the right hand know what the left hand is doing." If we know we're giving, it's no longer true giving. Likewise, Lao-tzu said that sages don't think of trying to liberating people. People just call on the sage, and the light is spread naturally. This is not because anyone is thinking it should be done like this or like that, but because it spreads naturally. And people naturally feel gratitude for this, as they do for the light and warmth of the sun.

In Buddhism, if we have an idea of having done something, or of having made great efforts, we suffer from it. Only when we work from morning until night without the idea of having worked at all can we become a person of abundant mind. When we do zazen all day without thinking about having done it, that is living zazen. It's not about how long we have sat or how

many years we've practiced. Thinking like that only brings suffering.

The Vimalakirti Sutra says that there's a way of arriving without having thought about arriving. There is a way of leaving without ever having thought about leaving. This is our natural way of being. When we think in terms of what must be done, those thoughts are a burden. The monk's question addressed humans' most basic way of being.

To this query Joshu answered, "The juniper tree in the front garden."

The monk responded, "I'm asking about the state of mind of Daruma Daishi. Please don't answer me by talking about the surroundings, I'm not asking about something external like that."

And Joshu said, "I am not talking about the surroundings."

The monk asked again, "Why did Bodhidharma come to China?"

Joshu replied, "The juniper tree in the front garden."

Joshu was in fact expressing his truest state of mind. Was there intention in Daruma Daishi? Or was there no intention?

If there was, it was the mind of empty-mindedness and the will of willlessness. This is very subtle, yet a tree expresses it naturally. People are called legs with thinking, but trees are truly legs that don't think.

Can a juniper--or the oak or cherry or plum tree--have intention or not? Does it intend to provide shade? Of course plants don't have intention in the way that humans do, but then why do they bring forth such beautiful flowers? Why do they exude such a beautiful fragrance? Why are they so lovely in form? It seems as if there must be some deep, profound intention there. How can we look at the individuality of each and every thing? Is there intention in this universe or not?

In contrast to individual intentions of people trying to understand and make sense of something, what about the all-embracing, eternal intention of existing? Why do we exist? Why do we manifest this form? Is it only coincidental? In what direction are we evolving? What's the goal in that evolution?

You might think that all humans are on a journey toward becoming Buddhas, that we're all moving toward some kind of fulfillment. We might say that the universe itself is Buddha, that the universe itself is the existence of all things.

Every day we think thoughts and focus on our own ego and desires. We create our own ideas of good and bad, thinking in terms of what's good and bad for us, what profits us. We often label anyone who goes against those notions as bad. When people are doing what we like, we get along well, but when they don't, the illusion of harmony immediately disappears. Then conflicts and struggles begin, becoming so ugly we can't imagine anything worse anywhere else in the whole world. Because we are each so full of our own wishes and so determined to fulfill them, we become more and more calculating and more and more manipulative, cultivating superfluous thoughts and decreasing the essence of our true mind. We become able to accept less and less.

When Joshu said, "The juniper tree in the front garden," he was not proclaiming a rehearsed idea but entrusting to the whole universe. He was not inserting the least bit of an "I," not adding the tiniest bit of restriction. He entrusted completely, with a huge magnanimous mind. We can feel this fullness in "The juniper tree in the front garden."

It's not about extinguishing our desires. We don't always have to be in a state of satori to be a good person. If we remain unattached to everyday desires, if we can be free of the ego filter, then those desires, just

as they are, are our Buddha Nature. This insufficient physical body is our Buddha Nature. Our everyday way of being alive is the way of the Buddha, and the state of mind of the Buddha is expressed in our every action and state of mind. Yet we can't know this if we remain caught in our own position and our own dualistic ideas.

When we entrust completely to the Buddha, letting go of our thoughts and attachments and becoming part of the natural flow, this is the state of mind of Zen. We entrust to the Buddha, and there we find the peace of mind that's described in Pure Land teachings.

Ikkyu Zenji also said it:

A baby's mind more and more  
becomes full of knowledge,  
Becoming further and further  
away from Buddha,  
How sad!

We suffer because we protect and defend our attachments and desires. We suffer because we divide our awareness into two. We suffer because we become more calculating and dependent on our rational mind. We have to remember the truth of, "Unless we become the mind of a baby we cannot enter heaven."

What was the intention of Bodhidharma?

The juniper tree in the front garden

Having thrown away all distractions and needless thinking, having become one with the will of the universe, Daruma Daishi's state of mind is like that of a breathing wooden statue. When Joshu said, "The juniper tree in the front garden," he was throwing away every bit of his small self. The tree, in front of our eyes, has stood for a hundred or more years. Every day, whether it's raining or sunny, in the heat of summer and in the cold of winter, it continues manifesting

its energy, providing shade, creating the oxygen we need to breathe. The juniper tree in the front garden is one with the heavens and earth.

Hundreds of years later, the founder of Myoshinji, Muso Daishi, commented on Joshu's answer: "In the koan of the juniper tree in the garden there is a terrible thief!" This koan will truly steal away all of your extraneous thinking and needless ideas. It will take them all right out from under you. When you have no thinking left, when you have no ego clutter left, then Daruma Daishi's intention will come forth clearly.

When Daruma Daishi reached China, he and the Emperor of Ryo had an exchange of questions and answers in which the differences in the levels of understanding became clear. Daruma Daishi then crossed the Yangtze River and for nine years sat facing the wall of a cave. His form was like that of a juniper deep in the mountains.

For nine years, he was just sitting, not giving talks, not translating texts. Yet he had a greater influence on Chinese Buddhism than any other person ever. He not only liberated many people in his own time, but even today he gives birth to our zazen with his huge influence. He's still being born within our zazen. We need to experience his way of being. Sitting without small intentions, our zazen matches the way of the heavens and earth.

Through our training and zazen we sweep away our attachments. People who practice the arts and play sports, those who perform noh and kabuki, do the same. They practice, crushing their desires and ego mechanisms, until they give life to the fullest potential of their talent. This is how people of the arts create masterpieces.

All of our ideas of beauty and ugliness, of wanting this but not that, of good and bad, prevent the mind of the Buddha from being expressed. Standing, sitting, waking, sleeping, in every action, in every movement, the

Buddha can be expressed in us. We have to clarify this completely.

“The juniper tree in the front garden.”  
This is our clarified and purified human state of mind, our daily actuality.

*In all the heavens  
and earth, only one  
person*

Kenkon tada ichinin

乾坤只一人

The source of this phrase isn't clear. When the Buddha was born he took three steps and raised one hand to the sky and pointed the other to the earth and said, “In all the heavens and earth, only one person.”

He didn't mean, “I am wonderful and there is something wrong with you.” A newborn baby can't walk or speak. Yet the Buddha expressed these words with his whole life. A baby gives its birth cry of “WAAAAAA” with every ounce of its strength. This is our expression of “In all the heavens and earth, only one person.”



There is no absolute power in the heavens that can make a slave out of our being. But because people want to rely on some absolute, they try to hold on to a God, and in doing so they dilute their own essence.

There is no devil who weakens human beings. We always want to blame failings on someone else. But whose fault is it? Everyone wants to make what is inconvenient for them be the fault of someone else. This is foolish. There is no such thing as a bad person. It's indulgent to form an idea of a bad person when we have a huge mind that can accept and receive everything. We're a true master, not slaves. We have the truth within and don't need to rely on someone else. In this way these words express humans' values.

All the Buddha's sutras are about becoming free and expressing compassion and wisdom. Awakening to a mind that gives life to this compassion and wisdom is what is most important for all of us. That's what the Buddha taught his whole life. He said that on behalf of everyone we take responsibility with our wisdom and compassion, and this great Mind is our true essence.

When the Buddha realized satori, he said, "How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings are endowed from the origin with this same clear bright mind to which I have just awakened." Although it took him six years of hard training to realize it, he saw that we are all endowed with this very same state of mind. Everything in existence has Buddha Nature. All the trees, grasses, mountains, rivers, animals, and flowers are Buddhas. "In all the heavens and earth, only one person" is about seeing all beings as Buddhas. It's the expression of the Buddha's enlightenment that was made on behalf of all people.

We have to make these words our own and awaken to them. We have to accept the responsibility of treating all beings in the world with

compassionate understanding. For this life and all beings we must know this empathy.

## *Everyday mind is the Path*

Heijōshin kore dō

平常心是道

These are often thought to be the words of Nansen. In fact they're the words of his teacher, Baso Doitsu Zenji. Baso, Nansen, and Joshu all expressed the Chinese wind of Zen. In India, Buddhism had the flavor of philosophy, teaching of emptiness and seeing truth as an absolute higher power. In China, the teachings were brought into the everyday world. Using our body, having all varieties of thoughts, we live our daily life and at the same time offer our life to the Buddha. Through our way of living each day, our way of being in society, we clarify the teaching of the Buddha



and work inventively and intuitively to clarify our mind. This is the Path.

Those who have realized deep awakening know how to live each day. But how do we go about it? What's the best possible way to live our life so that it has value for all for beings? These questions were worked on creatively by those masters who followed Baso Doitsu Zenji.

It was Joshu who asked Nansen, "What is the Path of Nansen?"

When Nansen responded by holding out the tool he was using to cut the grass, he was living the answer to Joshu's question.

Nansen expressed everyday mind in all he did, and Joshu received this teaching directly from Nansen. Nansen lived in such a way that everything he did, every footstep and every hand motion, expressed this ripened mind.

Nansen had no spare time for playing with thoughts. Instead, in the midst of daily life, while working and functioning, he expressed the teaching of the Buddha and taught his students the way of the Mind.

Joshu wholeheartedly asked, "What is the Path?"

Nansen answered, "The path? It's right there, outside the fence."

"I'm not asking about such a small path, I'm asking about the huge Path of the heavens."

"Oh! You're asking about the Great Path? That big road out front? It goes all the way to Tokyo!"

In this way he responded to conceptual questions and expressed the essence of mind. Sometimes he would say, "Go home and drink tea!" or "Wash your bowls!" By pointing to things having to do with eating and sleeping and working, the practical things of everyday life, he taught Joshu the Buddha Dharma. Without this training, Joshu as we know him would not have been born.

Joshu asked, "What is the Path?"

Nansen replied with Baso Doitsu's words, "Everyday mind is the Path."

This Path can't be known through conceptual thinking. If Baso's words are not actualized in our daily work, all we have is a limp notion about what they mean. We remain a hardened lump of ego, mistakenly thinking that everything we do and think is our path. Why did the Buddha train six years? Why did the ancients spend ten or twenty or thirty years training? They were shaving away ego, and then shaving it more, until finally they awakened to the hugeness of mind, in which the heavens and earth are fulfilled and all people are embraced.

This state of mind was still far away for Joshu when he asked, "What's the Path of Nansen?" When he didn't understand Nansen's answers, he continued, "If everyday mind is the path, how can you understand what the essence of this everyday mind is?"

Nansen replied, "If you look for it and try to reach it, it's no longer everyday mind but becomes something special. In trying to understand it, we make it special and bring in dualism, and it's no longer everyday mind."

Joshu still didn't get it. "But if we don't try to understand what the everyday is, how can we understand it? Isn't it because people do not understand the everyday mind that they struggle and suffer from the ego's view?" In this way Joshu aggressively continued asking.

Nansen borrowed the words of Baso, but he wasn't doing so casually. Because he had abundant practice in shaving his ego and piercing through his various layers, he was able truly to say, "Everyday mind is the Path." In speaking this way to Joshu, Nansen was being very kind, like a sweet old grandmother, offering his own experience.

Nansen continued by explaining that you can't know what the Path is or

give it a name. If it's something you think you know, then it's a moral idea. If we think we know, that's dualistic, but if we think we don't know, then no matter how good our actions are, there is no merit. If we don't know, we become like dogs and cats.

If we say we know, then our words are deluded and confused, a mere repetition of something we've heard elsewhere. If we say we don't know, we are being unethical. The ethical path is something that all people must walk together in harmony. There is good, bad, and that which simply occurs. If we do not make something good or bad, then it's just what occurs. The actions of dogs and cats just occur; it's only humans who look at animals' behavior in terms of good and bad. When humans act without being awakened, no matter how splendid or horrible their actions are, they just occur and don't come from a place of true depth.

Often we hear of people who without knowing end up having gone along with something their company or institution was wrongly doing, and this is sad for those involved. When we look at what's going on carefully and with discernment, for the first time we know what it is we should be doing.

"Everyday mind is the Path." This is in fact the most purified level of being. Children, still lacking life experience, aren't able to understand this. Only someone with experience, who's made efforts for all of humankind, can practice this way of resolving things. To receive other people and act in accordance with the will of the heavens, we offer our body and being. Not everyone can do this, but this is our true nature, something we have from the origin.

Everyday mind has no fixed form. There are no hard and fast rules saying it has to be like this or that. If we let go of our ego and its habitual behavior, if we drop our demanding self-centered ideas, we'll know the deep wisdom that is always there, prior to our

experience and understanding, prior to rational understanding, and prior to dualism. We'll know what's most important, that place all humans can rely on.

Finally Nansen said, "When you have reached the true Way beyond doubt, you will find it is as vast and boundless as outer space. How can it be talked about on a level of right and wrong?" Our mind is truly expansive, no tangled place to get caught. Free of doubts, not held prisoner by knowledge and information, our mind is as vast as the huge blue autumn sky, no clouds in sight. This is the state of mind like a great mirror that only reflects exactly what comes before it. If we can realize this kind of purity, there's no room for good and bad. That beautiful mind becomes our everyday mind.

Our original mind is like that of a newborn baby. When we live in that naturally clear mind, just as it is, that's the Path. But when mind is filled with ideas and prejudices, perceptions about economics, politics, and social issues, how can we see clearly? What does it mean when we say "everyday mind"? When people kill, steal, or get drunk, they're trapped in a whirlpool of deep desire. That is not our everyday mind. If we could all live from a place of ordinary, everyday mind, we would have no need for religion and education and laws.

Our mind is a cesspool of ego. We have many dark places that need cleaning out, or we have no resolution to these problems. No matter what we find, we have to clear it away. Only with this kind of cleaning can we come to know that blue sky of everyday mind. It's difficult to do, yet this mind is humans' truest source, and we have to believe in it. Even with all of the crises and conflicts in today's world of actuality, we must believe in this mind--we must believe in that which goes beyond suffering. Then we can know the flowers of spring, the cool breeze of summer, the autumn moon, and the winter's snow. If we

aren't concerned with outcomes, then every season is always the best. This is how Mumon Ekai has described this great huge mind that can receive everything, knowing that all ideas and thoughts are only the phenomena of a brief moment. We must engage our true nature and not chase around after ideas. Then no matter what's encountered, we find refuge within.

When we are not concerned with anything at all, this moment is always the best time and season. If we encounter a crisis or catastrophe, that's fine; when we die, that's okay too. Instead of seeing things as good or bad, we know that that is how it is. When we reach the end of our life, we can't keep on living just because we aren't yet ready to die. We must realize this deepest source, not to prevent physical death, but that we might live a life in which dying is only one of many things that come along.

We have to know this huge mind from which we are born, in which we live, and to which we return. This is the truth of "Everyday mind is the Path."



*The old pine  
is talking  
prajna wisdom*

Koshō hannya o danzu

古松談般若

This line forms a couplet with, "The mysterious bird is singing the truth." It is from the Ninten Ganmoku, which portrays the flow of China's Zen through the Rinzai, Soto, Igyo, Hogen, and Unmon schools.

The poet Sotoba wrote these lines:

The mountain--Buddha's body.  
The torrent--his preaching.  
Last night, 84,000 poems.  
How, how make them  
understand?

Practicing at a mountain temple,

Sotoba sat all night in deep samadhi. The valley's streams resonated, sarasarasasara, but he could not tell if he was the sound of the stream's flow or if the sound of the stream's flow was him. Had he become the stream and was he flowing there? He tasted clearly the flavor of becoming totally one with this world around him.

Normally we see our body and the relative world as separate; we live a life apart. When our world and our body meld, we experience the awakening of the Buddha. We join with this world of material things, and become a perfect whole.

Our zazen can't be for playing around with our own thoughts. This world is filled with problems; our bodies are imperfect too. But putting it all aside and becoming one with this world, completely and totally, is what has to be tasted.

"Last night 84,000 poems": listening to the river's song, we become its verses. Daito Kokushi said, "If we see it with our ears and hear it with our eyes it is beyond doubting, the rain dropping from the eaves." At the beginning we heard the raindrops dualistically, dripping as they fell. Then the raindrop became me, and I became the raindrop as we merged. I'm the raindrop and falling--drip, drip, drip. This mind of seeing with our ears and hearing with our eyes is beyond any doubt. The dualistic world has disappeared completely; our entire body is one with the whole world.

The willow is the subtle form of Kannon

The wind blowing through the pines is the Buddha teaching through the pines

The sun rises, and we can make out the mountain scenery. In all directions, the light brings forth the forms--this is truly Kannon Bodhisattva appearing. One after the next, as the mountains appear they're our body. This is the

state of mind where we are the world and the world is us.

The wind blowing through the pines is the Buddha's teaching. As the trees bend and moan, that sound is the very teaching of the Buddha. We don't think about receiving it but with our whole being we become it. Sotoba is relating the experience of awakening, and we have to know this in our deepest mind. In the Lotus Sutra it says, "A Buddha appears in the world to open the treasury of truth, to indicate its meaning, to cause sentient beings to see into it, to cause sentient beings to enter it and abide in it." In this way it's said that the Buddha came into this world so that all beings might be able to open that same eye of wisdom and live from there.

Before his enlightenment, the Buddha studied with two sages, Ararakarama and Utaramaputara. Because he wanted to go beyond their teaching of not thinking, he went to the mountains in order to deepen further. He deepened and deepened that absolute Mu of not thinking anything at all--not even thinking about not thinking. Then, in one moment, on the eighth of December, he realized that absolute Mu when he saw the morning star. Until then he had known an absolute Mu that was completely focused into a single point. This mind then exploded and became the heavens and earth; as the whole universe this energy merged, becoming the mountains, the rivers, the trees, the grasses, the animals, the birds, the sun. All of the ten thousand things expressed the radiance of his life energy completely. When we experience this, that which is seeing and that which is being seen are one and the same; they may appear separate, but they are one. We realize the truth of an absolute infinite great self. We are the world and the world is us, and there is no "me" to suffer.

As Rinzai Zenji has said, "In our eyes it will be seeing, in our ears it will be hearing, in our mouth it will eating,

in our hands it will be grasping, and in our feet it will be walking." That which is hearing, that which is seeing, is not the slightest bit separated from anything. To realize this true self we open our wisdom eye. Humans are born into this world in order to open this eye in the same way that plants are born into this world in order to bring forth flowers.

When we live in accordance with the great way of nature and open our wisdom eye, then,

The old pine is talking prajna wisdom  
The mysterious bird is singing the truth

Everything in existence is teaching prajna wisdom, and the truth is expressed everywhere.

We can't do zazen only to forget our body and let go of our thoughts. Realizing emptiness is not the goal. Having realized emptiness, we then have to become a truly dignified, quality person. No matter what we encounter, it arises from our wisdom and polishes our wisdom, enabling the bright light of the Buddha Dharma to shine brightly and illuminate everything. In becoming this world we discover our true worth.

## *A thousand-year-old peach pit*

Sennen no tokaku

## 千年桃核

This is from the sixth section of the Kaian Kokugo, "Eshuku Mondo."

Priest Bei from Kicho was known as Kei Chofu and also had a name meaning "one who was of seven teachers." He received the Dharma transmission of Issan no Reiyu. After training with Issan no Reiyu, he returned to the temple where he had been raised and became abbot there. One day a man named Roshiku came to visit Priest Bei. It's not clear whether he had come from training with Nansen or Baso, but he asked Priest Bei, "People look at a rope, and ten out of ten people will call it a snake. You worked

your state of mind at the place of Issan Reiyu, I think, but if you see the rope as a Buddha, what will you call it?"

Priest Keicho no Bei answered, "Seeing from the Buddha's eye is the same as being a sentient being." He was saying that if we think we are seeing as a Buddha, then we are only deluded sentient beings--that any such response is wrong-headed reasoning, an imitation of debate, and not useful for liberating people. Priest Bei responded to the question by saying that if there is even one bit of dualism remaining, there's still attachment to the view of a Buddha and no understanding of Zen in that. The priest was still moved around by Roshiku's words. He gave a standard response, but he had not yet seen it through.

Roshiku replied, "A thousand-year-old peach pit."

A peach pit that has been around for a thousand years will not sprout, no matter how much you cultivate it. Most people recognize this. But apart from the world of words and phrases, if we agree with the response of Priest Bei, "Seeing from the Buddha's eye is the same as being a sentient being," we are saying it's the same thing as being a deluded being.

Daito Kokushi recognized that this response was unfinished. Had he been in Priest Bei's place, he would have slapped that Roshiku.

But Daito Kokushi is Daito Kokushi. He knew the state of mind of a thousand-year-old peach pit that will never sprout. He recognized that Roshiku had seen clearly the mind of Priest Bei and then spit out a greater truth.

This is where you want to say, "Work with it for thirty more years!" But if this thousand-year-old peach pit isn't there, Buddhism can't stand. This is a profoundly deep, thousand-year-old secret. Maybe it appears to be useless, but the essence of it has to be seen.

Master Joshu expressed this state of mind in his Verse of the Twelve Hours:

The cock crows, 2 am!  
I get up and sadly look once  
more upon this broken down  
body,  
I have no hakama or singlet,  
only the kesa has a little of its  
form  
The underwear has no crotch  
left;  
the pants have no opening.  
My head is topped with 3 or 5  
scoops of ash.  
Originally the discipline is to  
save others.  
Who would have thought that  
instead I would become such a  
fool as this?

Getting up today, I'm once again drowning in this cheap suit of a body. The poem called the Verse of the Twelve Hours was written at the oxhour, or twelfth hour. It presents the cry of pain at waking in the morning and thinking that once again I am going to have to be in this inconvenient body. My hakama and koromo are worn out, and my kesa has little shape left to it. My pants are so torn there is no hole for the legs. I have so much dandruff it looks as if I have spoonfuls of ash on my head. I was planning to do training and liberate all beings! Who could have imagined that I would turn into such a mess!

Joshu is saying about himself, "What a stupid fool!" This state of mind has to be tasted, or we'll think of Buddhism as some convenient doctrine that we can use according to how we feel about it. It'll become nothing more than a tool for manipulating situations. Buddhism is not a tool to be used by a handful of people. A thousand-year-old peach pit! We have to open our eyes wide and see the marrow of the Buddha Dharma and make it clear.



*Go straight!*

Maku jikko

慕直去

This line is from the 31st case of the Mumonkan. "Joshu Interrogates the Old Grandmother." Near Joshu's temple there was the mountain of Godai. It's said that from ancient times there had been a temple of Manjusri on the mountain, and that a living Manjusri resided there. For those in the Zen line the altar in the zendo of Manjusri symbolizes the zendo.

When Joshu was young, he set out to visit Mount Godai, but mid-journey he met a senior student who told him that the place of Manjusri wasn't just on Mount Godai but everywhere--everywhere we walk, wherever we

place our feet, that is the dojo. Every single place we are is Manjusri's dojo. It isn't necessary to climb Mount Godai to see him. He might be seen riding a golden lion in the clouds, but even so, it's still nothing more than a dream, a hallucination. When you see from the awakened eye of Zen, you'll be able to see this clearly. Thus, Joshu dropped the idea of going to Mount Godai.

Because his temple was near Mount Godai, almost everyone traveling to the temple would visit the mountain first. There was a teashop at the crossroads, placed for the convenience of travelers. It was run by an eccentric old woman who was as vicious as they come. When people stopped at the teashop and asked where the path to Mount Godai was, she would say, "Go straight!"

Having been told that, they would go straight. But as soon as they had taken a few steps, she would say, "He appears to be a fine monk, but just look at him going off in that direction!" She would talk behind their backs as they left. What did she actually mean when she told them to go straight? Whether they came from the west or from the east, she would tell them to go straight. She would say that when anyone asked the way to Mount Godai, and she would say the same thing if anyone asked her which way to go in life. "Go straight!"

Someone should have asked her, "Which way is straight?" People know that they should go straight, but instead they want to rely on someone. They want an idea on which they can depend, or an environment where they might be safe. That's not straight. It's as she said, "He appears to be a fine monk, but just look at him going off in that direction! He's doing it again!" This is how it is.

So many monks had this happen to them that they finally got together and complained to Joshu about this immeasurably tiresome grandmother.

Joshu answered, "Wait. For all of you,

I'll go and check her out." The next morning he went to her teashop at the crossroads and asked her the way to Mount Godai. Just as she had answered all the monks, she said, "Go straight!" Her response to Joshu was exactly the same as her response to everyone else.

But Joshu went back and said to one and all, "I saw through that old woman today!"

But what did he see? Did he see her as enlightened or ignorant? Was she just bullying people? Or was she stuck in good and bad? This is the central question of the koan.

In the death row of the state penitentiary of Arkansas in the United States, Dainin is awaiting his execution, every day doing zazen. In accordance with his wishes he was given the precepts and a rakusu, and for his crimes he offered himself to the path of the Buddha. With gratitude and wonder, he expressed himself by saying to me as we parted, "Please give your disciples this message. Don't be confused! Go Straight!"

He sent this message, saying that for him, this was the only truth. In society, he made choices and wondered whether to go right or left. People are always saying that this or that is better, or that it's not like this or that. "He appears to be a fine monk, but just look at him going off in that direction!" For Dainin there is no longer any choice to make; only going straight. We've got to see this, we or risk missing the message the old woman gave to the monks and what Joshu saw so clearly.

*Above it extends  
beyond the milky  
way  
Below it reaches the  
Yellow Springs*

Kami shōkan ni tōri,  
Shimo kōsen ni tessu

上透霄漢 下徹黃泉

This verse is from the 97th case of the Blue Cliff Record, "The Diamond Cutter Scripture's Scornful Revilement." Throughout the Blue Cliff Record, Setcho added poems to the cases, and then Engo Zenji added poetic comments to those poems. This case quotes the Diamond Cutter Sutra, "If one is scornfully reviled by others, this person has done wicked acts in previous ages which should bring him down into evil ways, but because of the scorn and vilification by others in the present age, the wicked action of former ages is thereby extinguished." The passage is used as a koan.



上透霄漢 下徹黃泉

If someone takes the scripture of the Diamond Cutter Sutra into society, and if this someone is looked down upon and insulted by others, and if this person had great faults in past lives and is still being criticized and insulted in this life as a result of those faults, the wicked actions of former lives will now be extinguished.

This is the type of writing that's found in the Diamond Cutter Sutra. If we wonder why Setcho Zenji was moved by this, we have to see that the teaching isn't in words but only in the mind that is taught. When we know this direct perception ourselves, we find the true essence of Zen.

It's said here that if we read the Diamond Cutter Sutra sincerely, we will understand the true Buddha Nature. When we awaken deeply and for the first time understand the void and know prajna wisdom, then for the first time we'll be able to hold this state of mind. This isn't written as an advertisement for the power of the Diamond Cutter Sutra. It's written to provide the experience of awakening that deep eye that can see through any notion of good and bad and catastrophe, knowing these deeply as only phenomena. When our mind is open to that which relies on none of these, that is the truth of Zen.

Baso Doitsu Zenji's Dharma was transmitted to Layman Pang. Once Layman Pang went to hear a talk on the Diamond Cutter Sutra. When it was over, he approached the lecturer and asked if he might ask a question. The lecturer said, "Of course, anything."

Layman Pang asked, "Since there is no sign of self and no sign of others, who would you have lecture? Who would you have listen?"

The lecturer had no reply; instead he said, "I just interpret the meaning according to what it says on the page. I do not know how to answer the question." The layman then said in verse,

No self and no others; how could there be near or far?

I urge you to stop going through lectures;

How could that be compared to seeking the real directly?

The nature of adamantite wisdom is devoid of a single particle of dust;

"I have heard" through "I faithfully accept"

Are all just artificial names.

Above all else, you should practice zazen tirelessly and experience that place where the true Dharma has no form while extending into the ten directions. You have to experience the truth of prajna and clarify it by piercing through your body and thoughts and becoming one with the heavens and earth. When you experience the place where there is no speck of anything in the heavens and earth, then you'll experience the truth that words and phrases can't touch. This is the actual truth of the Diamond Cutter Sutra.

Setcho Zenji versified,

The clear jewel is in my palm;  
Whoever has accomplishment  
will be rewarded with it.

Each and every person has this bright clear jewel, but because it's so bright and full of light we don't realize that we have it. Those who have awakened to having the jewel know the whole universe within their own mind and know this true master as promised. You often hear this pure mind compared to a clear bright jewel, an excellent sword, or a mirror. In a mirror there is nothing, no clouds, no stain, no self, only transparency; that which comes before it becomes the actuality of what is in the mirror. If a horse comes before a mirror, then a horse is reflected.

So what kind of jewel is reflected in that mirror? Vertically it extends through the three realms of time, and horizontally it extends through the ten directions. This mind with which we've all been born shines from the top of the heavens to the bottom of the hells. Where in the mind can such a jewel be found, with no form and no shape yet shining brightly and revealed in every direction?

When we don't give any attention whatsoever to ideas of good or bad, this is the "za" of "zazen." Thus the Sixth Patriarch taught. Our zazen has to be like the mirror that accepts everything yet has no ideas or thoughts about it. The point of zazen isn't to sit without moving for as long as possible or to command the mind to not do this or do that. The point of zazen is to be open and revealed in all of the ten directions and not stagnate. Accepting everything, we don't get caught on anything. Within, we aren't concerned with anything whatsoever; we cling to nothing. Instead of always thinking this or that, we put the whole universe into our bellies and aren't stopped by anything. This is how our zazen must be.

Oh! Great all embracing Mind!  
It is impossible to measure the  
height of the heavens,  
yet the Mind is above the  
heavens.  
It is impossible to measure the  
thickness of the earth,  
yet the Mind is below the earth.  
The sun and the moon shine with  
a great radiance,  
yet the Mind is the source of that  
radiance.  
Within the Mind, the four seasons  
open in their sequence,  
Within the Mind the sun and the  
moon move.  
All of the ten thousand things exist  
within that great Mind.  
Oh! Great all embracing Mind!

This is how Eisai Zenji described it. To realize this huge mind and live in it is our zazen. If we can deeply know this, then we can let go of everything outside and be caught on nothing within. Then no matter what praise or criticism we receive, we aren't moved around by it. Our zazen must be like this.



*Before three and  
three*

*Behind three and  
three*

Zen san san go san san

前三三後三三

This poem is from the 35th case of the Blue Cliff Record, "Manjusri's Before Three and Three, Behind three and Three." Issan no Reiyu and Kyozan Ejaku began the Iggyo sect, and Master Kyozan was followed by Bunki Zenji. One day Mujaku Bunki Zenji had a dream while playing on Mount Godai.

In this dream he met Manjusri Bodhisattva and went to stay at his temple on the mountain. The mondo of this case took place there, and Mujaku Bunki later used it as a guide for training his students. Manjusri is famous for his wisdom

of the undifferentiated. This isn't the wisdom of dualism, relative view, or mental understanding, but what's prior to everything. Thus, Manjusri represents the wisdom that precedes any dualism.

Mujaku had been told that he could find a living Manjusri on Mount Godai. Because he wanted to have a Dharma encounter with Manjusri, he climbed the mountain. As nightfall approached, he hadn't met anyone like Manjusri. It was almost dark when an old man came along leading a cow. Mujaku explained very meticulously why he had come there to meet Manjusri Bodhisattva. The old man took him to a temple.

There the old man showed him a cup, a very precious and rare cup used for drinks that were so fragrant and indescribable, his eyes and his tongue would melt if he tasted them. At that time this mondo took place.

The old man asked, "From where have you come?"

Mujaku answered, "I have come from the south."

"Oh. How is the Buddhism in the south these days?"

"There are a few people who are obeying the precepts, but it is only about that."

"How many monks are there?"

"There are 300 or 500 monks. And how is the Buddha Dharma here?"

The old man answered, "Dragons and snakes are all mixed up together, the gold and the sand are all mixed up, and those who are enlightened and ignorant are all mixed up together too."

"How many are there?"

"Before three and three, behind three and three." This is how he answered.

Mujaku asked to stay for one night, but he wasn't allowed to do so. He thanked the old man warmly. As the old man saw Mujaku to the gate,

a younger man went along with them. Surreptitiously, Mujaku asked the young man, "That old man said, 'Before three and three, behind three and three.' How many are really here?"

The young man called out Mujaku's name, and he answered, "Yes?"

The young man responded, "How many is this?" This was not your usual young man.

Mujaku then asked, "What temple is this, anyway?"

As he asked, he looked up to point at the temple's gate, and suddenly there was no more old man, no more temple, no more young man--there was nothing at all.

Mujaku stayed on Mount Godai and trained there a long time, living in a place known as the Diamond Sutra Cave. He realized that the old man he had encountered there, was, in fact, the living Manjusri.

This koan is a mondo between the wisdom of the discriminative, represented by Mujaku, and the wisdom of equality or nondiscrimination, represented by Manjusri.

"There are a few people who are obeying the precepts" and "There are 300 or 500 monks" are answers from the world of discrimination. Then the walls of discrimination are torn down by Manjusri as he answers from the wisdom of the root source, "Dragons and snakes are all mixed up together, the gold and the sand are all mixed up, and those who are enlightened and ignorant are all mixed up together too." Because one was talking in the world of discriminative wisdom and the other was talking in the world of source root wisdom, there's no way they could understand one another. Their exchange could be seen as nothing more than weird conversation, but we have to know that there are different ways of approaching it.

In the world there are problems of

good and bad, yes and no, right and wrong. Often we don't understand what someone is saying or what we need to do to make things clear. Sometimes we forget our differences and work together, shoulder-to-shoulder. We need to learn to speak as one humankind.

We shouldn't get angry at the mistakes of another. Instead, it's important to review our own behavior. Everything changes so quickly we can hardly bear to look. In our daily lives, where can we stop and rest? Because our lives are so busy we can't slow down. We just have to forge ahead. We can look at it like the flight of an airplane: the greater its speed, the more stable its seats need to be. In the same way, the more we use our mind to process discriminating information and address the circumstances of the world, the more we need to swallow it all down.

We have to forget ourselves, living big, as with our zazen. Letting it all go, we embrace everything that comes our way. Whether we're hated or hating, resentful or being resented, acting for profit or loss, we have to put it all behind us and cut away everything in our mind.

Before three and three  
Behind three and three

Drinking down all of humankind in one gulp, we can savor that sublime piquancy of each and every person's individual absolute value.

*In the pot, sun and  
moon shine eternally*

Kochū jitsu getsu  
nagashi

壺中日月長

This poem is from the sixth section of the Records of Master Kido. Among the ancient Chinese writings there's one called Gokan no sho in which we find the Hojitsu Hen, and in that we find the Shicho Boden. This story is from there.

There was an old man in a small town who operated a pharmacy whose medicines always worked quite well. In the store there was a big jar of medicine, and that medicine would work for people with a headache, or a stomachache, or a backache, or a cold. No matter who came and no matter what their problem was,



medicine was given from that jar, with excellent results.

Everyone in town trusted the man and his medicine implicitly. But no one knew where he lived. In the evening people would see him closing the shop, but no one ever saw where he went. He would wait until no one was looking and then hide himself in the large jar that held all the medicine. Finally, one of the town's officials, who lived nearby, noticed this.

The next day, the official went to the old man's store and greeted him with great respect. He gave the old man sake and rich foods. The old man realized immediately that the official knew his secret and asked him why he had come.

The official said, "You are one of great good will. I will return tomorrow morning. Please ask me again then."

The old man understood and said, "You want to go into this big jar, don't you? Well, if you do want to do that, I will help you. Hold my kimono and close your eyes, and then you can come with me."

The official did as he was told, and suddenly his body seemed lighter. The old man then told him he could open his eyes.

When he opened his eyes, it was as if he were seeing a different world! How huge and spacious everything was! He saw an enormous house and a great garden filled with flowers and trees with ripened fruit. In the lake many fish were swimming, and the many rooms of the house were all filled with treasures. It was such a rare and special state of mind that he forgot about the passing of time. Although he had always been chased by his work and by time, it all seemed like a lie and was forgotten.

He wondered how this could be. Because the old pharmacist could read his thoughts, he answered without prompting, "I am a person

from an enchanted land. I am not a person of this world, I am from the world of hermits and sages. Because I made a mistake, I was sent down to Earth. Now I have been forgiven and can return to the world of gods and heavenly beings. It's time for me to return here now. I saw your heart of good will, and I wanted to show you a little corner of this heavenly realm, but this isn't a place you can stay. Let's drink a cup of sake together and then say farewell."

The official drank the sake and felt a little woozy. When his head cleared, he found he was back in his office. He thought he had been gone only a few hours, but it had been several days.

In the pot, sun and moon shine eternally.

He knew that the world in the pot was beyond time and space, an absolute world within our mind.

Eisai Zenji wrote of this hugeness:

Oh! Great all embracing Mind!  
It is impossible to measure the  
height of the heavens,  
yet the Mind is above the  
heavens.

It is impossible to measure the  
thickness of the earth,  
yet the Mind is below the  
earth.

The sun and the moon shine  
with a great radiance  
yet the Mind is the source of  
that radiance.

Within the Mind, the four  
seasons open in their sequence,  
Within the Mind the sun and  
the moon move .

All of the ten thousand things  
exist within that great Mind.

Oh! Great all embracing Mind!

The astronaut Russell Schweickart described a moment during a space walk when he was able to just be there. He said, "Those two or three minutes, I remember so well. It was

not the usual view from the narrowly framed window of the spaceship.”

He said that there was nothing to limit his view, only huge and infinite dark space. He was traveling across this space at the rate of 17,000 miles per hour, and this universe was totally silent. This great speed and huge silence were such a new experience, that he heard a voice asking, “Why are you here? Are you the best person for this? Do you have superior ability or have you worked so hard that you were chosen by God to have this precious experience on behalf of everyone?”

He said that he knew the answer to all of those questions was “no.” Then why was he there? “As I thought about this, suddenly the earth, a deep blue spinning globe, came into view way below. At that moment I suddenly understand. I am one person representing humankind who has been given the job of touching the universe directly.” Realizing this, he looked deeply at the earth. “I am one of the people of that planet. They are all human, just like me, but they are not me. We take this knowledge for the people that are to come after. Without thinking more I was deeply humbled. I felt the huge responsibility. I was a small part of the whole life of the earth. I had the responsibility to take this experience to everyone on earth. Thanks to that, my relationship to the life of the whole planet has changed completely. This very precious change happened because of my experience of being in the universe.”

He was one of the astronauts who flew Apollo 9, and he experienced this state of mind when as he was on his mission into space. We can't become aware of something that has never existed. Anyone who is born comes to this life with the same mind. But we get overwhelmed with the static of our ego and the weight of our small self. At least once, our tangled ideas and ponderous mental activity have to be swept away, or

we can't know this precious place. Because the mirror of our pure mind that we've been endowed with since birth is immeasurably huge, an infinite universe can be reflected there. Everything from the eternal past through the limitless future can also be held there, and in that way we are infinite.

To realize the source of this true mind and not be moved by anything is zazen. We can realize this absolute power within our own mind.



*The sea is vast and  
the hundred rivers  
flow toward it*

Umi hiroku shite  
hyakusen chōsu

海潤百川朝

These words come from the fifth section of the Kaian Kokugo.

In a deep and wide-open ocean, no matter how much water is added, it never feels as if there's too much.

In explaining the “MAKA!” or “GREAT!” of the Heart Sutra, Hakuin Zenji added a footnote about the Indian belief that at the center of the universe there's a great mountain called Sumeru, or Shumisen. At points east, west, north, and south are various countries. We live in the southern country, called Embushu. There's one sun and one moon above it. It's a small world. The Himalayas,

soaring high to the North of India, were probably thought of as the center of the universe. If a thousand of these worlds were gathered together, they would make a medium world. And when a thousand medium worlds are gathered, that makes a great world. And if a thousand of these great worlds are gathered together, they are called a thousand great worlds. If three of these are gathered, that is the three thousand great worlds.

These three thousand great worlds as one unit are considered one Buddha Land. In one Buddha Land there is one Buddha. In each small world there is one Mount Sumeru, so in three thousand great worlds there are 3 million Mount Sumerus. However, from the point of view of Maka, the Great, these three thousand are only a bubble on the surface. Together, they are no more than a single drop of dew on one of the unusually fragile and thin autumn hairs of a rabbit. They say that in one mosquito's eyelash there lives a whole universe of bacteria. Our tiny Embushu land is no larger than one of tiny things.

But our mind is as huge as the Buddha Land. Einstein said that the greatest miracle in the universe is that we can understand. When seen this way, we realize we can hold the entire universe in our mind, in the same way that a drop of dew is held on a leaf. Our mind is so huge, so enormous, that it can drink down everything. All truths can be brought into awareness. It is truly inconceivable!

Kant said that in our mind there is an amazing element of integrity that exists in the motion of a hand or a single footstep. When we swallow each thing down we don't miss the next one; we function totally, aware of every single thing. We have the potential to function and express ourselves in small, subtle ways. But when we make everything small by squeezing it into a narrow frame of ego, we can't see with this expansiveness. "Limited narrow

opinions make our minds small and tight; harmony makes our mind huge and open."

In doing zazen, we realize this mind. "The sea is vast and the hundred rivers flow toward it." We drink down the waters of all the rivers and still don't think of it as a lot. It's this kind of Mind we all need to have.